



Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Curriculum

EFLA STUDY GUIDE

UNIT 1: Ancient Africa (200,000 B.C.E. – 476 A.C.E.)

CLASS 1: Out of Africa - The Origins of Humanity *Part 1*

OVERVIEW

According to modern science and historical evidence, the first human beings (homo sapiens) on our planet originated in Africa approximately 200,000 years ago in the area which is now Ethiopia. This “Out of Africa” or (OOA) theory is the most widely accepted theory of the origins of mankind. There is but one “race” in the world - the human “race.” Modern ideas of separate “races” of people (i.e. black, white, Asian, Latino, etc.) are not rooted in anything scientific, but are social constructions. Once speculative, this theory of a recent single origin hypothesis (RSOH) coming out of Africa has been [corroborated](#) by present-day mitochondrial DNA, combined with evidence based on physical anthropology of [archaic](#) specimens. Thus, history begins in Africa. Fittingly, archeologists and geneticists affectionately refer to Africa as both the “birthplace of mankind” and the “cradle of civilization.”

Despite the fact that human beings originated in Africa and lived on the continent of Africa for well over 100,000 years before any other continent, we know very little about African history, let alone the first people in Africa - our common ancestors. These first human beings in Africa get little attention in modern history books, yet the contributions they made to civilization were not only pioneering – they allowed our species to survive. These early humans were the first to witness fire and learn to cultivate and manipulate it. They were the first to observe logs floating on the river and to translate that knowledge into the development of canoes and boats. They were the first to fashion shelter from reeds and to make homes from dried mud; to domesticate plants and animals; and to craft simple and complex tools for hunting, fishing, farming and building. They were the first to observe the wisdom of animals and apply it to their own lives. They were the first migrants, following herds of animals throughout the continent for new food and water sources. They gave us our first knowledge of astronomy, our first drawings of animals, vegetation, and human beings swimming. They made the world’s first weapons for taking down large prey, including the spear with stone tip and the more sophisticated bow and arrow. Furthermore, these early human beings in Africa established the first systems of human organization, including family structure and the first forms of human worship and spirituality. And this was literally tens of thousands of years before the first of the great ancient civilization of Kemet/Egypt was established circa 4,000 B.C.E.

In the next two classes, you will analyze the [prevailing](#) theories on the origins of humanity and journey back in time to the first humans in Africa. What did they do in Africa for 100,000 years? What did they learn? What did they pass on? When and why did they begin migrating out of

Africa? These questions will be probed as we begin our study of history, which begins with the study of Africa.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- ✓ Analyze the prevailing scientific theories on the origins of human beings.
- ✓ Describe the reasons the first humans (homo sapiens) migrated out of Africa.
- ✓ Discuss the contributions to civilization made by the first humans in Africa.
- ✓ Chart the path of human migration out of Africa and discuss its impact on human variation (i.e. skin/eye color, height, hair texture, etc.).

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Read/View the following:

- ✓ Natural History Museum: "Where did modern humans come from?" (7 min)
Link: <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/life/human-origins/modern-human-evolution/where/>
- ✓ Documentary: Journey of Man - The Story of the Human Species Part 1 (57:10 min)
- ✓ Video: UNTOLD BLACK HISTORY: The Black Chinese: DNA test... Case Closed (2:11 min)

STUDY QUESTIONS

From "Where Did Modern Humans Come From"

1. A. Define the three models of human origins: A. The Out of Africa Model B. The Multiregional Model and C. The Assimilationist Model.
2. What model of human origins is the most widely accepted?

From documentary "Journey of Man"

1. According to geneticists there are no separate "races" of people, all human beings originated in Africa from one man and woman. True or False?
2. When did human beings first begin to migrate out of Africa? B. What was the reason(s) for this first major migration?
3. According to geneticists, the San Bushmen of Africa have some of the oldest DNA on the planet. It was noted that looking at them was like "looking at a composite model of every face from around the world: the eye shape of east Asians, the high cheek bones of Mongolians, and the mid-brown skin color that can turn darker or lighter."

A. Is this true in your opinion? B. How does the skin color and physical appearance of the San Bushmen contrast with what you have been conditioned to believe indigenous Africans look like?
4. What is it that allows geneticists to trace human descent?
5. What is the unique element found in Sans Bushman language?
6. What was one of the newest technological advances made by Africans 50,000 years ago?
7. Where was the first place Africans migrated to 50,000 years ago?
8. What was the path Africans took to reach Australia?
9. A. What percent (%) of the people who migrated out of Africa went the southern route to India and Southeast Asia? B. What percent (%) went the northern route out of Africa to become the people of Asia, Europe and North and South America?
10. A. Where did the first wave of Africans who took the Northern migration route end up first? B. Where was the second wave of their migration after the Middle East?

11. While people were populating Asia (the Middle East, India and China), where were the Europeans?

From Video: UNTOLD BLACK HISTORY: The Black Chinese: DNA test... Case Closed

1. What was the original hypothesis Chinese geneticist Jin Lee sought of to prove?
2. What did the Chinese geneticist Jin Less say led him to believe that the Chinese developed independently from all other humans?