The Study of World History

Key Terms and People

historiography the study and writing of history

civilization a culture with advanced cities, specialized workers, complex institutions, record keeping, and advanced technology

artifacts remains, such as tools, jewelry, and other human-made objects

hominid human or other creature that walks upright

Before You Read

In this lesson, you will read about how and why we study history.

As You Read

Use a diagram to organize the lesson's main ideas and details.

GEOGRAPHY

***How* does geography affect how a civilization develops?**

The people who study history are also the people who write about history. They piece together the information they find in order to understand people from the past. Their field of study is called **historiography**.

Social scientists also use geography to study history. The book *Guns, Germs, and Steel* looks at how geography helped and hurt **civilizations** in the past. Jared Diamond, the book's author, explained the three factors that helped Eurasian civilizations succeed: good temperatures and locations for agriculture, resistance to certain deadly germs, and the ability to develop technology.

Where a group of people settle can affect how, when, and in what way they develop. The island nation of Japan was very isolated from the West before the mid-1800s. By the early 1900s, Japanese people were trading with the West and the country was considered a world power. Great Britain, also an island nation, developed much earlier. Britain was part of the Roman Empire. It later joined other European countries to start colonies around the world. The British had to develop a strong navy in order to protect its own empire around the globe.

1. Why did Japan develop later than Great Britain?

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ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

What is the importance of archaeology?

Archaeologists are important in historiography because they study **artifacts**. These human-made objects help historians understand how people from the past lived and developed. Artifacts also explain how the people were affected by their environment.

Archaeologists often work together with scientists from other areas—such as linguistics, genetics, and physics—to better understand what they find. Scientists of different fields use different tools and have different perspectives. The scientists will also criticize other scientists' discoveries and how each others' ideas are interpreted.

2. Why is it good for archaeologists to work with other scientists?

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FLEXIBLE HISTORY

Why is history being written and rewritten?

What is in history books today might change tomorrow. Historians understand the past using the artifacts and information available. They also might have certain feelings, or biases, based on where they live, when they were alive, what they were taught in school, and their personal opinions toward the information.

History is constantly being written and rewritten. When a new discovery is made, historians review and update their theories.

Imagine archaeologists who find artifacts with strange writing on it. Over time historians and linguists learn more about the language and can understand what the writing means. This helps them understand the civilization that used the artifact. This was the case with understanding the Mayan civilization.

Another example is a discovery made in Tanzania, Africa. In 1960 scientists found a humanlike fossil. This human walked on two feet like humans today do. Humans or creatures that walk upright are called **hominids**. The scientists used the fossil to explain the tools early humans made to survive. Hominid fossils have been found around the world since then. Each time, scientists learn more about early humans and update their theories.

