

The Study of History, Geography, and Culture

History is the study of the past. Many different types of scientists study history. One type of scientist, the **archaeologist**, investigates past cultures and their activities in ancient cities. The archaeologist also studies **artifacts**—things people made and used in their daily lives—and fossils. These artifacts and fossils give us clues as to how people lived during a certain time.

Other scientists study history as well. The **geologist** studies the formation of Earth and how it has changed over millions of years. The **anthropologist** studies the way people lived and how they interacted with their neighbors, as well as their beliefs, religion, and government—these make up a people's **culture**.

Timelines in History

Timelines help people who are studying history understand when events took place and the order in which the events happened. Timelines represent a certain length of time. They are used to show important events and time periods.

Dates increase as they move away from “1.” An event which took place in the year 300 B.C. happened 300 years *before* Christ was born. An event that took place in A.D. 1900 happened 1,900 years *after* Christ was born.

Other Terms for Division of Time

In addition to numbering individual years, people also group years into these divisions:

A **decade** is 10 years

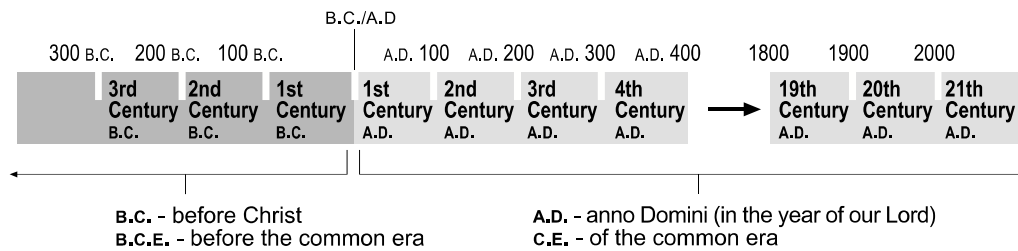
A **century** is 100 years

A **millennium** is 1,000 years

A.D. 1 to A.D. 100 was the first century. The years A.D. 101 to 200 were the second century. The period of time before the birth of Christ uses the same system. The years 100 B.C. to 1 B.C. are the first century B.C.

A.D. 1 TO A.D. 1000 was the first millennium. A.D. 1001 TO A.D. 2000 was the second millennium. The year A.D. 2001 begins the third millennium.

Timeline of Christian or Common Era



To find the number of years that have elapsed between dates...

1) when both years are either B.C. or A.D., subtract.

Example: From A.D. 500 to A.D. 2000 is _____ years.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{A.D. } 2000 \\ - \text{A.D. } 500 \\ \hline 1500 \text{ years} \end{array}$$

2) when one year is B.C. and the other is A.D., add.

Example: From B.C. 1500 to A.D. 1500 is _____ years.

$$\begin{array}{r} 1500 \text{ B.C.} \\ + \text{A.D. } 1500 \\ \hline 3000 \text{ years} \end{array}$$

Geography and Culture

Throughout history people have developed many cultures. Culture is a way of living or behaving. Culture includes language—the way in which people communicate. It includes government, the way people are ruled, and religion, the way people worship. The way people relate to each other and the environment they create for themselves are also a part of culture.



Culture may be shaped by the place where people live. For example, people who live in the mountains have a different culture from those who live in the desert or along river banks.

The use of land by humans and the form of government in an area are often determined by the **geography** found there. The reason for such developments is that geography greatly affects the way people live and work. In other words, geography influences culture.

History has shown that human culture has been directly influenced by the geography of each **region**. For example, the nearness of bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers, oceans, and the features of land determined methods of transportation. These physical characteristics also influenced the types of crops grown and the farming methods used. If the land was **fertile**, food and water were plentiful.

Natural resources, like the minerals copper, iron ore, gold, and silver, influenced many inventions. For example, metals such as copper were used for tools and money. Also, those who learned to use iron invented strong weapons and tools. And people located near land with a high clay content developed beautiful and useful pottery.

Even today, **climate** in an area determines how people dress and live. If they live in a very cold climate, their dress might consist of clothing made from animal fur and skins. Climate also influences types of shelter. For example, grass huts might be found in warm climates, while igloos are used by Eskimos in the arctic region.



Although it is sometimes difficult to explain why people live in certain areas, we do understand that the environment and the geography of an area help to shape the culture there.

