

The Stone Ages and Early Cultures

Section 2



MAIN IDEAS

1. People moved out of Africa as the earth's climates changed.
2. People adapted to new environments by making clothing and new types of tools.

Key Terms and People

ice ages long periods of freezing weather

migrate move to a new place

land bridge a strip of land connecting two continents

Mesolithic Era the middle part of the Stone Age, from about 10,000 years ago to about 5,000 years ago

Section Summary

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** 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 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.

How long ago did the ice ages begin? How long ago did they end?

From which continent did the first early humans probably come to North America?

Section 2, continued

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. At first these shelters 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. These tools were smaller and more complex than tools from the Paleolithic Era. They defined the **Mesolithic** (me-zuh-LI -thik) **Era**, which began more than 10,000 years ago and lasted to about 5,000 years ago in some places. These new tools included hooks and spears for fishing, and bows and arrows for hunting.

People in the Mesolithic Era also developed new technologies to improve their lives. For example, they learned how to make pots from clay, how to hollow out logs to make canoes, and how to use dogs for protection and to help them hunt.

What materials did early humans use to cover frame structures with roofs and walls?

How did early humans make canoes?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Drawing Inferences Draw a building plan with written instructions for a Mesolithic dwelling.

Section 2, *continued*

ice ages

land bridge

Mesolithic Era

migrate

DIRECTIONS Read each sentence and fill in the blank with the word from the word bank that best completes the sentence.

1. During the _____, people made tools out of bone and antler that were smaller and more complex than those made during the Old Stone Age.
2. During the _____, huge sheets of ice were formed from ocean water leaving ocean levels lower than they are now.
3. A _____ is a strip of land connecting two continents.
4. In response to the transforming of the Earth's geography, people began to _____.

DIRECTIONS Write three adjectives or descriptive phrases that describe the term.

5. land bridge _____
6. migrate _____