

UNDERSTANDING OUR PAST

Human beings have always been interested in learning about the past. We now know that the first people lived more than two millions years ago in **prehistoric times**. There are various theories as to where the first humans came from. Some believe that the origin is the **Great Rift Valley** in present-day Ethiopia. Many human remains, both partial and intact have been found. The oldest known remains belong to **“LUCY”** who was found in 1974 by a research expedition. They only found 40% of her bones, but it was more than enough to determine several key factors:

- She is over 3.2 million years old
- She is a member of *Australopithecus africanus*
- She is classified as a **hominin**
- She was approximately 3 feet 7 inches tall and only weighed 64 lbs.
- She is the oldest known **bipedal** human species

“Lucy”



<http://keskustelu.suomi24.fi/t/13266909>

Prehistoric people had no cities, countries or organized governments. This time period is known as **PREHISTORY** – the time before people invented writing.

Around 5,000 years ago, people in different parts of the world invented writing. This event marked the beginning of history.

HOW DO WE KNOW?

	Who does it?	What is it?	What do they do?	Why do they do it?
Archaeology	Archaeologist	Study of early people to examine artifacts they left behind	Study artifacts such as tools, weapons, clothing, pottery	To learn about the beliefs and activities of a certain group of people
History	Historian	Study of what happened and how people lived in the past	Study artifacts, especially written documents	To learn how and why events happened
Geography	Geographer	Study of the Earth, its peoples and resources	Study where people lived and why people lived there	To learn how places affect the way people live and how people move from place to place
Paleontology	Paleontologist	Study of the history of life on Earth	Study fossil remains to understand extinct and living organisms	To learn about information about an organism's life and environment
Anthropology	Anthropologist	The study of humans, both <u>cultural</u> and <u>biological</u>	Cultural studies: the workings of societies of the world Biological studies: the long-term development of the human organism	To study the stages and growth of mankind



<http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/research/archaeologyresearch/>

The First People

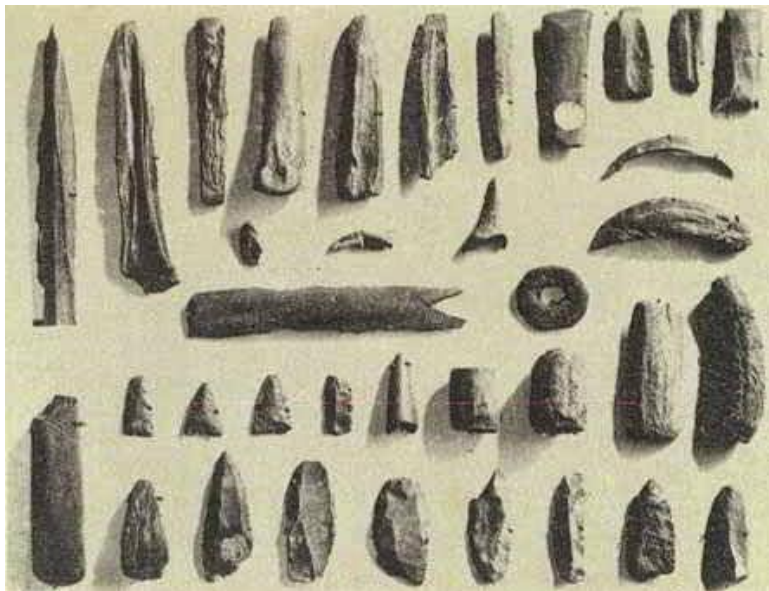
The earliest people lived during the **Paleolithic Age**, also known as the **Old Stone Age**. It began more than 2 million years ago. These people were **nomads**, they continually moved from place to place, often following the migrating herds of wild animals that were their food source. They made simple tools and weapons from stone, bone or wood. Over time, they developed a simple, spoken language. They believed that the world was filled with spirits and that there was life after death. They buried their tools and other valuable possessions in organized graves. In turn, these rituals led to the creation of religious beliefs.

Perhaps the most important “invention” during the Paleolithic Age was that man learned to **harness fire**. This offered warmth, protection, and most of all a new way of cooking meat to obtain more protein. This then led to a change of events. We ate better, became stronger, we were no longer prey for other animals, lived longer and subsequently created a larger population.

Paleolithic Age or Old Stone Age circa. 2,500,000 B.C.E.

Paleo = Old, Lithos = Stone

Very Small, Scattered Populations	Nomads, Hunters and Gatherers
Discovery/Harnessing of Fire	Simple Stone Tools and Weapons
First Spoken Languages	Belief in the Afterlife
Role of Women Important	Cave Paintings and Drawings



<http://www.tetsuccesskey.com/2014/12/on-trail-of-earliest-people-ncert-cbse.html>

Neolithic Age or New Stone Age circa. 10,000 B.C.E.

Neo = New, Lithos = Stone

Increasing Populations	Villages Formed
Wild Animals Domesticated	Agriculture (Farming) Developed
Personal Possessions More Important	Calendars and Technology Created
Village Headmen & Councils of Elders	Role of Women Less Important

Two major discoveries were made by humans during this era. They learned to **plant seeds** and **domesticate (tame) wild animals**. People could now stay in one place and develop **agriculture** (farming). Historians refer to this time as the **Neolithic Agricultural Revolution** as it drastically changed the way people lived. Despite it being only **subsistence farming** (growing just enough to feed one's family) there was now a balanced diet of crops and meat. This meant that people lived a better life and the populations grew. People began to live in **villages**. These villages later turned to cities and at the end of this age, people grew **surplus** crops and **trade** developed. The next progression was that these cities turned into **civilizations**.



<https://scotterb.wordpress.com/2013/12/08/a-new-age/>

Standards

AP® World History

I Historical Thinking Skills

- I Chronological Reasoning
- II Comparison and Contextualization
- III Crafting Historical Arguments from Historical Evidence
- IV Historical Interpretation and Synthesis

II Thematic Learning Objectives

Theme 1: Interaction Between Humans and the Environment

ENV 1,2,4,6

CUL 4

ECON 1

SOC 1,2

Theme 2: Development and Interaction of Cultures

IV The Concept Outline

Period 1: Technological and Environmental Transformations, to c. 600 B.C.E.

New York State Regents

2 – World History

4 – Economics

5 - Civics, Citizenship, and Government