Unit 1 Study of the History/Early Humans

Studying History & Stone Age

**Studying History – Section 1**

History & historian, culture, archaeology & archaeologist, fossil, artifacts, primary source, secondary source

**Section 1 Quiz: August 1**

The First People – Section 2

prehistory, hominid, ancestors, tool, Paleolithic Era, society, hunter-gatherers

**Section 2 Quiz: August 5**

Early Human Migration- Section 3

migrate, ice ages, land bridge, Mesolithic Era

Beginnings of Agriculture – Section 4

Neolithic Era, domestication, agriculture, Megaliths

**Section 3 & 4 Quiz: August 12**

**Notebook Check** – Students will be given 2 days of notice prior to the check

**Unit Test: August 17** – Students will be given a review a week prior to the test – please see my teacher page for questions, answers, and the DBQ’s.
Notes from Wednesday, July 27, 2016

The Study of the Past

- **History** is the *study of the past*. **Historians** are *people who study history*. Historians want to know how people lived and why they did the things they did. They try to learn about the problems people faced and how they found solutions. They are interested in how people lived their daily lives. They study the past to understand people’s culture. **Culture** is the *knowledge, beliefs, customs, and values of a group of people*.

- The *study of the past based on what people left behind* is called **archaeology** (ahr-kee-AH-luh-jee). **Archaeologists** explore places where people once lived, worked, or fought. They examine the things that people left in these places to learn what they can tell about the past.

Notes from Thursday, July 28, 2016

Using Clues

- We must rely on a variety of sources to learn history. For information on the very first humans, we have fossil remains. A **fossil** is *a part or imprint of something that was once alive*. Bones and footprints preserved in rock are examples of fossils.

- As human beings learned to make things, by accident they also created more sources of information for us. They made what we call **artifacts**, *objects created by and used by humans*. **Artifacts** include coins, arrowheads, tools, toys, and pottery. Archaeologists examine artifacts and the places where the artifacts were found to learn about the past.

Sources of Information

- About 5,000 years ago, people invented **writing**. They wrote laws, poems, speeches, battle plans, letters, contracts, and many other things. In these written sources, historians have found countless clues about how people lived. In addition, people have recorded their messages in many ways over the centuries. Historians have studied writing carved into stone pillars, stamped onto clay tablets, scribbled on turtle shells, typed with typewriters, and sent by computer.

- Historical sources are of two types. A **primary source** is *an account of an event created by someone who took part in or witnessed the event*. **Treaties, letters, diaries, laws, court documents, and royal commands** are all primary sources. An audio or video recording of an event is also a primary source.

- A **secondary source** is *information gathered by someone who did not take part in or witness an event*. Examples include history textbooks, journal articles, and encyclopedias. The textbook you are reading right now is a secondary source. The historians who wrote it did not take part in the events described. Instead, they gathered information about these events from different sources.

Source of Change

- Writers of secondary sources don’t always agree about the past. Historians form different **opinions** about the primary sources they study. As a result, historians may not interpret past events in the same way.

- For example, one writer may say that a king was a brilliant military leader. Another may say that the king’s army only won their battles because they had better weapons than their enemies did.
SCIENTISTS STUDY REMAINS

• Although humans have lived on the earth for more than a million years, writing was not invented until about 5,000 years ago. Historians call the time before there was writing prehistory. To study prehistory, historians rely on the work of archaeologists and anthropologists, people who study human culture.
• Archaeologists have found old bones that appear to belong to hominids, early ancestors of humans. Discoveries of ancient bones give us information about early humans and their ancestors, relatives who lived in the past, but not all scientists agree on the meaning of these discoveries.

HOMINIDS AND EARLY HUMANS

• As time passed hominids became more like modern humans. Many scientists think that the first modern humans appeared in Africa about 200,000 years ago. Scientists call these early humans homo sapiens, or “wise man.” Every person alive today belongs to this group.

Stone Age Tools

• The first humans and their ancestors lived during a long period of time called the Stone Age. To help in their studies, archaeologists divide the Stone Age into three periods based on the kinds of tools used at the time.
• To archaeologists, a tool is any handheld object that has been modified to help a person accomplish a task.
• The first part of the Stone Age is called the Paleolithic Era, or Old Stone Age. It lasted until 10,000 years ago. During this time people used stone tools.