Understanding Maps

Learning how to read maps will make clear how geography influences culture in different places. Maps come in many forms. For example, a map showing mountains, bodies of water, deserts, and other such features is called a *physical* map. An example of a physical map may be found below.

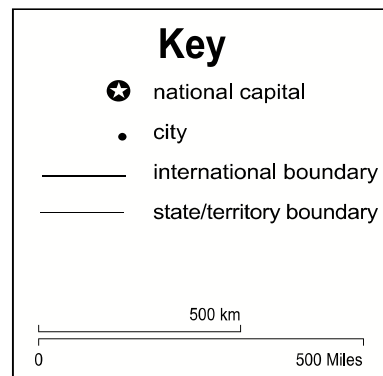
Some physical maps, like the one on page 14, show the entire world and the seven largest divisions of land on Earth, called **continents**. The seven continents are North America, South America, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Antarctica.

A map which shows separate boundaries is called a *political* map. An example of a political map may be seen below. This map shows the boundaries of Australia.



Australia

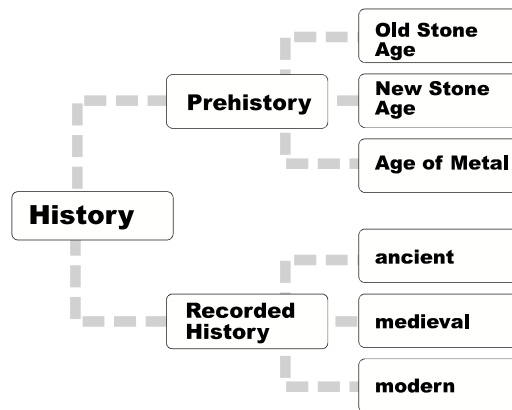
The best way to read a map is to use its **legend** or **key**. The legend is a key which explains the symbols used on a map. For example, look at the legend taken from the map above. Legends enable one to understand the information maps provide.



Periods of History

History is divided into two periods. These periods are called *prehistory* and *recorded history*. Prehistory was a time when humans did not know how to write and record events. The three periods of **prehistoric** time are the Old Stone Age, the New Stone Age, and the Age of Metal. Each period is marked by certain changes which affected the development of cultures.

Recorded history began around 4000 B.C., when humans started writing and kept records of events that shaped their lives. Recorded history is divided into three periods: ancient, medieval, and modern.



Old Stone Age

During the Old Stone Age, people moved from place to place hunting herds of animals. Because they did not have permanent homes they were called **nomads**. When nomads were not looking for food, they used caves as temporary shelters. It was during the Old Stone Age that people discovered and made use of fire for cooking food and staying warm.



Nomads formed small hunting parties and set out from their cave dwellings to search for food. They developed crude, handmade tools of stone, which made life easier. This was also the time the first languages were developed.



Scientists have discovered cave drawings, paintings, and carvings made by the Old Stone Age people, as well as fossils of their

remains. These artifacts helped historians to gain a better understanding of the Old Stone Age people. This period covered about 99 percent of the human race's total time on Earth!

New Stone Age

During the New Stone Age, people began to gain greater control of their environment. They began to live in organized, permanent **settlements** and learned how to grow crops for food. In other words, people were no longer nomads. Instead of going from place to place in search of food, groups of people settled near lakes, rivers, and oceans. Animals, once thought of only as a food supply, were **domesticated** or tamed. Some tame animals provided physical labor, while others were used as food. Animal hides were used to make clothing. Animals became helpful to the **community**. A community consists of people who share common interests.

One very important invention during the New Stone Age was the potter's wheel. With the invention of the potter's wheel, people developed much better tools and utensils (such as water jugs).

The human population began to grow at a very fast pace during the New Stone Age. This was due mainly to the development of agriculture, and the resulting ability to grow and store food. Having food, clothing, and shelter, people were able to stay permanently in one place. With these new discoveries, human life during the New Stone Age was less troublesome. The people lived longer and healthier lives than their forerunners in the Old Stone Age.

Old Stone Age Inventions and Discoveries

1. spear
2. needle (made out of bones)
3. fishhook

Humans learned how to control fire.

