

Chapter 2 – The Stone Ages and Early Cultures



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The First People

The Big Idea

Prehistoric people learned to adapt to their environment, to make simple tools, to use fire, and to use language.

Main Ideas

- Scientists study the remains of early humans to learn about prehistory.
- Hominids and early humans first appeared in East Africa millions of years ago.
- Stone Age tools grew more complex as time passed.
- Hunter-gatherer societies developed language, art, and religion.



Main Idea 1:

Scientists study the remains of early humans to learn about prehistory.

- To study **prehistory**, the time before writing, historians rely on the work of archaeologists and anthropologists.
- *Key Hominid Finds:*
 - Mary and Louis Leakey found bones of early ancestors of humans, called **hominids**, in East Africa.
 - “Lucy” was found by Donald Johanson. Tests showed that she lived more than 3 million years ago and walked on two legs.
 - Tim White found even older remains from as long as 4.4 million years ago.



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Main Idea 2:

Hominids and early humans first appeared in East Africa millions of years ago.

- Groups of hominids appeared about 3 million years ago.
- A group of hominids called *Homo erectus*, or upright man, appeared in Africa about 1.5 million years ago.
- Many scientists think that modern humans appeared about 200,000 years ago in Africa.



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Hominids and Early Humans

Homo habilis

- “handy man”
- Became more like humans over time
- Found in 1960s by Louis Leakey
- Closely related to humans

Homo erectus

- “upright man”
- Scientists believe they walked completely upright, like modern people.
- Scientists also believe they knew how to control fire.

Homo sapiens

- “wise man”
- Everyone alive today belongs to this group.



Main Idea 3: Stone Age tools grew more complex as time passed.

- The first humans and their ancestors lived during the Stone Age.
- The first part of the Stone Age is called the **Paleolithic Era**, during which people used stone tools.
- A **tool** is a handheld object that has been modified to help a person accomplish a task.



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First Tools

- Earliest tools found in East Africa
- About 2.6 million years old
- Each stone was hit with another to create a sharp edge.
- One unsharpened side could be used as a handle.
- Scientists think these first tools were used mostly to cut and grind food.



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Later Tools

- Improved tools were made out of flint.
- People learned how to attach wooden handles to tools.
- Because they no longer had to stand next to the animals they were hunting, people were able to kill larger animals from a distance.



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Main Idea 4: Hunter-gatherer societies developed language, art, and religion.

- Early humans formed **societies**.
- They were **hunter-gatherers**.
- The most important development of early Stone Age culture was language.



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Hunter-gatherer Societies

- A **society** is a community of people who share a common culture.
- Small groups
- Lived in caves
- Hunter-gatherers: hunted animals and gathered plants and seeds to survive
- Developed cultures with language, religion, and art
 - Allowed more relationships to form
 - Easier to hunt
 - Allowed food distribution



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Early Human Migration



6.1.2

The Big Idea

As people migrated around the world, they learned to adapt to new environments

Main Ideas

- People moved out of Africa as the earth's climates changed.
- People adapted to new environments by making clothing and new types of tools.



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Main Idea 1:

People moved out of Africa as the earth's climates changed.

- Ice ages caused people to **migrate**, or move, to new places.
- Early people migrated around the world. Complete global migration took hundreds of thousands of years.



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The Ice Ages

- About 1.6 million years ago, many places around the world began to experience long periods of freezing weather, called the **ice ages**.
- The ice ages ended about 10,000 years ago.
- Huge sheets of ice covered much of the earth's land.
- Many areas that are now underwater were then dry land. A **land bridge**, or strip of land connecting two continents, probably connected Asia and North America.



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Settling New Lands

- Early hominids migrated from Africa to Asia about 2 million years ago.
 - They eventually spread to India, China, Southeast Asia, and Europe.
- Humans began to migrate to South Asia around 100,000 years ago.
 - From South Asia, they moved to Europe, North Asia, and then North America.
- By 9000 BC, humans lived on all continents except Antarctica.



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Main Idea 2:

People adapted to new environments by making clothing and new types of tools.

- Early people had to adapt to new environments.
 - They learned how to sew animal skins together for clothing.
 - They found new shelters, such as pit houses and caves. Then, created structures made out of animal skins, wood, stone, and bones.
- They had to create new tools and technologies.
 - New tools defined the Mesolithic Era (Middle Stone Age).
 - Invented hooks, fishing spears, and the bow and arrow
 - New technologies such as canoes and pottery



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Beginnings of Agriculture

The Big Idea

The development of agriculture brought great changes to human society.

Main Ideas

- The first farmers learned to grow plants and raise animals in the Stone Age.
- Farming changed societies and the way people lived.



