

# World History Studies Weekly



## Earliest Humans

What comes to mind when you hear the words “prehistoric people”? Do you think of cavemen grunting and carrying big wooden clubs? Just what does prehistoric mean?

This issue will focus on the earliest humans, how they lived and what they left behind.

Prehistoric means “before written records.” The prehistoric period starts with what is called the Paleolithic Age. Paleolithic is Greek for “old stone.” Scientists say this period of time began about 2.5 million years ago and continued until about 8000 B.C. The Mesolithic Age is when early humans still hunted and fished as the basis of their existence but also started to use new ideas such as bow and arrows, nets and spears. The Neolithic Age (“new stone” age) was a time when scientists say early humans stopped being hunter-gatherers and settled down in large groups to grow crops, domesticate (tame) animals and develop improved tools.

To say that life was tough at this time is an understatement. There were no stores to go shopping for food or clothing. There were few types of shelter to protect you from animals and harsh weather. Your only weapons against a savage animal were your bare hands. It would be thousands of years before small steps helped make changes in the lives of the earliest humans.

The stomach ruled the lives of the earliest humans. They would spend each day trying to find food to eat to stay alive. They ate birds’ eggs, berries, mushrooms, rabbits or whatever they could find to settle those hunger pains. Scientists call these people hunter-gatherers. And, unlike today, the earliest humans didn’t have someone to say, “Hey, don’t eat that!

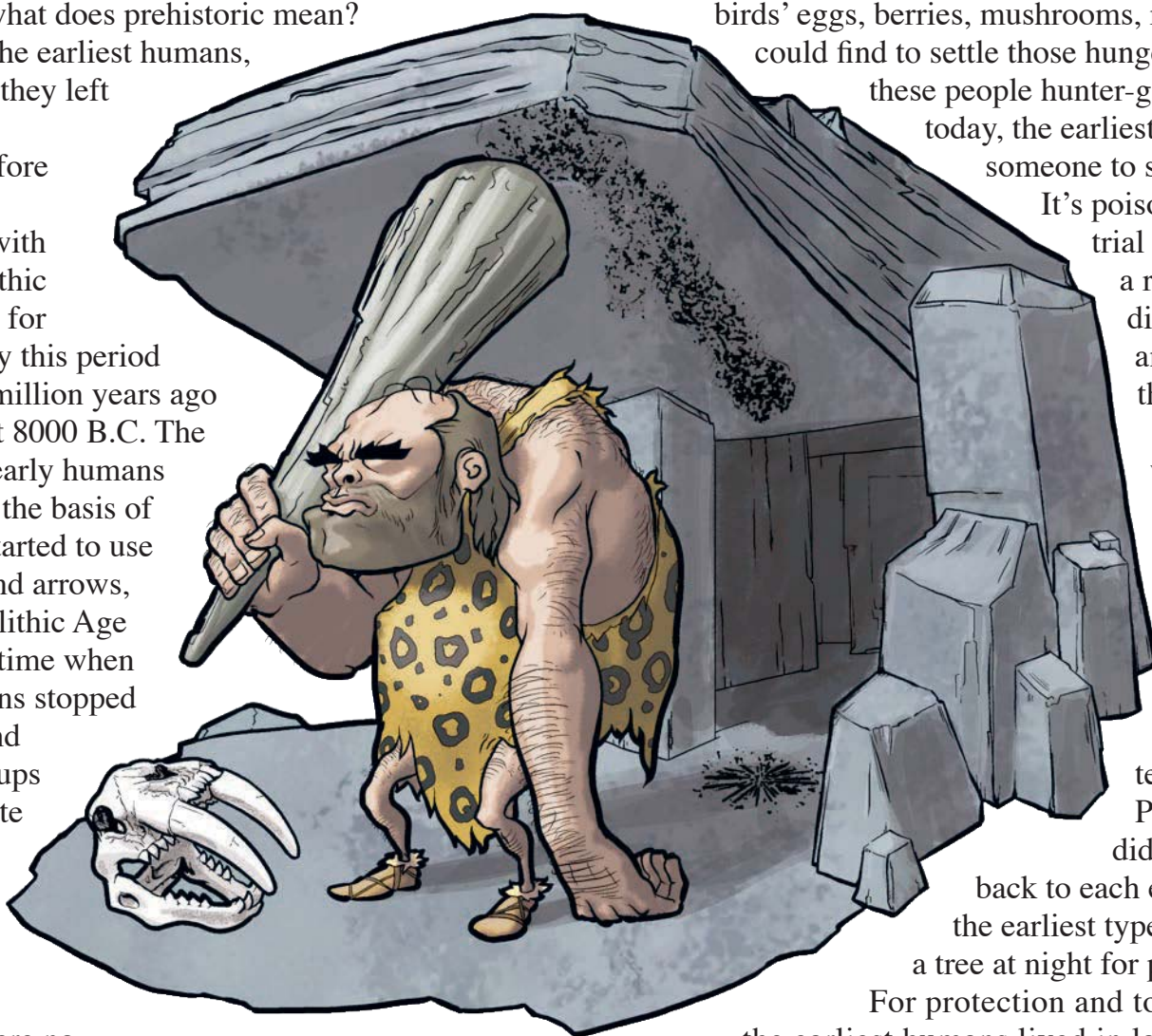
It’s poisonous.” People learned by trial and error. If someone ate a red berry and got sick and died, others would learn and remember to not eat that berry.

