

## Seventh Grade Social Studies: Ancient World History

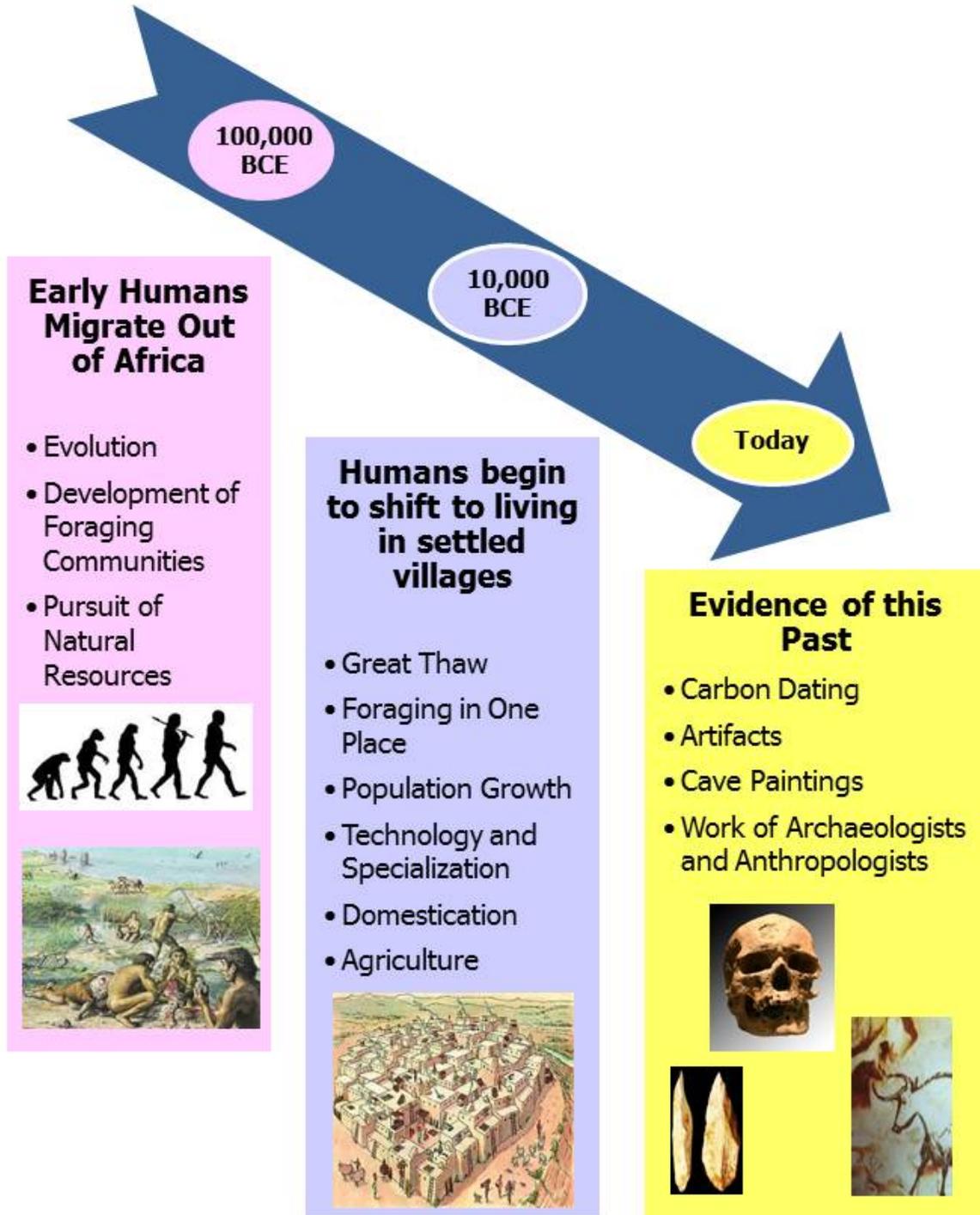
### Unit 2: Beginnings of Human Societies