Main Idea 1:

The first farmers learned to grow plants and raise animals in the Stone Age.

After the Middle Stone Age came a period of time that scientists call the **Neolithic Era**, or New Stone Age.

People learned how to make plants more useful through a process called **domestication**.

Farmers also began learning how to use animals for their own benefit.



New Stone Age

- Began as early as 10,000 years ago, in Southwest Asia
- People learned how to polish stones, make fire, and produce food.
- Ended 5,000 years ago in Egypt and Southwest Asia, when toolmakers began using metal



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Domestication

- Process of changing plants or animals to make them more useful to humans
- People learned they could plant seeds and grow their own crops.
- People learned to plant the biggest and sweetest crops for better yields.
- The domestication of plants led to the development of **agriculture**, or farming.



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Animals

- Hunters didn't need to follow wild animals once they learned how to keep and use animals.
- Sheep and goats were used for milk, food, and wool.
- Larger animals were used to help with farming.
- Learning to use animals to help with farming increased people's chances of surviving.



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Main Idea 2: Farming changed societies and the way people lived.

More certain survival

People could focus on activities other than finding food.



Domestication

Domestication of plants and animals led to the use of fibers to make clothes.



Permanent settlements

Domestication led to the need to stay in one place. Farming communities grew into towns.



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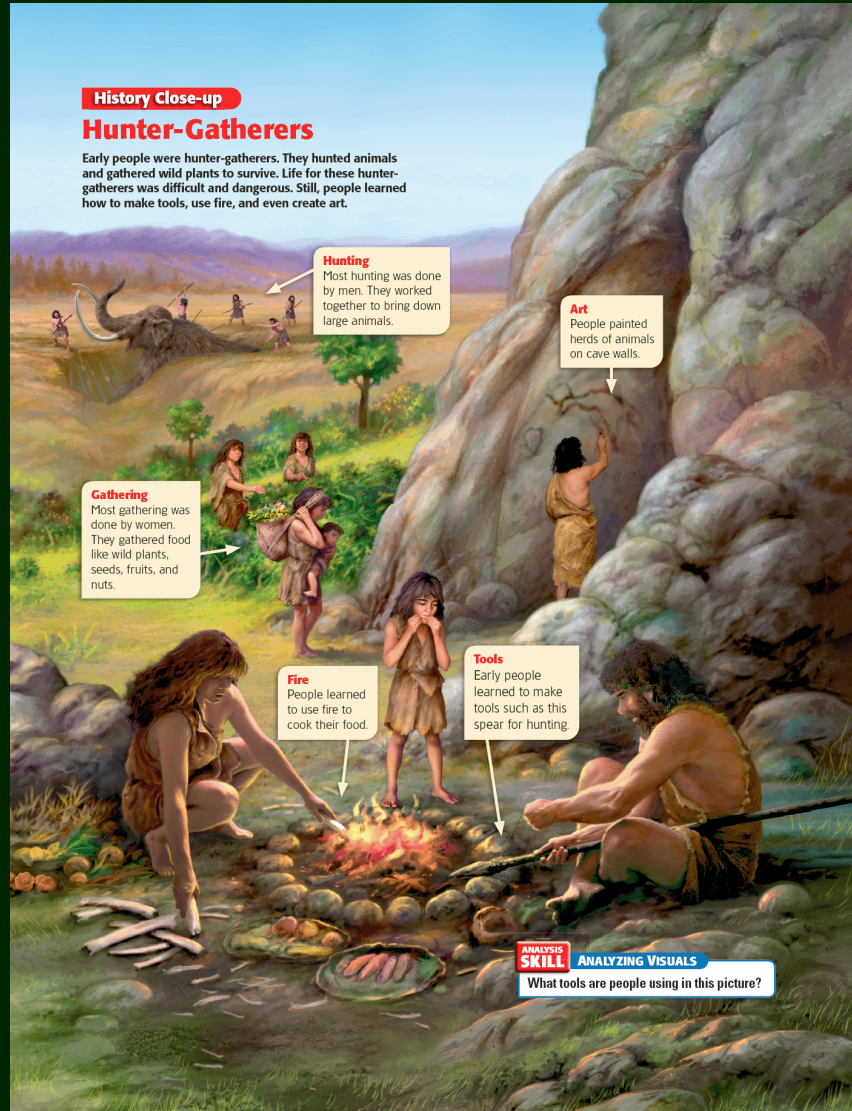


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History Close-up

Hunter-Gatherers

Early people were hunter-gatherers. They hunted animals and gathered wild plants to survive. Life for these hunter-gatherers was difficult and dangerous. Still, people learned how to make tools, use fire, and even create art.



