

Contents

6 950,000 years ago ...

The world is in the grip of the Ice Ages. A cave bear spends the cold winter in a deep sleep.

8 100,000 years later ...

Humans have discovered a cave—somewhere to shelter for the night. Suddenly a pack of lions attacks them.

10 300,000 years later ...

Prehistoric humans still use the cave for shelter. For food, they hunt wild animals with their wooden spears.

12 400,000 years later ...

Neanderthals have set up camp inside the cave mouth. Their clothes are made from animals skins and furs.

14 A few weeks later ...

The Neanderthal hunters have trapped a woolly mammoth.

16 The next day ...

The Neanderthals prepare to bury a man. His body is laid in a pit along with the skull of a deer.



18 65,000 years later ...

The Neanderthals have visitors. They are friendly, although the Neanderthals cannot understand what they are saying.

20 10,000 years later ...

Modern humans have taken over the cave. Some are at work painting pictures of animals on the cave walls.

22 20,000 years later ...

No one lives in the cave. People still hunt and fish, but they have now also become farmers.

24 A few years ago ...

A school party visits the cave. Some children manage to squeeze through the narrow opening. An astonishing sight greets them.

26 A few months later ...

Archaeologists are carrying out a very detailed excavation. Soon they make an exciting discovery.

28 Today

The cave, with its magnificent paintings discovered by the schoolchildren, is now a tourist attraction.

30 Glossary

31 Index

Introduction

Imagine you are somewhere in Europe, at the entrance to a cave on the slopes of a mountain valley. It is hundreds of thousands of years ago. Some humans use the cave as a shelter. They wear no clothes, their bodies are covered with hair and the shape of their heads is different from ours. As thousands of years pass, gradually the humans evolve and change. They become expert hunters and toolmakers and learn to make clothes. Then they die out and modern humans arrive to take over the cave.

The story told in this book is like a journey. It is not a journey you can make by plane, car or ship. In fact, you don't have to go anywhere at all. You are about to travel through *time*. With each turn of the page, the date moves forward many thousands of years—or sometimes just a short period. Each stop on the journey is like a chapter in the story. The first settlers, the encounters with wild animals, the capture of a woolly mammoth, the burial of the dead hunter, the cave paintings—all tell the story of the first humans.



Look out for a pair of bats. They appear in all of the illustrations, although sometimes they are quite difficult to spot.

Use this thumb index to travel through time! Just find the page you want to see and flip it open. This way you can make a quick comparison between one scene and another, even though some show events that took place many years apart. A little black arrow on the page points to the time of the scene illustrated on that page.



Homo heidelbergensis had emerged by about 500,000 years ago. These humans were forced to learn how to survive a period of rapid climate change. They used their brains to invent better tools. The hammer head (top) was carved from the antler of a giant deer. Clearly a treasured possession, it was used to make hand-axes (above) from flints.



10,000 years later ...

Modern humans have taken over the cave. From the depths comes drumming, dancing, clapping and chanting. Through

the dim light given off by the flickering lamps and fire brands, we can just see a group of people. Some are dressed up as animals and perform a dance to the music of a flute-player and drummer.

Meanwhile, other people are at work painting pictures of animals on the cave walls. Using both tools and their own fingers, they paint with charcoal and ochre, a type of clay.

CAVE PAINTINGS

Some of the most revealing things left behind by our early *Homo sapiens* ancestors were cave paintings. They have been found all over the world. Paintings found at Chauvet, France, date back about 32,000 years ago. It is thought that special ceremonies may have been held in the painted caves.