The earliest humans were nomadic. This means they didn’t have a permanent home. Instead, they wandered around following animals, their food supply. So, would “caveman” be a good term for these people?

Probably not, since most didn’t have a cave to come back to each evening. Scientists think the earliest type of shelter was climbing a tree at night for protection from animals.

For protection and to help search for food, the earliest humans lived in large groups called extended families. An extended family might include parents, children, aunts, uncles, cousins and others.

As you read this week’s cover story, use any color to circle or highlight all the reflexive pronouns (himself, themselves, etc.). (CC ELA L.6.1)



### Connections

## Very Old Cereal

Do you like sitting down to breakfast with a big bowl of your favorite cereal? Scientists say that prehistoric people did too.

Soultana-Maria Valamoti, an assistant professor of archaeology at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece, said they have discovered the world’s oldest known cooked cereal. Dating back to 8,000 years ago, it seems that early Neolithic Bulgarians enjoyed a hot cereal made of bulgur wheat.

Valamoti said the grain was dried after first being boiled. Any large coarse pieces

were removed and then the cereal was stored for eating throughout the year. When early humans wanted a bowl of cereal, they added warm water to the grain. Valamoti said the people living in the Mediterranean would have used natural sun in the hot summer months to dry out the grain. The cereal would have provided a nutritious meal any time throughout the year.

Since bread developed long before cereal, scientists say early humans may have had some toast with their hot porridge too.







## New Discovery

Some discoveries were made by accident. Fire was most likely discovered by accident. Perhaps lightning hit a tree, causing a fire. Maybe someone rubbed two sticks together or struck two stones against each other and created a spark. Fire certainly changed the lives of prehistoric people.

Scientists believe humans first used fire about 400,000 years ago, probably to frighten away animals. Over time people began to use fire for light, warmth and cooking.

## Weapons

The earliest weapons humans had were their hands. But coming upon a huge bear and fending it off with just your hands was probably not very successful. But humans did have an advantage over the animals—opposable thumbs that allowed them to pick up and hold objects. The earliest people probably threw things like sticks and stones at wild animals. It took thousands of years for them to think of sharpening these stones and sticks and fastening them together.

A very handy stone for the earliest

# Prehistoric Humans

humans was called flint. Flint cut well and was easily broken. It was a sharp stone and was used for making arrowheads, scrapers, knives, etc.

## Fido Joins Early Man

Taming of animals, or domestication, happened about 12,000 years ago. The first domesticated animal was probably the wolf. Hunters may have found a litter of wolf pups and kept them to raise as food. Raising their own food allowed prehistoric people to settle in one place. As time went on, domestication also provided wool, milk and labor. The wool was used for clothing, the milk provided nourishment and having animals to haul things made life a little easier.

