

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

Aim#6 SWBAT identify major characteristics of the Paleolithic Age

Directions: Before you read the article below, make a KWL chart in your **social studies notebook** and write what you know and want to know about the Paleolithic Age. Then read the article and **record 3 important facts** you learned. **Good readers use KWL charts.** 😊

PALEOLITHIC AGE



Historians call the early period of human history the **Stone Age**. The name comes from the fact that people during this time used stone to make tools and weapons. The earliest part of the period is the **Paleolithic** or Old Stone Age. Paleolithic means “old stone” in the Greek language. Paleolithic times began roughly 2.5 million years ago and last until around 8,000 B.C.

Who were the hunter-gatherers?

Try to imagine the world during the Stone Age. Early humans spent most of their time searching for food. They hunted animals, caught fish, ate insects (yummy), and gathered nuts, berries, fruits, grains, and plants.

Because they hunted and gathered, Paleolithic people were always on the move. They were **nomads**, or people who regularly move from place to place. Homo sapiens during this time were **nomadic**. They traveled in bands of 30 or so members because it was safer and made the search for food easier.

In these groups, women stayed close to the campsite. They looked after the children and searched nearby woods and meadow for berries, nuts, and grains.

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Men hunted animals, an activity that sometimes took them far from camp. They had to learn the habits of animals and make tools for the kill. At first, they used clubs or drove the animals off cliffs. Over time Paleolithic people invented spears, traps, and bows and arrows.

Adjusting to the Environment

The way that Paleolithic people lived depended on where they lived. Those in warm climates needed little clothing or shelter. People in cold climates needed protection from the weather in caves. Over time, Paleolithic people created new kinds of shelter. The most common was probably made of animal hides held up by wooden poles.

Paleolithic people made a life-changing discovery when they created fire. Fire gave warmth to those gathered around it. It lit the darkness and scared away wild animals. Food cooked over the fire tasted better and was easier to digest. In addition, smoked meat could be kept longer.

Language, Art, and Religion

Another advance in Paleolithic times was the creation of spoken language. Language made it far easier for people to work together and pass on knowledge.

Early people expressed themselves not only in words but in art. They crushed yellow, black and red rocks to make powders for paint. They applied it on cave walls making paintings of lions, oxen, panthers and other animals.

The inventions of tools

Paleolithic people were the first to use **technology**. **Technology** is tools to help humans perform tasks. People during this time often used a hard stone to make tools.

Over time, people grew more skilled at making tools. They created smaller and sharper tools, such as fishhooks and needles made from animal bones. They used needles made from animal bones. They used needles to make nets and baskets and to sew animal skin together for clothing.