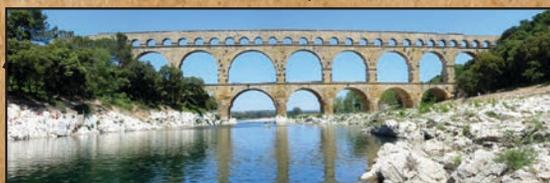
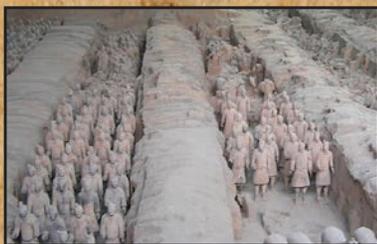
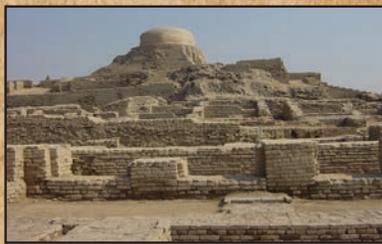


CURIOSITY CHRONICLES



SNAPSHOTS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

2ND EDITION

BY VIVIAN MEYERS, M.A.

CURIOSITY CHRONICLES

SNAPSHOTS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

2ND EDITION

Globally Minded History

by Vivian Meyers, M.A.

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SNAPSHOTS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

2ND EDITION

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INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

This book is intended to serve as a child's first introduction to history and is targeted at elementary to middle school students. It was written with the homeschooling family in mind, but can also be used in a traditional classroom environment. This book can be read at whatever pace suits your learning environment. You can read this book as a stand-alone text to complete your history studies or use our activity guides to create a more in-depth study with vocabulary, map work, expanded reading, hand-on activities, and more. While you can pace this book however you like, the book was originally 36 chapters long so that it could be completed in a traditional 36-week school year by reading one chapter a week. Six chapters have been added to the second edition to expand the global reach of this book, creating a total of 42 chapters. If you still wish to complete the book on a 36-week schedule, we recommend studying the following chapters as a pair of related topics in a single week: chapters 8 and 9, chapters 15 and 16, chapters 20 and 21, chapters 28 and 29, chapters 33 and 34, and chapters 35 and 36.

This book is titled *Snapshots of Ancient History* because my aim in writing it was not to provide a complete and rigorous telling of history (since that is beyond the grasp of the average elementary school child), but to provide quick snapshots of different moments and peoples in history. Events are told in order and a timeline is provided to help keep things in perspective, but ultimately, this book simply hopes to give a child a solid awareness of ancient peoples and cultures which can be built on in future years. Each chapter is color-coded based on the part of the world it covers. There are six main regions in this book with five chapters each. The main sections are Mesopotamia (brown), Egypt (orange), the Americas (green), India (pink), China (red), Greece (blue), and Rome (purple). There are also two chapters each on Oceania (yellow) and sub-Saharan Africa (black), as well as a chapter on ancient Britain (gray).

This book is written as a dialogue between two characters. The dialogue serves to keep the text conversational and accessible for the child. The dialogue also serves to model how to ask historical questions so children can begin formulating their own. The lines of the character Ted are shorter and typically include simpler words. Mona's lines are longer and more complex. Ted's lines were kept simpler on purpose so that a young reader could read those lines while a parent or older sibling reads Mona's lines. Reading along is of course optional and will vary based on a child's reading level and interest. We also offer an audiobook voiced by professional voice actors to make reading even easier.

As a parent and educator myself, I am very aware of the difficulty in selecting the right materials to use in my teaching. As such, I would like to provide context for my work to help you decide if this is the right book for you.

STATEMENT OF BIAS

We've all heard the phrase "everyone has a bias." In writing and choosing a history book, this is especially true. History itself is biased. The problem with history is there is simply too much of it. It is impossible to write a book that includes all the historical facts. A writer must choose which facts to include. This introduces bias. Then there is the problem that historical facts do not speak for themselves. They must be presented in context and interpreted. This is another huge opportunity for bias to enter in. How do you connect the historical facts together? Which interpretive theory do you choose? Whose voices are prioritized? Which events are deemed important? So history, perhaps more than any other subject, is biased. It's unavoidable.

To simplify the textbook selection process, this is my statement of bias. These are the biases I have, the ones that I am consciously aware of, that have guided me in the writing of this book. Of course, I have unconscious biases too, we all do; however, I have made an active effort to identify and edit out the unconscious bias that accidentally slipped into this book.

This book is intended to be secular. It does not present or promote a religious worldview. My presentation of the facts should be in line with current academics. As such, I have chosen to use the BCE/CE dating system, since it is the standard system in many academic fields.

I have sought to make this book open and accessible to people of all faiths or lack thereof. Religion is discussed when relevant to history, but is always presented as belief. I do not deal with which beliefs are true or false in any way. Instead, I focus religious discussions on how religion impacts daily life and historical events.

I have crafted this book to promote a global and inclusive worldview. I firmly believe everyone's history is important and ought to be told. I reject any historical views that involve ranking different cultures or in any way implying certain cultures are "better" or "superior." The second edition expands upon my goal of being global and inclusive by including extra chapters on areas of the world that were not adequately covered in the first edition.

