

The History Toolkit, Year 1 ~ Deep History

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A read-aloud journey through the deep human past. One Time Traveler, thirty-four stops, two million years, six continents, and one question asked at every stop: how do we know?

Lesson 1: History starts with you History is the true story of the past, and it begins with you.

Learners discover how their own family stories are history, then meet the Time Traveler frame that carries them through the whole course.

Lesson 2: Can you imagine? Historians use two tools together: evidence and imagination.

Learners practice traveling back in time and meet the idea of the artifact, a real clue left behind by real people.

Lesson 3: Lucy and the walking people (3.2 million years ago) In East Africa, learners meet Lucy and her relatives, and discover how the shape of fossil bones, and a trail of footprints frozen in volcanic ash, tell us our ancient cousins walked on two feet.

Lesson 4: Tool makers (2 million years ago) *Homo habilis* learns to strike one stone against another and make a sharp edge. Learners see how flakes found at Gona fit back onto their stones like puzzle pieces, proof that someone made these tools on purpose, and how that knowledge passed from hand to hand.

Lesson 5: Fire keepers (1 million years ago) Controlling fire changed everything: warmth, safety, cooked food, a place to gather. Learners explore how *Homo erectus* lived with fire, and meet the honest truth that we cannot know exactly when the first fire was kept.

Lesson 6: Homo sapiens (300,000 years ago) In the Great Rift Valley, learners meet the first modern humans and learn the thing that grounds the whole course: every person alive today shares these African ancestors. You are *Homo sapiens* too.

Lesson 7: Living by the coast (100,000 years ago) At Blombos Cave, families gather food from the tide pools and leave behind huge piles of shells. Learners discover how a midden, an ancient trash heap, becomes evidence of what people ate and what they knew.

Lesson 8: Hunter-gatherers (80,000 years ago) Two families, two ways of living: one following the herds, one settled by a lake. Learners see that there is no single right way to be a hunter-gatherer, and that trading between groups was a survival strategy.

Lesson 9: The day the sky turned gray (74,000 years ago) The Toba supervolcano was one of the largest eruptions in human history. Learners discover how a stripe of gray ash in the earth becomes a time stamp, and how the same tools above and below it show that people survived.

Lesson 10: When climate changes (*70,000 years ago*) Lakes dry, herds move, and families face hard choices. Learners meet the difference between weather and climate, and explore what people carry, in their packs and their hearts, when they leave home.

Lesson 11: Reaching the coast (*70,000 years ago*) A cooling Earth pulls the sea back, opening new coastline and narrower crossings. Learners see how knowledge shared between coastal and inland families became essential, and how a changing climate makes new paths possible.

Lesson 12: Journey out of Africa (*70,000 years ago*) At the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, families cross from Africa into Arabia. Learners follow a journey recorded in living DNA, and learn that most people outside Africa today descend from travelers like these.

Lesson 13: Island innovators (*69,000 years ago*) In Southeast Asia, the descendants of early travelers become people of the sea, building rafts and boats and passing better designs down the generations. The course celebrates the human pull toward the horizon.

Lesson 14: Australian achievement (*65,000 years ago*) Reaching Sahul meant crossing deep open ocean. Learners meet the strange megafauna of a continent apart, and discover at Madjedbebe the oldest ground-edge axes in the world, made by the ancestors of a people whose culture has continued on that continent for over 65,000 years, among the longest unbroken human stories anywhere on Earth.

Lesson 15: Neanderthals (*50,000 years ago*) In the Levant, learners meet the Neanderthals: cold-adapted, family-oriented humans who cared for their sick and buried their dead. And they learn that our two kinds of human met, had children, and left a legacy many people carry today.

Lesson 16: Into the green darkness (*48,000 years ago*) In the rainforests of Sri Lanka, *Homo sapiens* become the first humans to thrive in dense, wet forest, inventing the tools the canopy demanded. Different worlds call for different inventions.

Lesson 17: European ice survivors (*45,000 years ago*) Entering Ice Age Europe meant solving deadly cold. Learners discover limestone shelters and the bone needle, the tool that made fitted, warm clothing possible, and meet the Balkans as a doorway into the continent.