3. What did hominid fossils help scientists explain?

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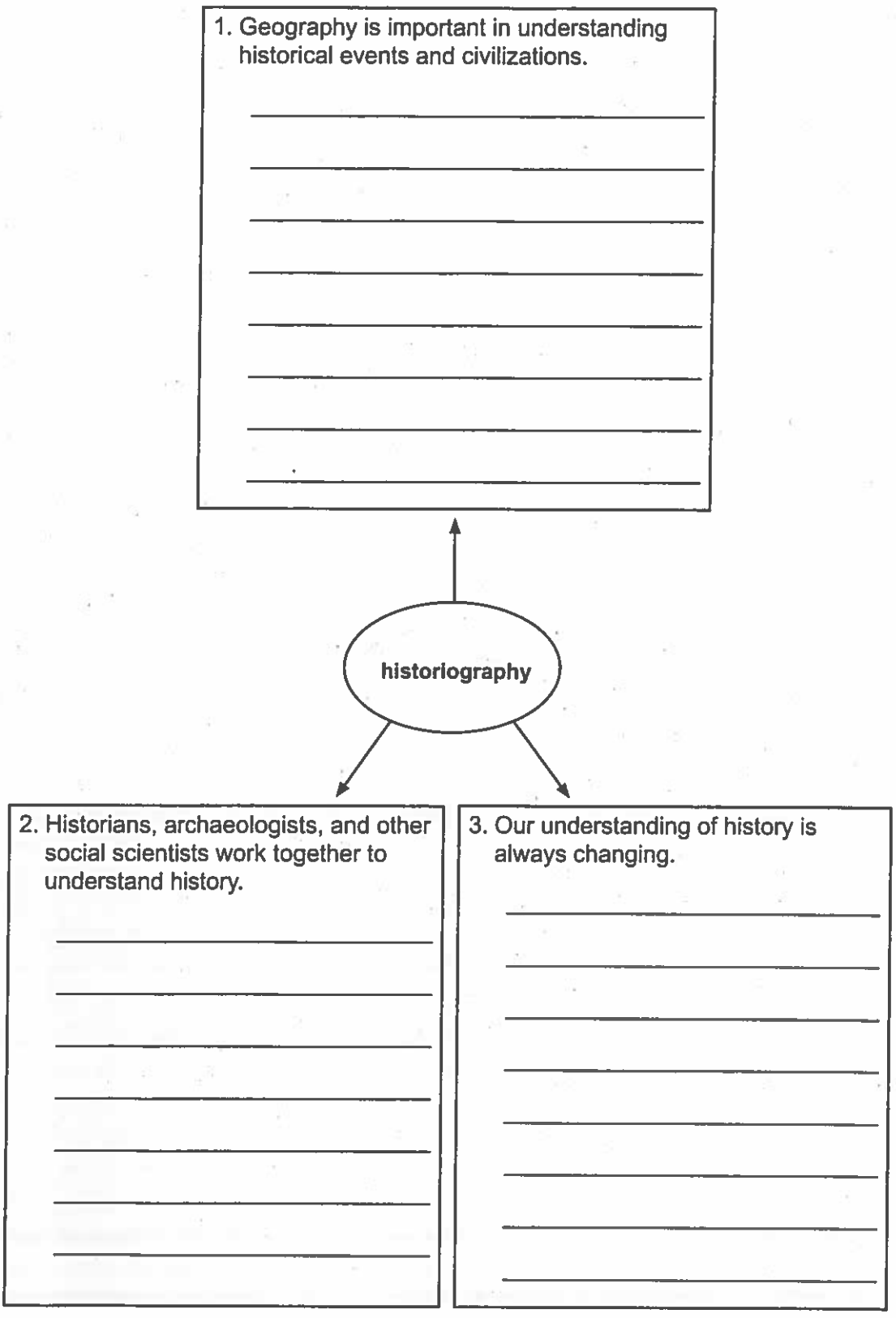
As you read about how history is studied and written, fill in the diagram with your notes.



Human Origins in Africa

Key Terms and People

culture people's way of life

Paleolithic Age Old Stone Age

Neolithic Age New Stone Age

technology ways of applying knowledge, tools, and inventions to meet needs

Homo sapien species name for modern humans

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about how history is understood and written.

In this lesson, you will read about the earliest humans.

As You Read

Use a chart to compare the hominids and time periods discussed in the lesson.

SCIENTISTS SEARCH FOR HUMAN ORIGINS

***How* do scientists learn about early humans?**

People can learn about the past by using written records. But these records cover only the last 5,000 years or so of human life. To learn about the time before written records, scientists called archaeologists use special skills and tools.

Archaeologists work at places called digs. Here they look for artifacts and dig up bones of ancient humans and of the animals that lived with them. By studying bones and artifacts, scientists learn about the **culture** of early humans.

In the 1970s, archaeologists in East Africa found footprints that looked like ones of modern humans preserved in the ashes of a volcano. A few years earlier, another group of scientists had found a complete skeleton of an adult female who looked like she walked upright. Lucy, as they nicknamed her, lived around 3.5 million years ago. She, along with the footprints, explained a lot to scientists.

Because these early beings walked upright, they could travel long distances. They could also use their free arms to carry food, tools, and children. They also had an opposable thumb that could move across the palms of their hands and touch their other fingers. This let them pick up and hold objects.

1. What were the first humanlike beings, and where were they found?

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THE OLD STONE AGE BEGINS

What advances did hominids make during the Stone Age?

Humans made important advances during a period called the Stone Age, when people used tools made of stone. At this time, they also began to use fire and learned to speak.

Scientists divide the Stone Age into two parts. The **Paleolithic Age**, or Old Stone Age, began about 2.5 million years ago and lasted until about 8000 BC. The **Neolithic Age**, or New Stone Age, went from about 8000 BC to around 3000 BC.

Much of the Old Stone Age overlapped the Ice Age, when the earth was colder than it is now. Huge sheets of ice—glaciers—covered much of the land. The Ice Age ended about 10,000 years ago, and the earth's temperature became warmer. People began to change their lifestyle, now having better tools, growing crops, and raising animals.