#### Big Picture Graphic

Overarching Question: <b>How can we know about the past?</b>		
Previous Unit: An Introduction to World History	This Unit: <b>Beginnings of Human Societies</b>	Next Unit: Early Civilizations and Pastoral Peoples
<h3>Beginnings of Human Societies</h3>		
Questions To Focus Assessment and Instruction: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do we learn about humans and human ancestors in pre-historic times, before there was writing?</li> <li>2. How and why did humanity spread across the earth?</li> <li>3. How did the natural environment shape the ways people lived in the Paleolithic Era?</li> <li>4. How and why did many humans begin to shift from full-time foraging to living in settled villages?</li> </ol>		<u>Types of Thinking</u> Evidentiary Argument Compare and Contrast Cause and Effect Description Predicting

Graphic Organizer

# Beginnings of Human Societies



### High School Foundations (see World History and Geography)

- F1: World Historical and Geographical “Habits of Mind” and Central Concepts: Explain and use key conceptual devices world historians/geographers use to organize the past including periodization schemes (e.g., major turning points, different cultural and religious calendars), and different spatial frames (e.g., global, interregional, and regional).
- F2: Systems of Human Organizations: Use the examples below to explain the basic features and differences between hunter-gatherer societies, pastoral nomads, civilizations, and empires, focusing upon the differences in their political, economic and social systems, and their changing interactions with the environment.
  - Changes brought on by the Agriculture Revolution including the environmental impact of settlements.

### Historical Overview

The universe is 13 billion years old and the earth is probably between four and five billion years old. However, modern humans are relatively new to the planet, having emerged through the processes of evolution between 200 and 300 thousand years ago. Learning about humans and their ancestors that far back in the past is difficult, yet archaeologists and anthropologists have found and analyzed fossils, tools, and other artifacts our ancestors left behind in order to understand the origins of modern humans.

Hominids<sup>1</sup> developed somewhere between two and three million years ago in Africa, and they evolved over hundreds of thousands of years. Hominids are characterized by an upright gait, increased brain size and intelligence relative to other primates, a flattened face, and smaller sized teeth and jaw. Within the family Hominidae, scientists include *Australopithecus*, *Homo erectus*, and *Homo sapiens* (modern humans). Sometime between 125,000 and 60,000 years ago, humans began to migrate out of east Africa into other parts of the world. This migration took thousands and thousands of years, and as humans migrated, they learned to live in more varied environments such as deserts and dense forests. Humans migrated to new biomes to find food, escape weather patterns, and find space for a growing population. Current evidence indicates that language might have developed in Africa, anywhere between 50,000 and 100,000 years ago. As humans migrated and moved, language likely became more complex and helped people solve new problems.

Spreading out across the globe, developing language and tool use, these humans lived as foragers, often moving to find and follow food sources. The quality of life for foragers was dependent on environmental factors like climate, vegetation, and available game for hunting. They most likely traveled in family-based groups. By studying the artifacts they left behind, from bones and tools to artwork and dwellings, archaeologists and historians have come to understand some characteristics of Paleolithic societies.

The end of the Paleolithic Era coincided with the last Ice Age. By this time, humans had spread across most of the Earth. The end of the last Ice Age is known as the Great Thaw, occurring about 10,000 years ago, and it generated warmer, wetter, and more productive climates. These changes marked one of the major turning points in human history, a gradual shift from a time when all humans

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<sup>1</sup> The term “hominid” refers to any of the modern or extinct bipedal primates of the family Hominidae, including all species of the genera *Homo* and *Australopithecus*.

gathered their food (foraging) to one in which most humans produced their food (agriculture). Notably, settled agriculture appeared independently in several different regions of the world that were well-suited for farming because of environmental factors and population patterns. However, some groups remained foragers (in fact foragers still exist today). Farming allowed people to develop food surpluses and changes in technology allowed people to store food. These developments permitted population growth and resulted in the settlement of denser populations. Food surpluses and larger populations enabled people to specialize because not everyone had to put their energy into food production. This spawned the development of new types of jobs in these agrarian, village-based societies. New problems emerged as people lived in larger groups in settled villages. Social institutions changed and developed to respond to these changes and to address these new problems.

Despite many differences, there were important similarities across early human settlements even though they were not in contact with each other. These similarities suggest independent development of similar forms of agriculture, specialization, and social structures. Global patterns of early human development were characterized by settled villages with greater numbers of people near important natural resources, growing dependence on agriculture and animal domestication, the development of social institutions and culture (e.g. burials, art and architecture, etc.), and the specialization of labor.