I believe it is important for history books to intentionally include the accomplishments of historically marginalized people, including women and colonized people, because their histories have been persistently excluded by past history books. As such, I have included women in many places in this book and intentionally sought to avoid prescriptive discussions of gender roles. Gender roles are discussed within the different civilizations when relevant, but only as statements of fact, not 'shoulds' and 'should nots.' I have included several chapters on parts of the world that are typically ignored in history texts in order to better represent marginalized peoples. Certain words such as "primitive," "superior," "savage," and "barbarian" are never used descriptively. If they are ever used (such as the word "barbarian" in chapter 27), it is only to describe how a specific group of people thought. Certain words such as "savage" are never used.

I hope that this statement of my bias as an author has helped you get a feel for what this book will be like and its appropriateness in your own teaching.

Vivian Meyers, M.A.

Chapter 1

HISTORY IS COOL

Ted: Hi, I'm Time Talking Ted.

Mona: And I'm Mystery Mulling Mona.

Ted: And we're the founding members of the Curiosity Club!

Mona: I'm the President because I've read all sorts of books about history.

Ted: And I'm the Vice President because. . . I was the second person to join the club. I haven't read nearly as much as Mona, but I love to learn!

Mona: We hope you'll join our club too. You see, we're really curious about how our world got to be the way it is, so we're going on an adventure to find out.

Ted: There's lots of cool and exciting stuff that's happened in the past! And we're going to learn all about it!

Mona: I'll do the research to find out about the past.

Ted: And I'll ask a lot of questions!



Mona: We're not going to learn ALL of history—that would be a little much. So instead, we're going to stop at certain places in history to see what was happening. Think of it as a snapshot of one moment in history. It's not all the details, but it's enough to get a feel for it.

Ted: But if you want to know more, I'll leave some suggestions at the end of each chapter of things you could learn more about.

Mona: You know, Ted, we should probably introduce ourselves a little better.

Ted: And we should probably introduce history too.

Mona: Good idea. I'm Mystery Mulling Mona, and I LOVE mysteries! History is full of mysteries! It's like a big puzzle. You have to put all the pieces together, but sometimes you're missing a piece. I love trying to fit the pieces together and guess what a missing piece is like. I'm a bit of a bookworm too. I just can't help myself! There's so much to learn!

Ted: Mona's all big on mysteries, but not me. I like cold, hard facts. I'm called Time Talking Ted for a reason. I like knowing the dates of when things happened. I like putting things in order. I'm also a pretty big fan of military history. History is made up of wars and fighting. If you know who fought who when, then you know most of history. I like things that are clear. Plus, war is all about logic. Who has the better weapon? How did they position their troops? How did they trick the enemy? Cold, clear, logical—that's what I like.

Mona: Ted! You're missing the best parts of history if you just focus on wars and battles. What about art? Invention? Everyday life? There are so many fascinating things out there!

Ted: Meh. I suppose those things are a little interesting.

Mona: If you only think things other than war are a little interesting, I guess I'll just have to prove you wrong. But first I better introduce what history even is. 'History' is things that have happened in the past.

Ted: So what I ate for dinner yesterday and dinosaurs are all part of history.

Mona: Technically yes, but our study of history is going to be a little more focused than that. We're not studying the history of everything. We're studying the history of humans.

Humans have used a variety of calendars throughout history to keep track of time, some of which are shown below. In this book, we will be using the Gregorian Calendar which was introduced in October 1582 CE. From left to right, these images are an astronomical clock calendar in Prague, Czech Republic built in 1410 CE. Next is a 260-day Maya calendar. Next is a star chart with a geared calendar made in Persia in 1221 CE. The last calendar is a sheet from the Chinese calendar from the 1830s CE.



Ted: Aw, so we're not studying dinosaurs?

Mona: Nope. We're sticking to humans. Human history can be divided into two big categories: prehistory and history. Prehistory is everything that happened to humans before the invention of writing. History begins when humans start writing.

Ted: You really narrowed things down there! No formation of the universe, no dinosaurs, no Pangaea, no cavemen! What's left?

Mona: There's a lot of exciting things that happened after that! But don't worry, we'll be talking about some things from prehistory, like cavemen. After all, there was some pretty interesting stuff that happened in prehistory! But most of what we're going to be exploring happens after the invention of writing, and it's plenty exciting and mysterious!

Ted: I think it's time we introduce the most important part of our club. My timeline!

Mona: I wouldn't say it's the most important part. . .

Ted: Yes, it is! My timeline keeps track of everything that happens in history. My timeline keeps things in order and helps us compare when things were happening in different parts of the world. My timeline is pretty fantastic.

Mona: Are you going to explain how to use it?