In East Africa, archaeologists found a hominid fossil they named *Homo habilis*. It means "man of skill." The fossil was given this name because the site also held tools made from lava rock. *Homo habilis* lived about 2.5 million years ago.

About 1.6 million years ago, another kind of hominid lived. This one, called *Homo erectus,* began to use tools for special purposes. That is when **technology** began. *Homo erectus* dug for food in the ground, cut meat from animal bones, and scraped animal skins. *Homo erectus* also used fire and may have had spoken any kind of language.

2. Which was more developed, *Homo habilis* or *Homo erectus*? Why?

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THE DAWN OF MODERN HUMANS; NEW FINDINGS ADD TO KNOWLEDGE

Who were the Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons?

Many scientists believe that *Homo erectus* eventually developed into humans, or ***Homo sapiens***.

Scientists once thought that Neanderthals were ancestors of modern humans but no longer do. These hominids appeared 200,000 years ago. They lived in caves or built shelters of wood or animal skins. At one time, they were thought to be rough and wild people. Now scientists think that they may have held religious beliefs. These people found ways to survive the freezing cold of the Ice Age. About 30,000 years ago, though, the Neanderthals strangely disappeared.

About 10,000 years before the Neanderthals vanished, the Cro-Magnons appeared. Their bodies were just like those of modern people. Scientists think that these people worked with one another in planning large-scale hunts of animals. They may have also had more skill at speaking than did the Neanderthals. Because they had these skills, the Cro-Magnons were better at finding food. That may explain why Cro-Magnons survived and Neanderthals did not.

Scientists are continuing to work on many sites in Africa. New discoveries continually add to what we know about human origins.

3. How is the species *Homo sapiens* different from earlier hominids?

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As you read about early humans, fill in the chart below by describing the physical traits and achievements of each species of hominid listed.

Name	Physical Traits	Achievements
1. Australopithecines		
2. *Homo habilis*		
3. *Homo erectus*		
4. Neanderthals		
5. Cro-Magnons		

Fill in the chart below to compare the Old Stone Age and the New Stone Age.

Stone Age	Began	Ended	Achievements
Paleolithic Age			
Neolithic Age			

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Humans Try to Control Nature

Key Terms and People

nomad person who wanders from place to place

hunter-gatherer person whose food supply depends on hunting animals and collecting plant foods

Neolithic Revolution agricultural revolution that occurred during the Neolithic period

slash-and-burn farming early farming method that some groups used to clear fields

domestication taming of animals

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about the earliest humans.

In this lesson, you will read about the development of agriculture and a settled way of life.

As You Read

Use a chart to organize the lesson's main ideas and details.

EARLY ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY AND ART

***What* advances occurred in technology and art?**

The first humans had struggled to survive. For thousands of years, they had two concerns: finding food and protecting themselves. They used fire, built shelters, made clothes, and created spoken language. Human culture changed over time as new tools replaced old ones and people tested new ideas.

The people who lived in the early part of the Old Stone Age were **nomads**. They moved from place to place. They found food by hunting and gathering nuts, berries, and roots. If they stayed too long in one place, they would eat all of the food in the area. So they moved to new places to find new sources of food. People who live this style of life are called **hunter-gatherers**.

Early modern humans, called Cro-Magnons, used many kinds of tools made out of stone, bone, and wood. They also created art. Thousands of years ago, Stone Age artists mixed charcoal, mud, and animal blood to make paint. They used this paint to draw pictures of animals on cave walls and rocks.

1. In what ways did Cro-Magnon people change human culture?

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THE BEGINNINGS OF AGRICULTURE

***What* was the Neolithic Revolution?**

For centuries, humans stayed alive by hunting and gathering. Humans lived in small groups of 25 to 70 people. They often returned to a certain area in the same season each year. They knew it would be rich in food at that time.

Over the years, some humans realized that they could leave plant seeds in an area one year and find plants growing there the next year. This was the start of a new part of human life: farming.

Scientists think that the climate became warmer all around the world at about the same time. The change in weather, combined with humans' new knowledge about planting seeds, created the **Neolithic Revolution**.

Instead of relying on gathering food, people began to produce food. One early farming method was **slash-and-burn farming**. That meant cutting trees and burning them to clear a field. The ashes were used to fertilize the soil.

Along with growing food, people also began to raise animals such as horses, dogs, goats, and pigs. **Domestication** is the taming of animals.