### **Unit Abstract**

This unit introduces students to the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology in the context of studying human origins and prehistoric human societies. Students begin with a literacy-rich lesson in which they are introduced to the importance of metacognition – being aware of one’s thinking. Students explore a variety of concrete reading comprehension skills and practice making their thinking visible through a “Think-Aloud” reading strategy. They then begin their study of prehistory by examining the larger chronology of the universe, the earth, and human history in order to help them conceptualize time and chronology. Students explore the different types of evidence these scientists use to learn about humans in the distant past and make their own conjectures and conclusions in the process. Students also learn about evolution and the broad scope of human history from early hominids up to the Neolithic Revolution. They study the important role that human/environment interaction played in shaping early human societies, and explore the push/pull factors of early human migration. In exploring movement and migration, students consider the role of language development and communication in problem solving. Students then examine artifacts of tool use and early human homes to explore how humans adapted to their environment. Towards the end of the unit, students explore the Agricultural (Neolithic) Revolution, looking in particular at the development of different crops around the world and exploring archaeological work in different Neolithic villages. They explore the Neolithic Revolution as a turning point and consider the historical theme of continuity and change by comparing life during the Era of Foragers with the Agrarian Era. An important thread in this unit is that the development of human societies across the world was a long, gradual process. The Neolithic Revolution, for example, did not represent a conscious choice by people around the world to start farming and stop hunting, but rather was the result of gradual changes and human learning over time. Throughout the unit, students read and analyze a range of texts. These integrated reading activities are designed to scaffold and support students’ analysis and higher-ordered thinking with texts in order to meet the demands of the Common Core Literacy Standards.

### Focus Questions

1. How do we learn about humans and human ancestors in pre-historic times, before there was writing?
2. How and why did humanity spread across the earth?
3. How did the natural environment shape the ways people lived in the Paleolithic Era?
4. How and why did many humans begin to shift from full-time foraging to living in settled villages?

### Content Expectations

- 6 – *W1.1.1*: Describe the early migrations of people among Earth's continents (including the Beringa Land Bridge).<sup>2</sup>
- 6 – *W1.1.2*: Examine the lives of hunting and gathering people during the earliest eras of human society (tools and weapons, language, fire).
- 6 – *W1.2.1*: Describe the transition from hunter gatherers to sedentary agriculture (domestication of plants and animals).
- 6 and 7  
*H1.1.1*: Explain why and how historians use eras and periods as constructs to organize and explain human activities over time.
- 6 and 7  
*H1.2.1*: Explain how historians use a variety of sources to explore the past (e.g., artifacts, primary and secondary sources including narratives, technology, historical maps, visual/mathematical quantitative data, radiocarbon dating, DNA analysis).
- 6 and 7  
*H1.2.2*: Read and comprehend a historical passage to identify basic factual knowledge and the literal meaning by indicating who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to the development, and what consequences or outcomes followed.
- 6 and 7  
*H1.4.2*: Describe and use themes of history to study patterns of change and continuity.
- 6 and 7  
*H1.4.3*: Use historical perspective to analyze global issues faced by humans long ago and today.
- 6 and 7  
*G2.1.1*: Describe the landform feature and the climate of the region (within the Western or Eastern Hemispheres) under study.

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<sup>2</sup> While this unit addresses the movement of people generally throughout the world during this period, the specific topic of the Beringa Land Bridge is addressed when students study settlements in the Americas in a later unit. It is also addressed in sixth grade as an example of global migration.