## Early Settlements

Most early settlements were near rivers or streams. Water provided fish for food, transportation and



## Learning about Ötzi the Iceman

In 1991 hikers found a body in the Ötztal Alps near the border of Austria and Italy. The frozen body was very well preserved in the glacier, still in clothes and carrying tools. What made the discovery so amazing is the body was that of someone who lived about 5,300 years ago. This is the most preserved body found of anyone who lived so long ago.

The body was named Ötzi, for the Alps where he was found. Ötzi was found wearing a fur hat, a long grass cloak and a leather jacket. His leather shoes were stuffed with straw and he carried a bow and arrow, copper ax and a bark container that held grains of wheat.

Cutting open his stomach, scientists were able to see that, before hiking up into the mountains, Ötzi had eaten a cracker, some plants and some red

deer meat. They also found a few bits of sloes (fruit of a blackthorn tree) and eggs of whipworms in his stomach. Such worms may have caused stomach pain and diarrhea. Ötzi had 57 tattoo marks on his lower back, ankles and right knee. Scientists think these tattoos of dots and dashes had something to do with medical practices of his time.

When he was found, Ötzi held a knife and had cuts on his hand. He also had wounds from being pierced with an arrow. An arrowhead was found in one of his shoulders. Researchers believe Ötzi died from blood loss or from a blow to the head. After being "defrosted" for a short time to be studied further, Ötzi is now resting in a deep freeze display in the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy.

## Trades & Technology





fertile land for crops. People and animals also needed the water to drink. Hunters often killed animals as they drank from a stream or river.

### Farming Begins

Because early humans were nomadic, they may never have noticed what happened to the seeds they spit out of their mouths. When they started to settle in one location, they noticed that seeds sprouted and grew. Early humans learned they could actually grow their food. This was about 11,000 years ago. Agriculture, or growing crops, had begun.

Early humans no longer had to spend entire days searching for food. For the first time they had free time. This was a wonderful change that helped early humans have time to develop better clothing, weapons, tools, pottery and painting.

### Cave Paintings

Why do you draw? Probably for something to do or to express yourself. Scientists think prehistoric people drew on cave walls for the same reasons. Additionally, paintings may have been used to brag about a successful hunt or as a magical wish for success in a hunt. Some paintings may have had religious meaning.

Early humans painted with charcoal, berries and minerals mixed with water, animal fats and oil. They used feathers, sticks and hands as painting instruments.

Some of the oldest cave paintings were found in Chauvet Cave in France. Its drawings may be more than 30,000 years old.

Paintings of bison, deer, lions, owls and panthers (two animals never before seen on a cave wall) were found. Red stencils of someone’s handprint, perhaps a signature, were also found.

Would you believe that no cave paintings have yet been found that show clouds, the sun, trees, rivers, campfires, tents or mountains?

Cave artists also rarely drew birds, fish and snakes.

### Coming Together

Extended families would eventually find other extended families to exchange surplus (extra) goods with. Later, extended families joined together to create larger communities, but this created problems.

Different families needed to cooperate to make the community successful.

That wasn’t always easy. They needed rules to live by. To

help remember rules, a

new idea would come about—a writing system. Early people developed

picture writing to help remember the laws. With that, prehistoric people entered a new era—historic times.