First Tools & Later Tools

• Scientists think that these first tools were mostly used to process food. Stone tools were probably used to cut, chop, and scrape roots, bones, or meat. Tools like these were called choppers.
• Over time people learned to make better tools. Later, people learned how to attach wooden handles to sharp stones (made of flint) to make hand axes and spears. Because a spear could be thrown, hunters no longer had to stand close to animals they were hunting.

HUNTER-GATHERER SOCIETIES

• Anthropologists believe that early humans lived in small groups of hunter-gatherers, or people who hunt animals and gather wild plants, seeds, fruit, and nuts to survive.
• In these societies, or a community of people who share a common culture, men hunted and women collected plants to eat and took care of children.
• These societies developed cultures with language, religion, and art. Language developed as a means of communicating and of resolving issues like how to distribute food. Little is known about the religious beliefs of early people but archaeologists have found graves that included food and artifacts might prove it existed. Scientists still aren’t sure why people made art (carved figures & cave paints) but perhaps it was used to teach people how to hunt, or maybe they had religious meanings.
Notes from Monday, August 8, 2016

PEOPLE MOVE OUT OF AFRICA

• About **1.6 million years ago**, many places around the world began to experience **ice ages**, or **long periods of freezing weather**. In response to these changes, many hominids and early humans **migrated**, or **move**, to **new places**, from **Africa** to **Asia** and eventually spread to **India**, **China**, **Southeast Asia**, and **Europe**. The ice ages ended **about 10,000 years ago**.

• During the ice ages, huge sheets of ice covered much of the earth’s land. These ice sheets were formed from ocean water, leaving ocean levels lower than they are now. Many areas that are now under water were dry land then. Scientists think that in some places the ocean level dropped and exposed **land bridges** between continents. These **land bridges**, a **strip of land connecting two continents**, allowed **Stone Age people** to migrate around the world. **Early humans probably came to North America across a land bridge from northern Asia, and spread throughout North America and to South America.** By **9000 BC**, humans lived on all continents except **Antarctica**.

![Image of Early Human Migration]

PEOPLE ADAPT TO NEW ENVIRONMENTS

• Early people had to learn to **adapt** to new environments. The places to which they migrated were often much **colder** than the places they left, and often had strange plants and animals.

• To keep warm, they **learned to sew animal skins together to make clothing**. At first they took shelter in caves. When they moved to areas with no caves, they built their own shelters. **The first human-made shelters were called pit houses.** They were pits in the ground with roofs of branches and leaves. Later, people learned to build more permanent structures with wood, stone, clay, or other materials, even bones from large animals such as mammoths. They covered frames with animal hides to form solid roofs and walls.

• People also began to make new types of tools which were smaller and more complex than tools from the **Paleolithic Era**. They defined the **Mesolithic Era**, or the **Middle Stone Age**, which **began more than 10,000 years ago and lasted to about 5,000 years ago in some places**. **During the Middle Stone Age**, people found new uses for bone and stone tools (included hooks & spears for fishing, bows & arrows for hunting).
THE FIRST FARMERS

• A warming trend brought an end to the ice ages, and new plants began to grow in some areas. As early as 10,000 years ago, in Egypt and Southwest Asia, people came to depend on wild barley and wheat for food. People soon learned that they could plant seeds to grow their own crops. This shift from food gathering to food producing defined the Neolithic Era, or New Stone age.
• This domestication of plants led to the development of agriculture, or farming. For the first time, people could produce their own food. This development changed human society forever. The process of changing plants or animals to make them more useful to humans is called domestication. The first farmers also learned to domesticate animals. Instead of following wild herds, they could now keep sheep and goats for milk, food, and wool. People could also use large animals like cattle to carry loads or to pull large tools used in farming. Domestication greatly improved people’s chances of surviving. With survival more certain, people could focus on activities other than finding food.
• During this time, people also learned to polish stones to make specialized tools like saws and drills. People also learned how to make fire. Before learning that skill, people could use only fire that had been started by natural causes, such as lightning.

FARMING CHANGES SOCIETIES

• People began to build permanent settlements. As they started raising crops and animals, they needed to stay in one place. People also began to make clothing from plant fibers and wool as well as from animal skins. As these early farmers learned to control their own food production and to make better shelters and clothing, populations grew. In some areas farming communities developed into towns.
• Some groups gathered to perform religious ceremonies around huge stone monuments called megaliths. These people probably believed in gods and goddesses associated with the four elements—air, water, fire, and earth—or with animals. Some scholars believe that prehistoric people also prayed to their ancestors. Some societies today still hold these beliefs.