Archaeologists have studied a site in the northeastern part of modern Iraq. It is called Jarmo. The people who lived in this region began farming and raising animals about 9,000 years ago.

2. How did life change during the Neolithic Revolution?

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VILLAGES GROW AND PROSPER

***How* did the growth of farming villages change life?**

People began to farm in many spots all over the world. The study of one village in modern-day Turkey shows what early farming communities were like.

The village is now called Catal Huyuk. It used the good land near a river. Some workers grew wheat, barley, and peas. Others raised sheep and cattle. Because these workers produced enough food for all the people, others could begin developing other kinds of skills. Some made pots out of clay. Others worked as weavers. Some artists decorated the village. Archaeologists have found wall paintings that show animals and hunting scenes. They have found evidence that the people had a religion, too.

Early farming villages had problems also. If the farm crop failed or the lack of rain caused a drought, people would have no food and starve. Floods and fires caused damage and death. With more people living near each other than before, diseases also spread easily. Still some of these early villages grew into great cities.

3. What problems did early farming villages face?

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As you read this lesson, take notes to answer questions about the development of agriculture.

People of the Old Stone Age were nomads who wandered from place to place in search of food.

1. How did hunter-gatherers use tools to improve their chances of survival?	2. What types of art did Paleolithic people create?

About 10,000 years ago, an agricultural revolution began.

3. What factors led to the agricultural revolution?	4. How were animals caught and domesticated?

Farming led to a settled way of life.

5. What were some of the cultural achievements of Neolithic villagers?	6. What kinds of plants did farmers grow in Africa, China, Central America, and Peru?

Neolithic Cultures

Key Terms and People

excavation digging carefully for bones and other ancient objects

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about how humans settled and developed an early culture.

In this lesson, you will read more about Neolithic cultures.

As You Read

Fill in a chart to review the Neolithic cultures mentioned in the lesson.

PRE-CIVILIZATION CULTURES

***Why* is it important to study early cultures?**

Some people think that researchers should study civilizations and not the cultures that came before. However, researchers have learned a lot from their archaeological **excavations**. They use artifacts to understand the people of the past and the culture they developed. We can use this information to compare Neolithic cultures to modern cultures.

One important pre-civilization culture was from the town of Jericho. The Neolithic Age began in 8000 BC. Most people during this time were nomads. Jericho, however, was surrounded by a 30-foot-high wall. They planned the town around a spring that provided water. The people of Jericho traded. They were on their way to creating a new civilization.

Another was the village of Skara Brae. The people of this village lived close together in stone houses. They used axes and spears made of stone. They also made clothing from animal skins and jewelry from bone beads. Researchers found that their culture divided people into social classes—which they thought started after civilizations developed.

In China Neolithic people made pottery, possibly using pottery wheels. They also buried pots and bowls with the dead. Unlike the people of Skara Brae, all of the dead were buried with the same kinds of pottery. Researchers use these clues to support the idea that the cultures did not separate the wealthy from the poor people.

1. What did researchers learn from the burials in Skara Brae and in China?

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NEOLITHIC CULTURES LEAVE THEIR MARK

What do we know about Stonehenge?

In a field in England, there is a monument made of large stones, placed to form a circle. Stonehenge, as it is called, began being built in about 3000 BC and was finished around 1500 BC.

There are many theories as to the purpose for Stonehenge. Some people think it was used to watch Earth move around the sun. Others think the stones were part of a religion or a kind of medicine. Another theory is that leaders were buried at Stonehenge. The rocks can be used to tell when the summer and winter solstices happen. Buried there are also the bodies of people who died from diseases.

Other bodies are of women who probably had high status in the culture. From this information, researchers have had to change their thoughts about Neolithic men and women. Other evidence from Neolithic cultures shows that women were not equal to men. Women were not rulers or leaders. But, here, men and women were buried in the same place. This shows that there was some equality.

In 2015 scientists found another monument that is similar to Stonehenge. This structure, also made of large stones, is called Superhenge. What's different is that the stones at Superhenge are all underground. Whatever researchers discover at Superhenge might help them understand the meaning and purpose of Stonehenge.

2. What has Stonehenge taught us about Neolithic men and women?

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As you read this lesson, fill in the chart to outline the cultures mentioned.

Culture	Time of Culture	Location	What Is Understood
1. Jericho			
2. Skara Brae			
3. Yangshao			
4. Stonehenge			