Lesson 18: The cave of a thousand animals (*36,000 years ago*) Deep inside a cave in what is now southern France, Ice Age people painted lions, horses, and rhinoceroses so skillfully that the scientists who found them could scarcely believe their age. Learners explore why people went into the dark to make beauty.

Lesson 19: Siberian masters (*35,000 years ago*) On the treeless mammoth steppe, families built homes from mammoth bone and wasted nothing. Learners see the extraordinary resourcefulness it took to live on a frozen grassland.

Lesson 20: Beringia — bridge and homeland (*30,000 years ago*) Beringia was not just a land bridge but a homeland where families lived for generations. Learners discover the different routes, coastal and inland, that people took toward two new continents.

Lesson 21: How wolves became dogs (23,000 years ago) The first domesticated animal in the world was not tamed by force. It was drawn in by firelight and food. Learners explore how less-fearful wolves became partners through mutual benefit, and the deep bond that followed.

Lesson 22: The Jomon people (16,500 years ago) On the islands that will become Japan, hunter-fishers paddle cedar canoes between settlements, trade obsidian community to community, and press rope into wet clay to make some of the world's earliest pottery.

Lesson 23: A melting world (15,000 years ago) On the coast of what is now British Columbia, the warming world raises the sea and a family moves its camp upslope, again and again. Learners watch a world change by gaining water, and meet a grandmother who has done this all her life.

Lesson 24: Monte Verde (14,500 years ago) At the southern tip of South America, a child leaves a footprint in the mud. Learners discover how radiocarbon dating, and a team of doubting scientists who came to see for themselves, proved people reached the Americas far earlier than anyone believed.

Lesson 25: Doggerland (14,000 years ago) Before Britain was an island, a rich forested land stretched across what is now the North Sea, full of families who knew every river mouth, until the rising sea swallowed it. Learners meet a world known today only through what the seafloor gives up.

Lesson 26: The Natufians (13,000–11,000 years ago) In the Fertile Crescent, people discover that planted seeds grow into food, and the world changes in that corner of the Earth. Learners explore both the gains and the trade-offs of settling down.

Lesson 27: Chinese innovators (11,000 years ago) Along the rivers of China, people invent farming on their own, with rice in the wet south and millet in the dry north. Learners see how a built, walled, flooded field proves people grew food on purpose, the same idea as the Fertile Crescent, reached entirely independently.

Lesson 28: American plant partners (10,000 years ago) In the mountain valleys of Mexico, families begin shaping squash by saving the best seeds, an early kind of science, while still moving with the seasons. Learners meet domestication happening a world away from the Fertile Crescent.

Lesson 29: The people who chose the sea (10,000 years ago) On the same southern African cape where the human story of the coast began, the San read their rich shoreline and choose the life it gives them, even as farming spreads elsewhere. Learners discover that staying put never required farming, and that choosing not to farm was a wise, informed choice.

Lesson 30: African innovators (9,000 years ago) The green Sahara was once grassland and lakes, home to expert cattle herders, potters, and rock artists. Learners explore the creativity and the long trade connections of early African communities.

Lesson 31: Farming reaches Europe (8,500 years ago) In the hills of Thessaly, in what is now Greece, learners discover how farming arrived in Europe, carried by people and their seeds across the sea, not invented again but learned from others, an example of knowledge spreading by travel.

Lesson 32: Planning for hard times (*7,000 years ago*) High in the Andes, drought pushes people to invent terrace farming and to domesticate potatoes, quinoa, and llamas. The invention of freeze-dried chuño gave families food that could outlast the hardest winters. Learners meet long-term planning as a survival tool.

Lesson 33: Australian continent keepers (*6,600 years ago*) At Budj Bim, the Gunditjmarra people build one of the world's oldest aquaculture systems, shaping water and stone to farm eels. Learners learn the meaning of Country and meet environmental stewardship practiced across thousands of years, by a people still here today.

Lesson 34: Our human journey (*everywhere on Earth, today*) The journey comes home. Among the Hadza of Tanzania, by a fire under the stars, learners gather the whole story into one idea: every person alive shares ancestors who began in Africa, and we are all part of one human family. The course closes where it opened, with you, and your place in the human story.