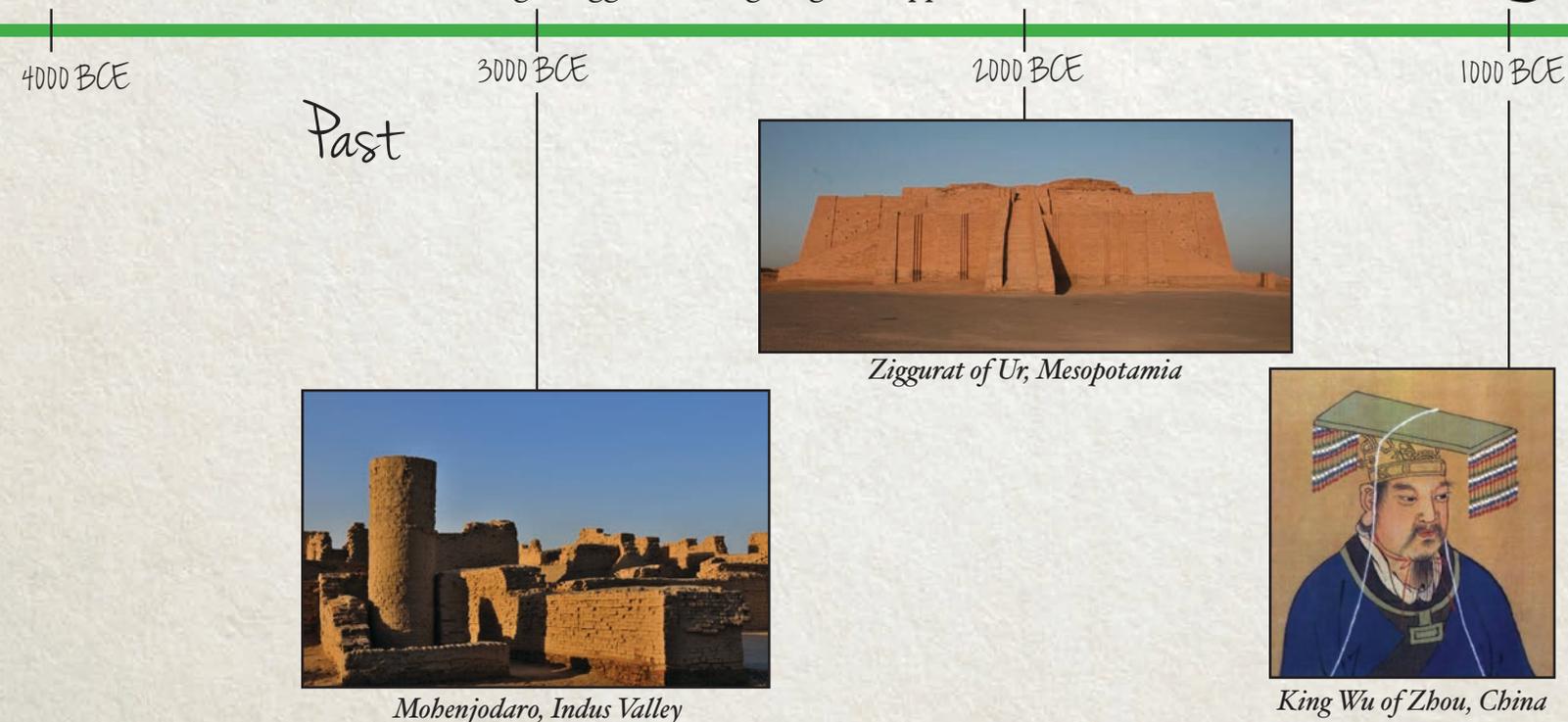
Ted: Sure. We live on the right end of my timeline, at the beginning of the 2000s CE. That means we live about 2,000 years after our calendar system started counting.

Mona: What does the 'CE' mean?



The green section is BCE dates.

These dates get bigger the longer ago it happened.



Ted: CE stands for Common Era. That's the name for the era we live in. It can also be called AD. AD stands for anno domini, which means 'the year of our Lord' in Latin. Our calendar system was created by Christians, so they started counting years from when they believed Jesus Christ was born. CE and AD mean the same thing.

Mona: CE dates count forward, so the bigger the number the closer it is to today.

Ted: Yep. 1970 CE is closer to today than 154 CE.

Mona: But what about the other side of your timeline?

Ted: Things that happened before 1 CE are labeled BCE, which means 'before common era.' In the Christian system these dates are labeled BC, which stands for 'before Christ.'

