Big Geography and the Peopling of the Earth

Key Concept 1.1
Summary

Throughout the Paleolithic era, humans developed sophisticated technologies and adapted to different geographical environments as they migrated from Africa to Eurasia, Australasia, and the Americas.
Who were the first humans?

**Hominids**
Humans and other creatures that walk upright on two feet.

**Australopithecus** - The first Hominids
They are thought to have emerged in East Africa in the Great Rift Valley between 3-4 million years ago.

**Homo habilis** - meaning handy human was a phase between Australopithecus and Homo Erectus that emerged between 2.5-1.6 million years ago.

**Lucy** - discovered in 1974; bipedal creature that lived in eastern Africa more than 3 million years ago (hybrid between modern humans and apes)
Who were the first humans?

**Homo Erectus**

Second stage in early human development, Homo erectus, which means upright human being, emerged about 1.8 million years ago.

These were the first hominids to leave Africa and move into Europe and Asia.

They had bigger brains and used more complex tools. They use fire and lived in small bands suggesting higher intelligence and language skills.
Who were the first humans?

**Homo Sapiens**

About 250,000 years ago *Homo sapiens* emerged.

*Homo Sapiens* means “Wise Person” or “Consciously Thinking Man”.

Large, well-developed brain; more sophisticated tools

This group split into two distinct groups:

- Neanderthals
- Homo Sapiens Sapiens
Who were the first humans?

**Neanderthals**

Discovered in the Neander Valley in Germany. Thought to have lived between 100,000 and 30,000 years ago; they lived in Europe and Turkey.

They used stone tools, and buried their dead. It is thought they had some primitive religious beliefs.

It was originally thought that they were killed off by *homo sapiens sapiens*, but new evidence has recently emerged that shows that there was some genetic mixing between the two groups.
Who were the first humans?

**Homo Sapien Sapiens**
- Modern Human Beings
- Ability to adapt to different environmental settings led to migration to all continents.
  - Believed to have appeared in Africa between 150,000-200,000 years ago
  - Began to migrate outside of Africa 100,000 years ago.
  - Believed by many to have replaced the Neanderthals by 30,000 B.C.E.
  - By 10,000 B.C.E. Homo Sapiens Sapiens could be found throughout the world due to migration.
Archeological Evidence

ARCHAEOLOGY
The study of past societies through an analysis of what people have left behind.

ANTHROPOLOGY
The study of human life and culture

FOSSILS
The remains of ancient plants and animals.

By studying fossils archaeologists and anthropologists can learn about what people ate, what animals they had around, and their way of life.
PALEOLITHIC TOOLS

LOWER PALEOLITHIC

Chopper: pebble, roughly worked on one side. Used for digging and skinning.

Biface: hand axe knapped on both sides. Used for cutting.

MIDDLE PALEOLITHIC

Knife: utensil knapped on one side. Used for cutting or as a weapon.

Scraper: used for cleaning animal hides and sharpening knives.

UPPER PALEOLITHIC

Blade: finely knapped. Used as spear heads.

Harpoon: used for fishing.

Spear thrower: used to throw javelins.

Javelin: weapon for throwing. Similar to a small spear.

Needle: made of bone and used for sewing.

Perforator: used for making holes in hides.
From cave paintings it is apparent that men hunted while women supplemented their diets by collecting seeds and fruits.
The first pottery would have been used for cooking and consuming foods. Believed to have first appeared in East Asia.
Little is known about the significance of Paleolithic jewelry. Archeologists believe it could have been sewn into clothing or used as bracelets. It also reflects an aptitude for creativity among humans.
Ancient buildings and monuments suggest elaborate burial practices which reflects thinking about the nature of human existence and the world around them (belief in an afterlife or honoring their dead?)
Summary of the Paleolithic Era

• “Paleo” means old “Lithic” means stone
• Paleolithic= Old Stone Age. This era was called the stone age because early man used stone to make his tools and weapons.
• Paleolithic man lived in groups called clans.
• These clans got their food by Hunting and Gathering
• Once the food supply ran out they would move to a different area.
• Because they moved from place to place they were Nomadic.
Summary of the Paleolithic Era

- Gathering was a more reliable source of food and so in Paleolithic society it is thought that it may have been *Matriarchal*, or female dominated.

- Women were often seen at the time as symbols of life and fertility. Many ancient religions were centered around the worship of the earth and the woman was often representative of the earth and life because of the fact that women gave birth.
Summary of the Paleolithic Era

• Early ideas about religion are often called *sympathetic magic*.
• It is thought that early man often drew, or made representations of what he/she wanted to happen. Fertility statues for having many children, paintings of successful hunts etc.
Summary of the Paleolithic Era

Essential Knowledge
- Wandered from place to place in search of food and shelter
- Invented the first tools and weapons including simple stone tools.
- Lived in groups called clans of about 20-30 people, used caves for shelter.
- Learned to make and control fire to keep warm and cook their food.
- Developed oral, or spoken language
- Made cave art and statues.
- The role of men was to do the hunting
- The role of women was gathering and caring for children