

Early Human Society

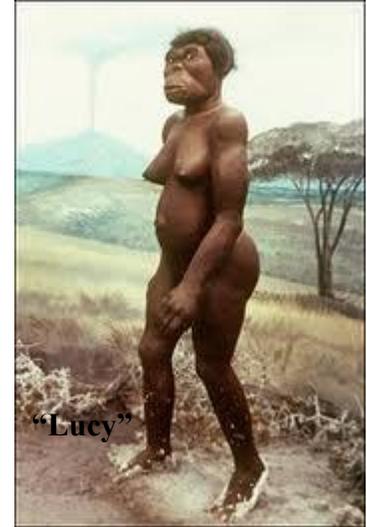
I. The Prehistoric Period (Before 4,000 B.C.)

Prehistoric people left no written records because they did not know how to write. Our knowledge of this period comes from “material remains”, or artifacts, such as bones, tools, weapons, cave paintings, pottery, cloth and buildings.

Two types of scientists study prehistoric times: archaeologists and anthropologists. Archaeologists study material remains of past human life. Anthropologists study interaction between human beings with their environment. The earliest humans appeared on earth during the “Ice Age”. Their remains were discovered by Louis and Mary Leakey in “Olduvai Gorge”, located in Tanzania, Africa, during the 1950’s.

The early people faced many obstacles and hardships, such as intense cold, wild animals, and low food supply. They early people were able to survive these hardships because they had:

1. brains to reason and learn from experience,
2. the power of speech to communicate,
3. hands with which to grasp objects and make tools and weapons,
4. an upright posture that enable them to use their hands freely.



II. The Historic Period (Since 4,000 B.C.)

The development of writing led to written records, such as stone inscriptions, tablets, scrolls, letters, diaries, books, and newspapers. Written records are important because they provide a more accurate dating of events. There are two types of written sources: primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are documents written during the same period as an even, such as diaries, newspapers, photos, journals, and eyewitness interviews. Secondary sources are material written about an event after it has occurred, such as books, songs, poems, and monuments.

Questions to Answer

1. How do we know what happened during the Prehistoric Period?
2. What challenges did the early people face?
3. Why is it important to keep written records?
4. What is the difference between primary sources and secondary sources?