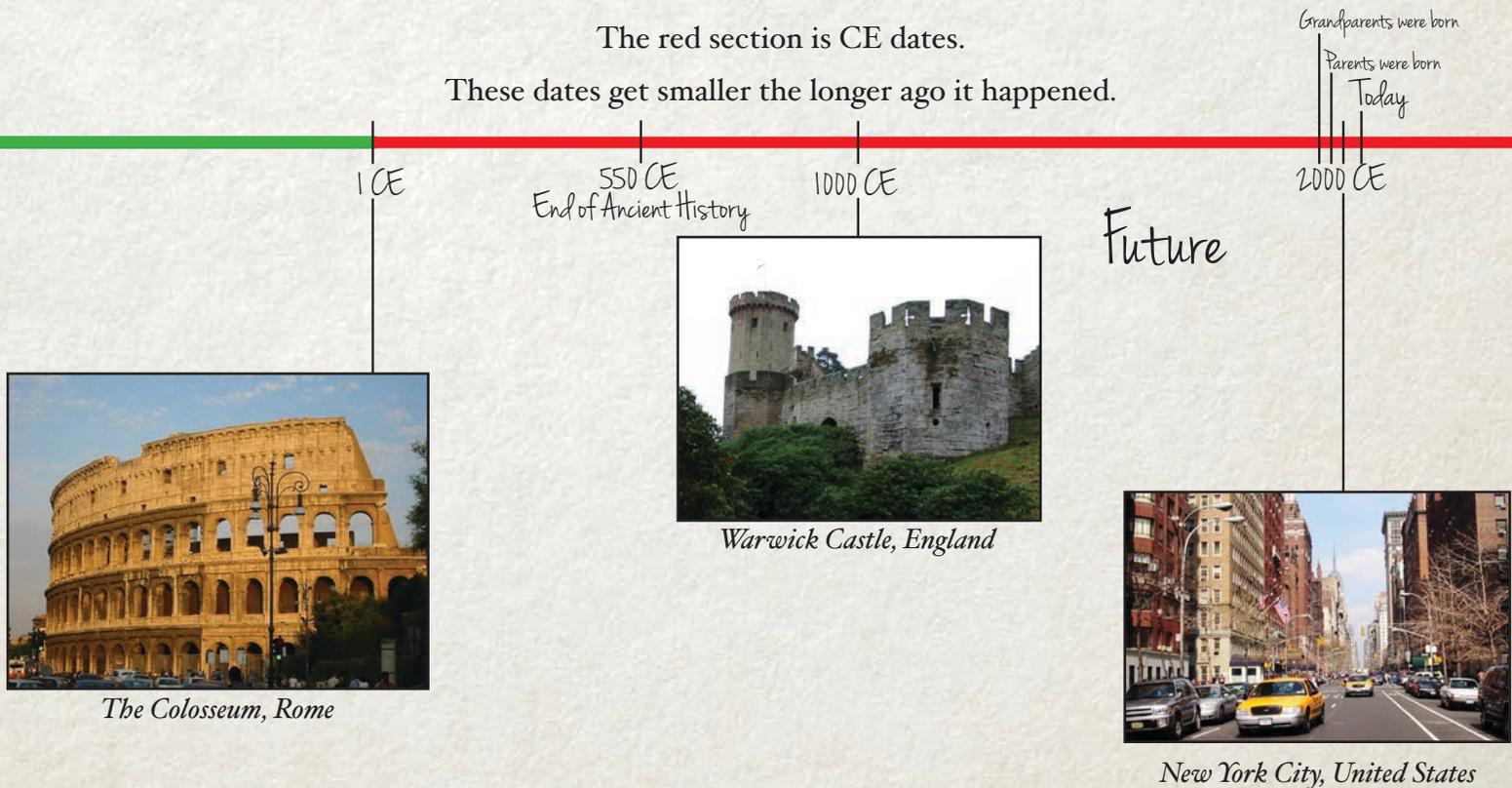
Mona: Why does the number get bigger the farther away they get from the CE side of the timeline?

Ted: BCE dates count down to the Common Era. So 10 BCE was just ten years before the Common Era, and 3150 BCE is 3,150 years before the Common Era.

Mona: So the bigger the BCE number, the longer ago it happened?

Ted: Yep! You're getting the hang of my timeline, Mona!

Mona: Well, if we understand what history is and how your timeline works, I think we're ready to set off on our adventure through history. First stop, early humans!



Chapter 2

HUMANS START HUNTING AND GATHERING

Ted: Where does the story of history begin?

Mona: We're exploring the history of humans, so that means we're starting in Africa!

Ted: How far back do I need to go on my timeline?

Mona: Really far back! Modern humans emerged in Africa between 300,000 and 200,000 years ago.

Ted: I don't think I can fit all that on my timeline. . .

Mona: That's ok! We don't need it all on the timeline because, until around 10,000 BCE, humans were all doing roughly the same thing. They were hunters and gatherers.

Ted: What does that mean?

Mona: It means life was really different back then! Humans didn't have a store to buy food. They didn't have any of the conveniences we have, like warm homes, comfortable clothes, books, or cars. They had to do everything from scratch, including finding food. If they wanted meat, they had to hunt for it. But hunting rarely provided enough food, so they also gathered seeds, nuts, vegetables, fruits, berries, eggs, and so on.

Ted: How did humans go about hunting? What kind of tools did they have?

Mona: They definitely didn't have all the fancy tools we have today! The best technology humans had was stone. That's why this period is sometimes called the Stone Age.

Ted: Huh, so they'd throw stones at animals to hunt?

Mona: Sometimes, like with a slingshot. But that wasn't all. Humans made tools by using a stone to sharpen or shape other stones. Those stones could be used to make spears, axes, arrows, grinding stones, and more. Humans also used bone and wood to make tools. As time passed,

Collection of stone tools uncovered in Greece from the Neolithic period, which was the last phase of the Stone Age.





Woolly mammoths were a large mammal hunted by prehistoric humans.

humans started developing even more tools like fishing nets woven from plants. But humans didn't rely just on tools to hunt! They also used a lot of very smart tactics!

Ted: Ah, humans have always been great at coming up with plans!