Hunting
Most hunting was done by men. They worked together to bring down large animals.

Art
People painted herds of animals on cave walls.

Gathering
Most gathering was done by women. They gathered food like wild plants, seeds, fruits, and nuts.

Fire
People learned to use fire to cook their food.

Tools
Early people learned to make tools such as this spear for hunting.

ANALYZE SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS
What tools are people using in this picture?



History Close-up

An Early Farming Society

The village of Catal Hüyük in modern Turkey is one of the earliest farming villages discovered. Around 8,000 years ago, the village was home to about 5,000–6,000 people living in more than 1,000 houses. Villagers farmed, hunted and fished, traded with distant lands, and worshipped gods in special shrines.



Villagers used simple channels to move water to their fields.

Wheat, barley, and peas were some of the main crops grown outside the village.

Houses were made of wood covered with mud. Since they didn't have doors, people entered on ladders through rooftop openings.

Inside their houses, villagers made the earliest known wooden bowls and cups, pottery, and mirrors.

Some houses were built as shrines and had small statues of goddesses and large sculpted bulls' heads.

ANALYZE SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS
How did farmers get water to their fields?



LINKING TO TODAY

Stone Tools

Did you know that Stone Age people's tools weren't as primitive as we might think? They made knife blades and arrowheads—like the one shown below—out of volcanic glass called obsidian. The obsidian blades were very sharp. In fact, they could be 100 times sharper and smoother than the steel blades used for surgery in modern hospitals.

Today some doctors are going back to using these Stone Age materials. They have found that blades made from obsidian are more precise than modern scalpels. Some doctors use obsidian blades for delicate surgery on the face because the stone tools leave “nicer-looking” scars.



ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING INFORMATION

How do you think modern obsidian blades are different from Stone Age ones?



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Cave Paintings

Thousands of years ago, early people decorated cave walls with paintings like this one. No one knows for sure why people created cave paintings, but many historians think they were related to hunting.

Why do you think this cave painting may be connected to hunting?



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Why is he important? Ötzi is the oldest mummified human ever found in such good condition. His body, clothing, and tools were extremely well preserved, telling us a lot about life during the Stone Ages. His outfit was made of three types of animal skin stitched together. He wore leather shoes padded with grass, a grass cape, a fur hat, and a sort of backpack. He carried an ax with a copper blade as well as a bow and arrows.

Drawing Conclusions Why do you think the Iceman was in the Alps?

Scientists examine the Iceman's body in 1991, before it was removed from the glacier.



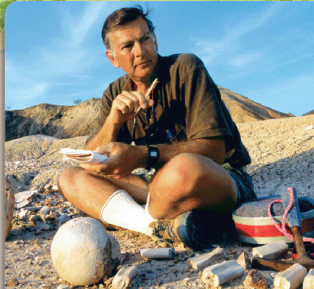
A Mammoth House

Early people used whatever was available to make shelters. In Central Asia, where wood was scarce, some early people made their homes from mammoth bones.

Heavy mammoth bones were used as a frame for the shelter.

The frame was probably covered with animal hides to form a solid roof and walls.





