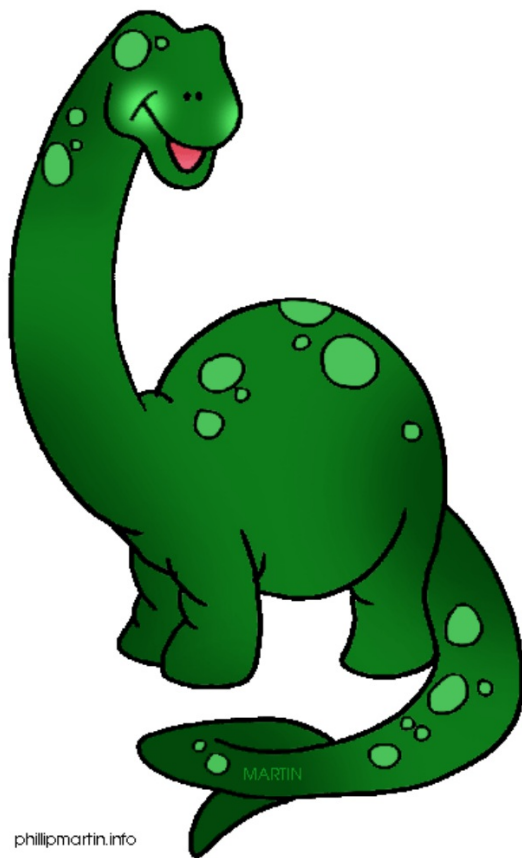


Survival and the Creation of the First Civilizations





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FIRST QUESTION:

What do you know about the earliest people on earth?? Did early man live at the same time as dinosaurs?



The answer to that one is simple. Nah! No way. Not a chance. Nobody knows for sure why dinosaurs disappeared, but they do know that dinosaurs died out about 65 million years ago. The first hominids (human-like primates) did not appear until 3.6 million years ago. Even if scientists are off a few million years or so, early man simply did not live during the same period in history as dinosaurs.



This is not to say that early man had it easy. They did have to face saber-toothed tigers, cave lions, and woolly mammoths! But, they did not have to fight dinosaurs! (Some of the movies you've seen have men fighting dinosaurs - fortunately for mankind, this is movie nonsense. Dinosaurs were long gone before man first appeared.)



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As you learn about Early Man, you may find words with which you are not familiar. I'll give you three definitions right now, because these are terms you will see quite often!

Hominids are the family of mankind and his or her relatives.

Fossils are remains of living things (plants, animals, people), not things that were made.

Artifacts are remains of things that were made, not remains of living things.



The Old Stone Age people were hunters/gatherers. We know about these people because scientists have found fossils and artifacts, which reveal traces of their life. Human-like hominids first appeared about 3 million years ago! Man went through a lot of different stages to evolve into the human being of today!



Since the evolution of man (and the Stone Age) covers a period of roughly 3 million years, it's hard to pinpoint when exactly man started creating civilizations, but we feel it happened over 10,000 years ago! Let's go back to that time and take a look at the life of "Thog," one of the first men who got the idea to start a civilization!

About 11,000 years ago, Thog had been living all by himself in Southeast Asia for years, but was growing tired of having to hunt and gather all day, every day for his food.....that is ALL he ever had time for!



One day, probably by accident, Thog figured out that plants grow from seeds. "Cool!" he thought. Thog was tired of getting poked with wooly mammoth tusks every time he wanted dinner and thought it would be pretty nice to grow food that didn't stampede. So.....he put a bunch of seeds in the ground and waited for them to grow into bread and cake (give him a break.....his brain wasn't quite as big as ours!).





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Thog planted so many seeds that corn and wheat shot out of the ground like geysers – far more than he could eat by himself. Unfortunately, it was too much for him to harvest by himself and some of the crops rotted in the ground. He also broke his ankle once and almost starved because he couldn't do all the planting by himself.



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Even so, he got by pretty well, farming and hunting by himself and he usually had extra food. Now Thog was vain – he did his sit-ups every morning, and he didn't want all the extra food to mess up his waistline! Instead of eating all the extra food, Thog decided to start a family. Eighteen years later, Thog's children had children, and soon, there were 20 people running around his farm.



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There was so much food from farming, that some of Thog's grandchildren didn't even need to farm. They made tools, clothes, and other things that were needed on the farm. They traded these items for food, and even had time to draw hunting pictures and to invent better tools. One tool was a pottery wheel, which they used to make clay pots to hold water and other things.



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By this time, Thog was getting old and he liked to sit next to the fire and tell stories about the old days. He remembered carrying everything he needed with him as he chased migrating animals all over Asia. Ah, the good old days. Was he really better off now? His memory wasn't very good anymore, and he had forgotten what the days were like before working together on the farm. He had forgotten what it was like spending all day, every day just looking for food.

We are going to help Thog sort out his memories. Were the good old days really better? We will try to survive on our own, and then, we will try to survive on the farm together as a small band. Both days you will need food, water, and shelter. Which day do you think will be easier? Why?



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