Mona: It depended on the area and the animal what plans humans came up with. Sometimes, they set traps.

We have cave paintings showing humans herding woolly mammoths off a cliff. Sometimes, they would herd them into a small area to make them easier to capture. Sometimes, they would chase an animal until it was too tired to keep running.

Ted: What types of animals were early humans hunting?

Mona: That varied based on what part of the world they were in. Depending on what was around, humans hunted large animals like wildebeests, antelope, woolly mammoths, horses, moose, and elk. Those big animals were a lot harder to hunt but also had way more meat. Humans hunted smaller animals like rabbits, too.

Ted: Who was responsible for hunting?

Mona: In most hunter-gatherer societies, both men and women were involved in hunting. But they weren't alone! In many societies, humans were also helped by dogs. Humans and dogs have been working side-by-side for tens of thousands of years.

Replica of an early human dwelling made out of mammoth bones and bides found in the Lake Bikal region of Siberia. This type of dwelling was also built in Western Eurasia. This replica was part of an exhibit on early humans in Japan in 2013.

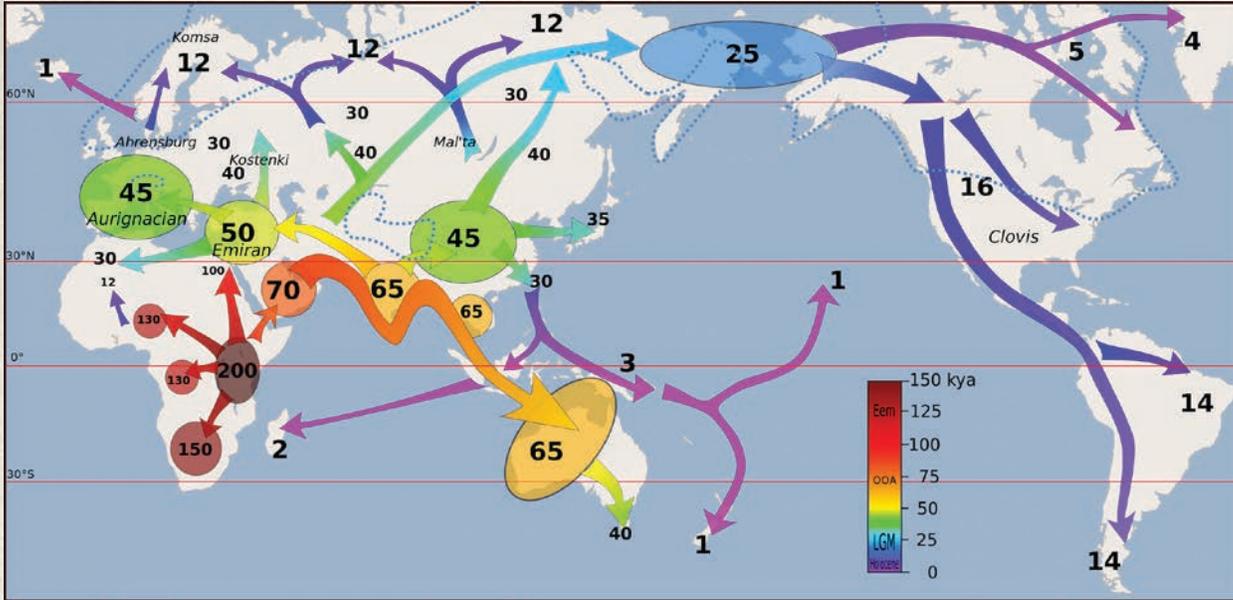


Ted: Awesome! I love doggos! So, what part of the world were humans living in? You said they started in Africa. Where did humans end up?

Mona: Almost everywhere! Humans lived in family groups with a few dozen people. Tribes weren't very big because too many people could be hard to care for. Early humans were nomads. That means they didn't live in one spot. They moved around as they looked for food. As humans moved about, they spread far and wide! Humans started leaving Africa around 70,000 to 50,000 years ago. Humans fanned out across the Middle East, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. It took tens of thousands of years, but aside from Antarctica and a few islands, humans reached every nook and cranny of the world.

Ted: That's impressive! Why did humans move around so much?

Mona: Lots of reasons, but climate change was a big one. Humans began spreading across the world during the last ice age.



Map showing approximate dates of human migration across the globe. Only the first wave of migration to an area is shown. Early waves that didn't lead to a settled population or migration routes that are still being investigated are not shown. The dotted blue lines show the approximate locations of glaciers during the Last Glacial Maximum.

Ted: What's an ice age?

Mona: An ice age is also called a glacial period. During an ice age, the earth's temperature drops for a loooong time, and lots of glaciers form.

Ted: A glacier is a giant piece of ice, right? Like mountain-sized ice?

Mona: Yep! An ice age changes what plants grow, where animals live, what the weather is like, and more. Ice ages also change the sea level. All those glaciers contain a lot of water, so the oceans become smaller. Smaller oceans mean more land is exposed. That means more places to walk, new rivers to fish in, and a totally different-looking map. The last ice age ended around 11,000 years ago. As the ice age ended, the climate and shape of the earth changed a lot. Humans moved around because of those changes.