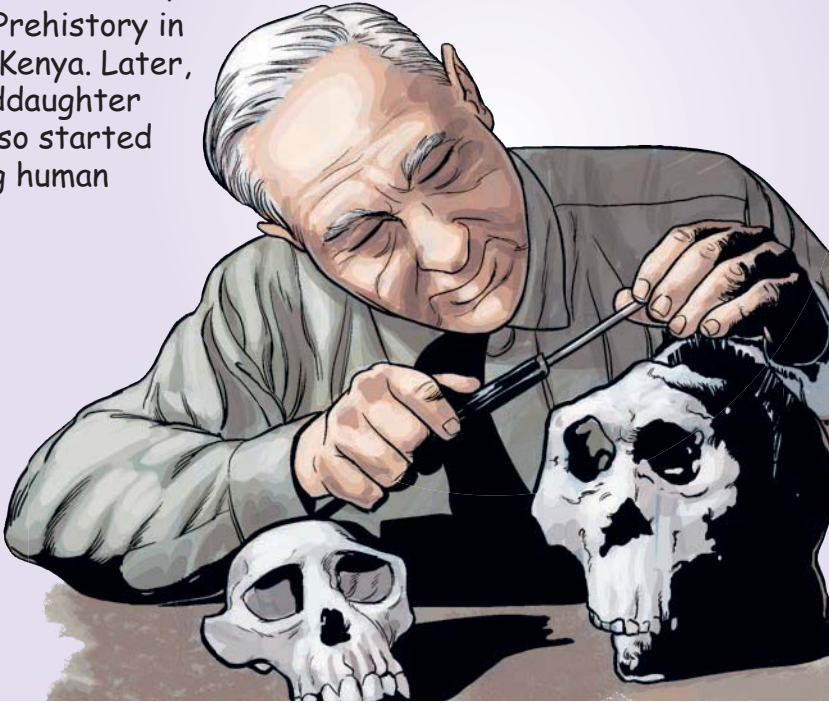
## Biography

# Louis Leakey

Louis Leakey was an archaeologist and anthropologist who spent his life studying the origin of man. Leakey was born in the country Kenya in 1903 to British missionaries. Leakey was the first white child the Kikuyu tribe (Kenya’s largest) had ever seen. Leakey learned the language of the Kikuyu before he learned English and was actually inducted as a member of the tribe when he turned 13 years old. As a boy, Leakey loved searching throughout Kenya for birds to observe. One day, Leakey came upon stone arrowheads and tools. This is what made him decide to study human origins.

After earning his degree from Cambridge in England, Leakey returned to Africa because he believed this was where humans originated. This idea was unusual at the time since most scientists believed humans originated in Asia. Leakey and his wife, Mary, who shared his desire to find the origins of humans, made a number of discoveries at Olduvai Gorge in northern Tanzania. The discoveries showed that early humans walked the earth many years earlier than previously thought. One skull, Zinjanthropus, was believed to be 1,750,000 years old. Leakey’s discoveries showed that Africa, and not Asia, had the oldest evidence of human life.

Louis Leakey died in 1972 after almost 50 years of studying the origins of humans. His son, Richard Leakey, followed in his footsteps and founded the Louis Leakey Memorial Institute for African Prehistory in Nairobi, Kenya. Later, his granddaughter Louise also started exploring human origins.



## This Week’s Question

### Should prehistoric cave paintings be open to the public?

Authorities of Lascaux Cave in France noticed that visitors’ breathing was causing mold to form on the cave paintings. The paintings date back to about 15,000-20,000 years ago. If they didn’t do something, the paintings would be ruined. They made a drastic decision; they closed the cave to the public. Now many other caves with paintings are also closed or limited to only a few people a day. At Lascaux Cave, a replica cave was made close to where the real cave is found. Using photographs and painting methods that the earliest humans used, Lascaux Cave was re-created down to the same nooks and crannies of the original. It was made from concrete and painted by present-day artists.

What do you think? Should caves be closed to the public to help preserve them?

# Catalhoyuk

In central Turkey, southeast of the city of Konya, archaeologists are excavating Catalhoyuk, a Neolithic town that was settled 9,000 years ago. Scientists say Catalhoyuk, meaning “forked mound,” is one of the largest settlements found to date. It is estimated that 10,000 people called this area home.

The settlement stretches over an area the size of 50 soccer fields. It was first discovered in the late 1950s. Archaeologists from Turkey, Great Britain, the United States and many other countries are involved in studying the site.

The people that lived at Catalhoyuk built their houses of mud brick. The buildings were packed tightly together and there are no streets. Archaeologists say that to get into the houses, people climbed in through holes on the roof. Beautiful murals (paintings on a wall) have been found inside the mud buildings. Artifacts made from wood, metal and earthenware have also been uncovered.

