

## Human Evolution Timeline

### Years Ago

- 55,000,000 First primitive primates evolve, lives in the shadow of the dinosaurs
- 8,000,000 First gorillas evolve. Later, chimp and human lineages diverge
- 5,800,000 *Orrorin tugenensis*, oldest human ancestor thought to have walked on two legs
- 5,500,000 *Ardipithecus*, early "proto-human" shares traits with chimps and gorillas, and is forest-dwelling  
*Australopithecines* appear. They have brains no larger than a chimpanzee's – with a volume around
- 4,000,000 400 – 500 cc -, but walk upright on two legs. First human ancestors to live on the savannah
- 3,200,000 **Lucy**, famous specimen of *Australopithecus afarensis*, lives near what is now Hadar, Ethiopia  
*Paranthropus*, lives in woods and grasslands, has massive jaws for chewing on roots and vegetation.
- 2,700,000 Becomes extinct 1.2 MYA  
*Homo habilis* appears. Its face protrudes less than earlier hominids, but still retains many ape
- 2,500,000 features. Has a brain volume of around 600 cc  
Hominids start to use stone tools regularly, created by splitting pebbles – this starts Oldowan tradition
- 2,500,000 of toolmaking, which last a million years  
Some hominids develop meat-rich diets as scavengers, the extra energy may have favored the
- 2,500,000 evolution of larger brains
- 2,000,000 Evidence of *Homo ergaster*, with a brain volume of up to 850 cc, in Africa  
*Homo erectus* is found in Asia. First true hunter-gatherer ancestor, and also first to have migrated out
- 1,800,000 of Africa in large numbers. It attains a brain size of around 1000 cc  
Possible first sporadic use of fire suggested by discolored sediments in Koobi Fora, Kenya. More
- 1,600,000 convincing evidence of charred wood and stone tools is found in Israel and dated to 780,000 years
- 1,600,000 ago  
More complex Acheulean stone tools start to be produced and are the dominant technology until
- 1,600,000 100,000 years ago
- 500,000 Earliest evidence of purpose-built shelters - wooden huts - are known from sites near Chichibu, Japan
- 500,000 *Homo Heidelbergensis* lives in Africa and Europe. Similar brain capacity to modern humans
- 400,000 Early humans begin to hunt with spears  
Oldest surviving early human footprints are left by three people who scrambled down the slopes of a
- 325,000 volcano in Italy
- 280,000 First complex stone blades and grinding stones  
Neanderthals appear and are found across Europe, from Britain in the west to Iran in the east, until
- 230,000 they become extinct with the advent of modern humans 28,000 years ago  
Our own species *Homo sapiens* appears on the scene – and shortly after begins to migrate across
- 195,000 Asia and Europe. Oldest modern human remains are two skulls found in Ethiopia that date to this
- 170,000 period. Average human brain volume is 1350 cc  
Mitochondrial Eve, the direct ancestor to all living people today, may have been living in Africa
- 150,000 nans possibly capable of speech. 100,000-year-old shell jewelry suggests that that people develop
- 150,000 plex speech and symbolism
- 140,000 First evidence of long-distance trade
- 110,000 Earliest beads – made from ostrich eggshells – and jewelry  
"Great leap forward": human culture starts to change much more rapidly than before; people begin
- 50,000 burying their dead ritually; create clothes from animal hides; and develop complex hunting techniques,
- 50,000 such as pit-traps.  
Colonization of Australia by modern humans  
Oldest cave art. Later, Stone Age artisans create the spectacular murals at Lascaux and Chauvet in
- 33,000 France
- 33,000 *Homo erectus* dies out in Asia – replaced by modern man  
*Homo Floresiensis*, "Hobbit" people, found on the Indonesian island of Flores. They stand just over 1
- 18,000 meter tall, and have brains similar in size to chimpanzees, yet have advanced stone tools
- 12,000 Modern people reach the Americas
- 10,000 Agriculture develops and spread. First villages. Possible domestication of dogs
- 6,000 The Sumerians of Mesopotamia develop the world's first civilization  
Stone Age ends and Bronze Age begins. Humans begin to smelt and work copper and tin, and use
- 5,500 them in place of stone implements
- 5,000 Earliest known writing