- 6 and 7  
G2.2.3: Analyze how culture and experience influence people’s perception of places and regions (e.g., beaches are places where tourists travel, cities have historic buildings, northern places are cold, equatorial places are very warm)<sup>3</sup>.
- 6 – W.1.2.2 Explain the importance of the natural environment in the development of agricultural settlements in different locations (e.g., available water for irrigation, adequate precipitation, and suitable growth season).  
7 - W1.2.1:
- 6 – W1.2.3: Explain the impact of the Agricultural Revolution (stable food supply,  
7 – W1.2.2: surplus, population growth, trade, division of labor, development of settlements).
- 7 – W1.1.1: Explain how and when human communities populated major regions of the Eastern Hemisphere and adapted to a variety of environments.
- 7 – W1.1.2: Explain what archaeologists have learned about Paleolithic and Neolithic patterns of living in Africa, Western Europe, and Asia.
- 7 – W2.1.1: Describe the importance of the development of human language, oral and written, and its relationship to the development of culture
- Verbal vocalizations
  - Standardization of physical (rock, bird) and abstract (love, fear) words
  - Pictographs to abstract writing (governmental administration, laws, codes, history and artistic expression )
- 7 – G1.1.1: Explain and use a variety of maps, globes, and web based geography technology to study the world, including global, interregional, and local scales.
- 7 – G1.2.1: Locate the major land forms, rivers, and climate regions of the Eastern Hemisphere.
- 7 – G1.2.5: Use information from modern technology such as Geographic Positioning System (GPS), Geographic Information System (GIS), and satellite remote sensing to locate information and process maps and data to analyze spatial patterns of the Eastern Hemisphere to answer geographic questions.

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<sup>3</sup> These expectations get at perspective – how one’s experiences and background influences how one interprets the world. Although this expectation is limited to the field of geography, the previous unit addressed how both historians and geographers have perspectives that influence their accounts (historical accounts and maps). This curriculum broadens the interpretation of this expectation to include the interpretation of evidence such as artifacts and primary sources. Moreover, the essence of this expectation is muddled by the examples provided, some of which are provable (“beaches are places where tourists travel”) while others, which are relative (“northern places are cold”) and depend on a perspective.

Moreover, the essence of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade expectation is muddled by the examples provided, some of which are provable (“beaches are places where tourists travel”) while others, which are relative (“northern places are cold”) and depend on a perspective.

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade expectation is the same and is similarly muddled by the examples provided: “(e.g., the Caribbean Region that presently displays enduring impact of different immigrant groups – Africans, South Asians, Europeans – and the differing contemporary points of view about the region displayed by islanders and tourists).”

**6 and 7**  
**G3.2.2:** Identify ecosystems of a continent and explain why some provide greater opportunities (fertile soil, precipitation) for humans to use than do other ecosystems and how that changes with technology (e.g., China's humid east and arid west and the effects of irrigation technology).

**7 – G4.3.2:** Describe patterns of settlement by using historical and modern maps.<sup>4</sup>

### **Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies**

**RH.6-8.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**RH.6-8.2:** Determine the main ideas or information of a primary or a secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

**RH.6-8.3:** Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

**RH.6-8.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

**RH.6-8.7:** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

**RH.6-8.10:** By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**WHST.6-8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**WHST.6-8.9:** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**WHST.6-8.10:** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### **Key Concepts**

adaptation  
agriculture  
domestication  
evidence  
evolution  
foraging

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<sup>4</sup> In this unit, students use a map to explore early agricultural settlements. Accordingly, while the expectation itself is addressed, the examples used to explain the expectation "(e.g., the location of the world's mega cities, other cities located near coasts and navigable rivers, regions under environmental stress such as the Sahel)" are not applicable in this context.

metacognition  
migration  
Neolithic Era  
Paleolithic Era  
settlement  
social institutions  
specialization  
world history

**Duration:** 4 weeks

### **Lesson Sequence**

Lesson 1: Introducing Reading Strategies  
Lesson 2: The Study of Prehistory  
Lesson 3: Anthropology and Early Humans  
Lesson 4: The Peopling of the Earth  
Lesson 5: The Paleolithic Age  
Lesson 6: The Agricultural Revolution  
Lesson 7: Neolithic Settlement, Surplus, Specialization, and Social Institutions  
Lesson 8: Global Patterns of Early Human Settlement

### **Assessments**

### **Resources**

#### Equipment/Manipulative

Butcher paper  
Markers  
Overhead projector, Document Camera, Computer and Projector or Whiteboard/  
Student journal or notebook  
Tape  
Wall Maps  
Whiteboard or Chalkboard  
World Atlases

#### Student Resource

Abbaymedia.com. Oldest Human Remains Found in Ethiopia. *Abbay Media News*. 20 April 2012  
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“All About Mammoths and Mastadons: Human Interaction.” *Mammoths and Mastadons: Titans of the Ice Age*. Field Museum of Chicago. 20 April 2012  
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#### Teacher Resource

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