



# Early People

How did early people discover the uses of fire? Read the possible explanation below and then answer the questions that follow. For help, you may refer to pages 30 to 35 in your textbook.

They learned to carry it [fire] from the wilds, where it appeared when a volcano erupted, when lightning struck in the dry grass of the plains, or when some outcrop of coal or shale oil burst into flames by spontaneous combustion. Having captured fire, the first men learned to keep it going in their hearths.

Besides the protection it afforded, fire was a key to survival in other ways. Once *Homo erectus* discovered the art of cooking—perhaps by accident as a slab of meat fell onto a flaming hearth and was eaten—he seems to have cooked much of what he caught.

Besides cooking with fire, *Homo erectus* discovered other practical uses for it. It broadened his choice of tools and weapons. The observation that bone or antler grew hard in the heat of a campfire or that green wood did not always burn completely and instead hardened must have led him to employ fire in toolmaking.

Editors of Time-Life Books, *The First Men* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1973), pages 20–21.

1. How did people discover various uses for fire?

---

---

---

2. How did the technology of building fires change life in the past?

---

---

---

3. What were the first tools used by humans? For what were they used?

---

---

---

4. What do ancient rock paintings and carvings reveal about early people?

---

---

---

## Using New Words

Choose a word from the box to complete each sentence. For help, you can refer to the lessons in Chapter 1 of your textbook.

civilization

agriculture

technology

Neolithic Era

surplus

specialize

Paleolithic Era

hunter-gatherers

domesticate

1. The period of time when people used simple stone tools is called the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Hunters and gatherers used simple \_\_\_\_\_, such as stone tools, to meet their needs.
3. About 12,000 years ago people began practicing \_\_\_\_\_, the raising of crops and animals for human use.
4. The world's first farmers learned to \_\_\_\_\_ animals, such as wild goats, cattle, and sheep.
5. Eventually, early farmers began to produce an oversupply, or \_\_\_\_\_, of food.
6. Having an oversupply of food freed some people to \_\_\_\_\_, or train to do a specific task, such as turning wheat into flour for baking bread.
7. During the \_\_\_\_\_, which ended about 6,000 years ago, people began to settle down in permanent locations.
8. Complex changes in the way people lived and worked sparked the development of \_\_\_\_\_, cultures with systems of religion, education, and government.
9. People who met their needs by hunting animals and gathering plants are called \_\_\_\_\_.