Ted: Makes sense. What else were humans up to?

Mona: They made art! Some of the oldest human creations that have been discovered are artistic. Early humans made cave paintings, jewelry, and statues to express themselves and show their creativity. They also probably decorated their skin and clothes and made musical instruments. Hunting and gathering didn't take all day. Once humans had enough food for the day, they could relax or make art.

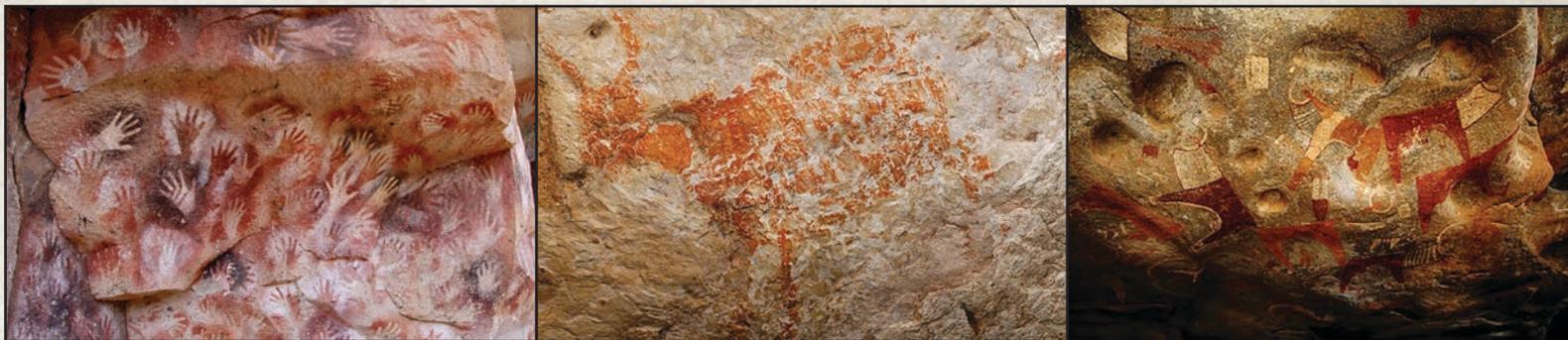


These objects are some of the artistic objects early humans created. Far left, bone flute discovered in Europe that is approximately 35,000 years old. Left, the Venus of Brassempouy. This is an ivory sculpture of a woman found in France that is approximately 25,000 years old.

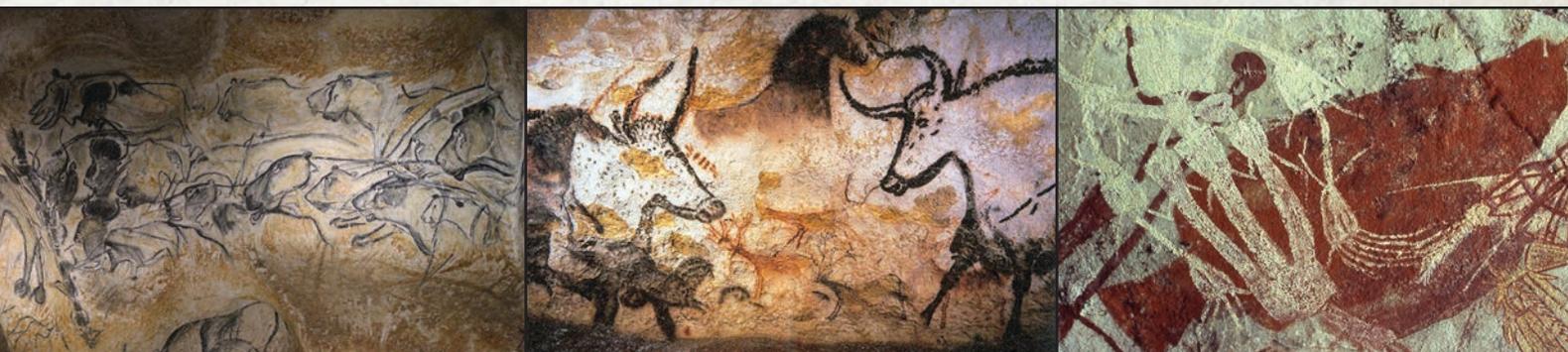


300,000 BCE
Modern Humans begin to emerge in Africa

200,000 BCE



Left, hand-shaped paintings from Cueva de las Manos in Argentina. These paintings were made between 7,300 BCE and 700 CE. Middle, a cave painting of a bull-shaped animal found in Lubang Jeriji Saléh in Borneo, Indonesia. This painting is approximately 40,000 years old and is one of the oldest figure paintings in the world. Right, ceiling of a cave in Laas Geel in Somalia showing long-horn cattle. This was painted between 3,500 and 2,500 BCE.



Left, a reproduction of the Gallery of the Lions found in Chauvet Cave in France. The cave was used between 37,000 and 28,000 years ago. The original cave is closed to the public to preserve it, but a reproduction was built nearby. Middle, horse and deer painting in Lascaux Cave in France. This painting is approximately 17,000 years old. Right, Jabiru Dreaming found at Kakadu National Park, Australia. This painting was made of ochre, which cannot be accurately dated. The oldest cave painting in the region that has been dated is 17,300 years old.