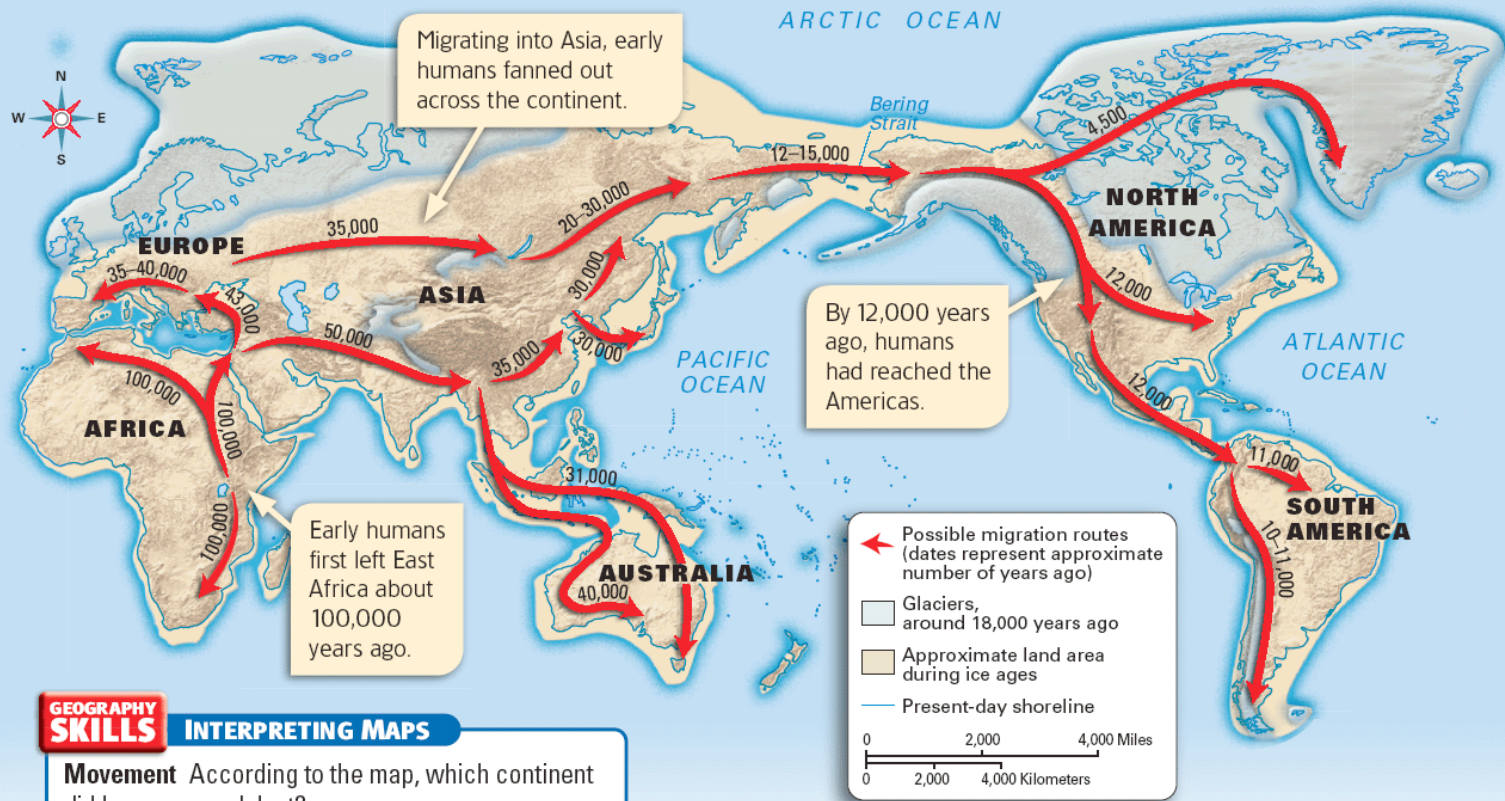
Donald Johanson discovered the bones of Lucy, an early hominid that lived more than 3 million years ago.



Mary Leakey found some of the earliest ancestors of humans in Olduvai Gorge.



Early Human Migration



GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

Movement According to the map, which continent did humans reach last?



Early Domestication

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

1. **Location** Which animals were domesticated in Asia?
2. **Location** Where was corn first domesticated?





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Early Hominids

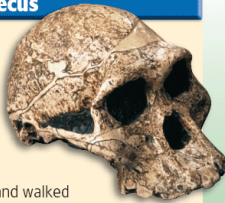
QUICK
FACTS

Four major groups of hominids appeared in Africa between 5 million and about 200,000 years ago. Each group was more advanced than the one before it and could use better tools.

Which early hominid learned to control fire and use the hand ax?

Australopithecus

- Name means "southern ape"
- Appeared in Africa about 4–5 million years ago
- Stood upright and walked on two legs
- Brain was about one-third the size of modern humans



Homo habilis

- Name means "handy man"
- Appeared in Africa about 2.4 million years ago
- Used early stone tools for chopping and scraping
- Brain was about half the size of modern humans



An early
Stone Age
chopper

Homo erectus

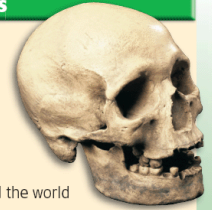
- Name means "upright man"
- Appeared in Africa about 2–1.5 million years ago
- Used early stone tools like the hand ax
- Learned to control fire
- Migrated out of Africa to Asia and Europe



A hand ax

Homo sapiens

- Name means "wise man"
- Appeared in Africa about 200,000 years ago
- Migrated around the world
- Same species as modern human beings
- Learned to create fire and use a wide variety of tools
- Developed language



A flint knife



Visual Summary

Use the visual summary below to help you review the main ideas of the chapter.

QUICK FACTS



Hominids developed in Africa and learned how to use tools.

Early humans lived as hunter-gatherers.

Humans migrated around the world, adapting to new environments.

Eventually, people learned how to farm and raise animals.



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