## World Regions

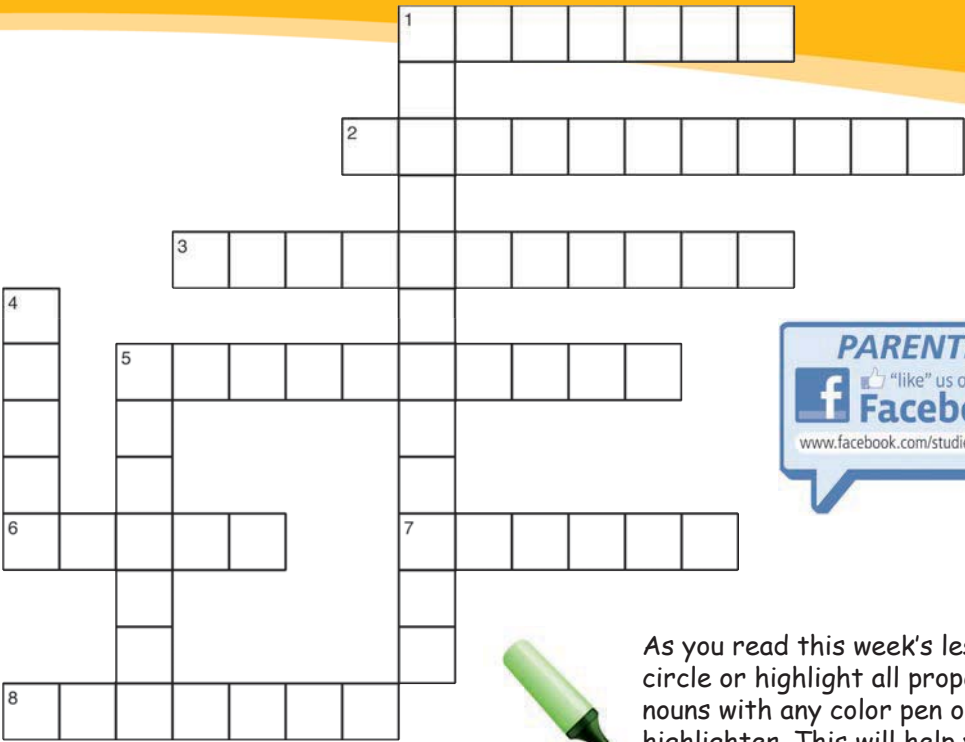


photo by Jason Quinlan

John Swagger has worked to reconstruct what Catalhoyuk may have been like when people lived there.



Name \_\_\_\_\_



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

Across

- 1. a word that describes a person who doesn't have a permanent home
- 2. this word means to tame animals
- 3. word that means before written records
- 5. a Neolithic town in central Turkey
- 6. found on the hand, this was an advantage that humans had over animals
- 7. continent where the oldest evidence of humans have been found
- 8. Ötzi's body had 57 of these.

Down

- 1. new stone age; was a time when scientists say early humans stopped being hunter-gatherers
- 4. stone that was helpful to the earliest humans
- 5. Some of the oldest cave paintings were found in \_\_\_\_\_ Cave in France.

Mapping & Charting

1. In which country is Altamira Cave?

2. On what island would you find Levanzo and Addaura caves? Which country is this island part of?

3. Which cave is found in the northernmost section of France?

4. Which cave is found the furthest south in Spain?

5. Which cave is located between Arcy and Ekain caves?

Write four facts learned about cave paintings from the issue.

Cave Art



HEY KIDS!

Scan this with a smartphone, or go to [StudiesWeekly.com](http://StudiesWeekly.com) to earn points as you learn! Help me upgrade my home and garage!



If you'd like to make any editorial comments about our paper, please write to us at [feedback@studiesweekly.com](mailto:feedback@studiesweekly.com).

In 1879, 8-year-old Maria and her dad, Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola, found the Altamira Cave in Spain. They discovered bones, arrowheads and drawings of 15 large bison, red deer, a boar and a horse. Scientists say Altamira Cave dates back 14,000 years. Because the bright reds, golden yellows and black paints looked so freshly painted, some people thought the cave paintings were fake. Today, Altamira Cave is famous throughout the world for its beautiful cave paintings. Pretend you are Maria going into the cave for the very first time. How did you feel as you climbed into the cave? What feelings did you have as you found the cave paintings? Write a diary entry of that day. Remember to check your writing for spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Let's Write