

5th Grade to 6th Grade Step Up Day Social Studies Assignment

6. Why is domestication an important invention of the early humans? How could animals help early humans?
7. Why were most early settlements near water?
8. When did early humans stop being nomadic?

Use the map below to help answer the following questions:

Cave Art



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9. In which country is Altamira Cave?

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

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

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

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

14. Write four facts learned about cave paintings in these articles.

1.

2.

3.

4.

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!

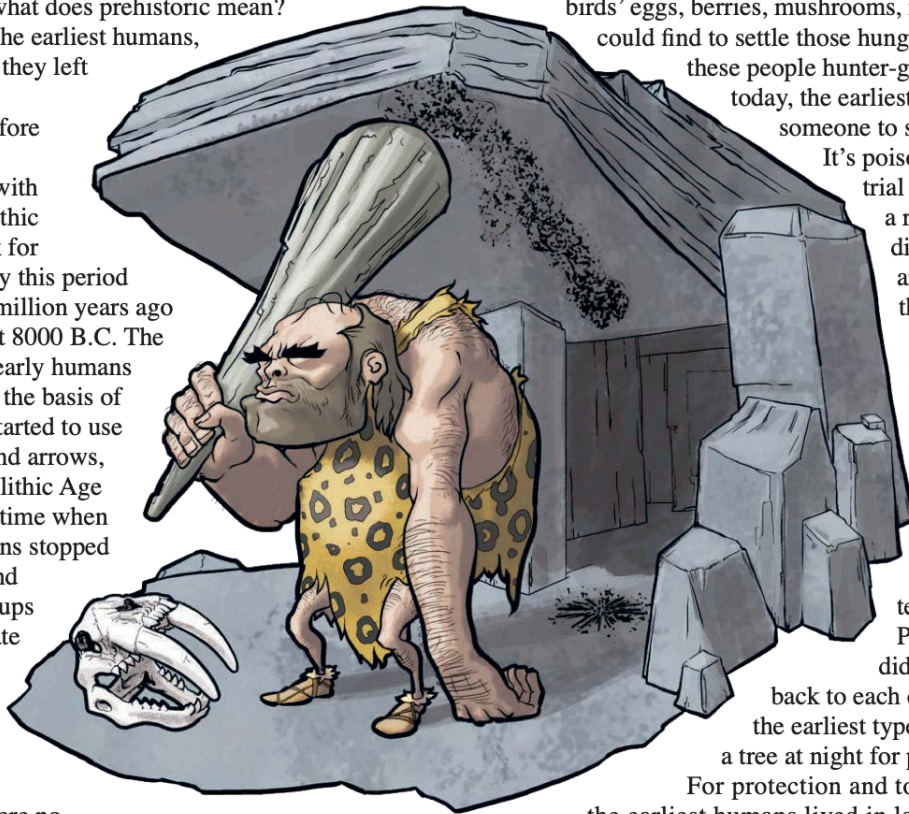
It’s poisonous.” People learned by trial and error. If someone ate a red berry and got sick and died, others would learn and remember to not eat that berry.

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)



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

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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.



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?