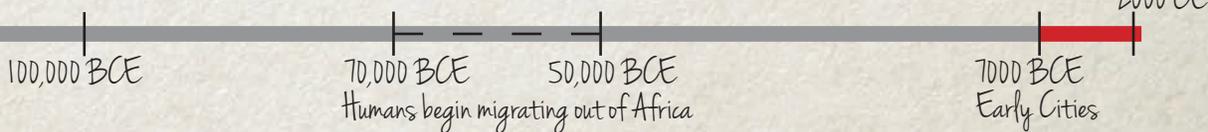
Ted: Wow! Those cave paintings are beautiful!

Mona: Aren't they so pretty? There are still oodles of mysteries about early humans, but what we do know shows humans have always been impressive! One of the most amazing things about human history is how humans always adapt to their environment. If they need something to survive, humans almost always find a way to invent it. But humans don't usually change their actions if life is comfortable and good. So all of this stuff we talked about isn't just true of early humans. There are still nomadic people on the earth today. They live in isolated locations where there's always been enough food to survive. But other humans settled in places where there wasn't enough food. Rather than move away to find food, they came up with a whole new plan. Our next snapshot will be about when humans invented a whole new way to get food.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Try researching the following topics:

- Modern hunter gatherer societies
- The Caves of Lascaux
- Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa
- Humans during the last ice age
- Early human migration patterns



Chapter 3

MESOPOTAMIA STARTS FARMING

Ted: So all humans used to be nomads moving from place to place looking for food. But something obviously changed because we're not still doing that.

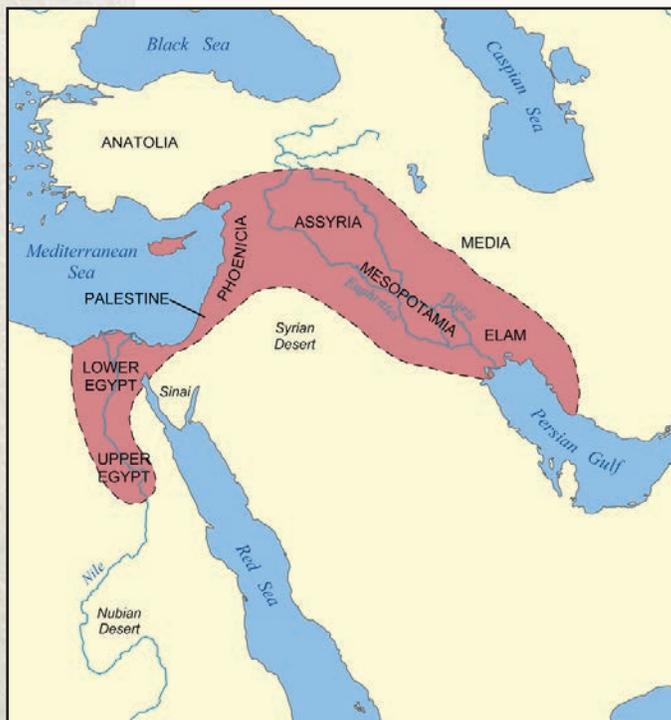
Mona: You're right, Ted. For our next snapshot we're going to find out what changed. Today we're going to be between 7,000 and 5,000 BCE on your timeline.

Ted: That's still a big range of time, but not nearly as big as last time!

Mona: Let's start by looking at our map.

Ted: Okidoki, I've got it right here.

Mona: We're going to start in this area right here where Europe, Asia, and Africa all meet. Today we call this area the Middle East. The Middle East is the first place in the world that humans developed agriculture.



Ted: Agriculture? I'm not sure what that is, but it doesn't sound good.

Mona: Don't be silly, Ted. Agriculture is probably the most important invention in human history. Agriculture is just a big word that means farming. People learned how to plant seeds and grow them and then harvest them and eat them. Agriculture is why you have food in your kitchen right now.

Ted: Well, I'm a fan of anything that makes food. So how did humans invent agriculture?

Mona: When humans first started living in the Middle East, it was a really nice place to live, but then, drought happened.

Map of the Fertile Crescent, shown in red, including Mesopotamia and Egypt.

The excavated walls of the city of Jericho. Jericho was one of the earliest human cities. It was founded around 10,000 BCE. The walls of Jericho are possibly the oldest in the world.



Ted: Drought, as in no rain?

Mona: Yep. People had gotten really comfortable in the Middle East. They'd even started forming villages and staying in one place because food was easy to find. Until it wasn't. Then they had a problem.

Ted: But humans are great at finding an answer to problems.

Mona: And these humans rose to the occasion. It looks like the humans were starting to run out of food, so one day, a human had the idea 'what if, instead of eating this seed, I plant it? Then it might grow more seeds I can eat later!' And with that simple idea, agriculture was born.

Ted: So just like that their problem was solved!

Mona: Well, it wasn't 'just like that.' Figuring out which seeds to plant, where to plant them, how to water them, and how to help them grow took a lot of figuring out. Agriculture was not an overnight success! It wasn't even an over the century success. It took a few thousand years before humans really knew what they were doing.