New Stone Age Inventions and Discoveries

1. village or community
2. hoe



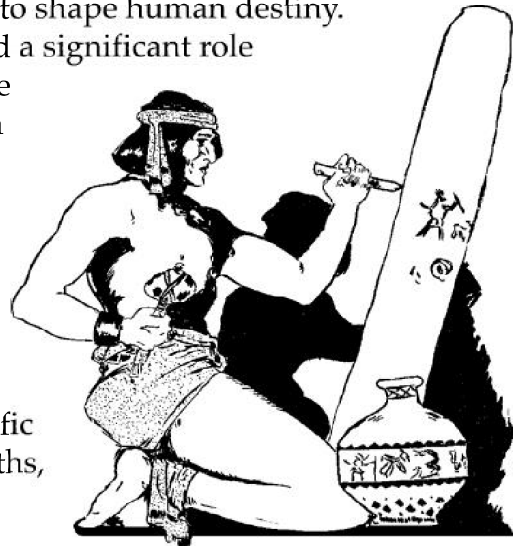
The Age of Metal—Civilization Begins

The invention of the plow in the Age of Metal radically changed the way people farmed. They were now able to farm large fields and create an abundant supply of food. Along with improved farming techniques, people also developed better ways to domesticate animals. The earliest farm animals were cattle, goats, sheep, and pigs.

Inventions helped to improve people's way of life. People learned to spin yarn from plant fibers and animal hair, to weave cloth, and wear cloth garments instead of animal hides. Another invention, the wheel, made transportation much easier.

It was around 4000 B.C. that civilization, a word meaning an advanced stage of social order, began to shape human destiny. The discovery and use of metal played a significant role in the development of civilization. The discovery and use of metal resulted in superior tools, weapons, and farm equipment.

An important change took place in the way people worked. During this period in history, man began to **specialize**. This means that within communities, each person had a specific skill or job. Soon there were metalsmiths, potters, and tradespeople, as well as farmers and hunters.



During the Age of Metal, humans began to understand that cooperation meant improved living standards and better protection against enemies. It was at this time in history that the first simple governments were formed.

Age of Metal Inventions

1. copper tools
2. bronze tools
3. plow
4. sailboats
5. sleds
6. wheels

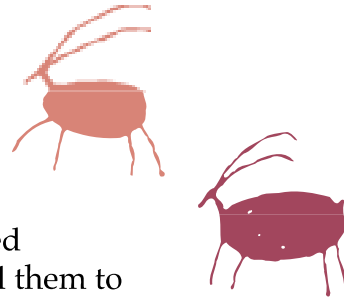


Humans learned how to weave thread into cloth.

Review

History, or the study of the past, is important to many types of scientists. Archaeologists investigate the remains of ancient cities to find out about the lives of the people who lived in them. Geologists learn about Earth's history by studying rocks and soil. Anthropologists study different cultures to gain information about the history of human society.

Geography is important to the study of history because the geography of a region affects the way people live and work. For instance, features like bodies of water and mountains determined the kind of transportation people used. The type of soil in a region determined the kinds of crops grown by the people who lived there. If there were minerals nearby, people used them to make tools and coins.



Even now we can see how geography affects the way people live. For example, the climate of a region determines the kind of clothes people wear and the kind of buildings in which they live.

One way to learn how geography has shaped history is to study maps. A physical map, one that shows features like mountains and rivers, helps us to understand why human cultures began where they did. For instance, a region with a big river is a good place for a culture to spring up because rivers provide people with easy transportation by boat and because fertile soil is often found by rivers.

Prehistoric time, or the time before recorded history began, is divided into three periods. During the Old Stone Age, people lived as nomads, hunting animals for food and living in caves. Old Stone Age people also discovered the use of fire for cooking food and staying warm.

In the second period, the New Stone Age, people learned how to grow crops for food. They began to live in permanent settlements so they could tend to their crops. Animals were domesticated, providing labor as well as food.

The Age of Metal, the third period, marks the beginning of civilization. People discovered how to shape metal into farm tools and weapons, thus greatly improving farming and hunting techniques. In the Age of Metal, people also began to specialize, which meant that each person worked at a specific task. The result was greater production and a higher standard of living. Even more important than specialization was cooperation: people in the Age of Metal learned that they could live better, safer, and longer lives if they cooperated with each other.