Ted: But when they did get there, they had more food.

Mona: That's right. The beauty of agriculture is one person can grow more food than he or she can eat. That means not everyone has to worry about food all day long. That means people could start to have other jobs.

Ted: Whoa! I feel like something huge just happened.

Mona: You're right. The first two things we need to form a civilization just happened: a surplus of food and a division of labor.

Left, pottery jar from between 4700 and 4200 BCE. On display at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Middle, pottery bowl from around 5000 BCE. On display at the Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Right, shallow pottery bowl from between 5400 and 4700 BCE. On display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.



Section of a cylinder seal from 3100 BCE showing Sumerian farmers. On display at the Louvre, Paris.

Ted: That was a lot of big words all at once Mona. A civilization is an organized society, right?

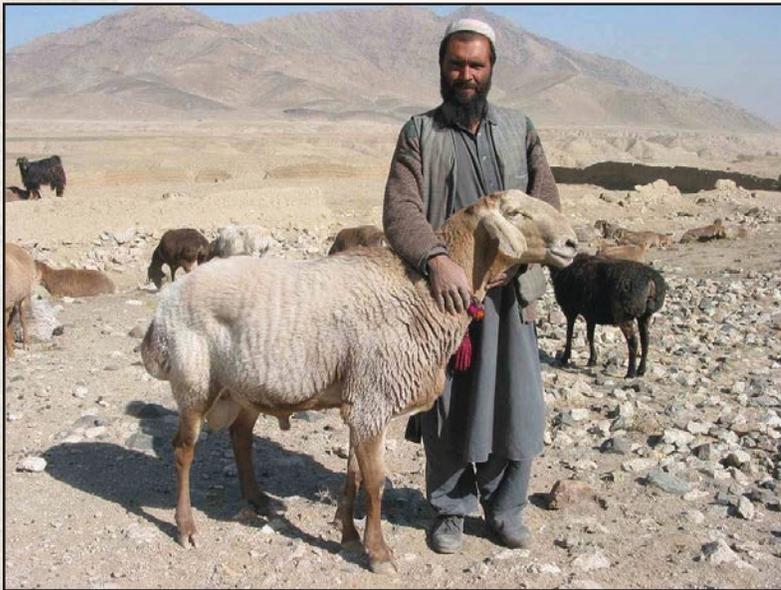
Mona: Yeah, it's considered the most advanced form of society. We live in a civilization today. It's called Western Civilization. And we're going to study a lot of other civilizations, like Egyptian Civilization and Chinese Civilization.

Ted: Ok, and a surplus of food means a civilization has extra food.

Mona: Yes, and a division of labor means there's more than one type of job in a civilization. For example, some people would be farmers, and other people would be fishermen, and others would make pottery.

Ted: Hey, wait a minute! That reminds me, the invention of farming is great and all, but how did humans get meat to eat? Did they just live off plants?

Mona: Nope. At the same time humans were developing farming, they also figured something else out: herding. Some animals can be easily domesticated, which means they can be tamed to live with humans. Horses, cows, sheep, chickens, goats, and pigs are all animals that can be domesticated. Not all animals can be domesticated. Animals like lions and bears are better left in the wild. But humans learned if they domesticated an animal, like a cow, then they didn't have to go hunting to get food. They had a nice meaty meal right next to them.



Ted: Plus a lot of those animals have other things humans could use, like wool, eggs, and milk.

Mona: Exactly. So while some humans were focusing on planting and watering seeds in their fields, others were focusing on caring for their animals. If they worked together, everyone could have enough food.

Modern herder living in Afghanistan.



Ted: If humans were planting seeds, that means they couldn't move around like nomads anymore.

Mona: The invention of agriculture also led to humans forming villages. The area where many humans were first successful at farming and making villages is between two rivers called the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The kind of curved shape of land between them is called the Fertile Crescent. It's also called Mesopotamia, which means land between the rivers—and that's where human civilization began.

Ted: Why there? Why not somewhere else?

Mona: The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are wild, unpredictable rivers. Each spring, when the snow melts in the mountains, the Tigris and Euphrates flood.

Ted: That doesn't sound like a good thing.

Mona: But both those rivers are rich in silt. Silt is rocky soil with lots of minerals in it. Silt is really good for growing food. When these rivers flooded, they would leave silt behind, so humans who planted their seeds near these rivers grew better crops.

Ted: So even though flooding is dangerous, it was also helpful.

Mona: These early farmers had to learn how to control the rivers by building dirt walls and ditches so the water would reach their crops, but not wash them away. This is called irrigation.

Ted: Farmers all over the world still use irrigation today.

Mona: That's right. The rivers were unpredictable, so life as an early human farmer was very difficult. You never knew if a new year would bring helpful flooding, too much flooding, or not enough flooding. Next time we'll look at another group of people who lived next to another river that flooded each year: the Egyptians.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Try researching the following topics:

- The early history of the city of Jericho
- History of irrigation
- First settlements in the Fertile Crescent
- History of herding
- Semi-nomadic herding cultures

5000 BCE

More Organized Agriculture

4000 BCE