

ANT-202 Fact Sheet Week 1 September 22-24, 2014

I. Introduction: What is Prehistory?

A. Definitions

1. Prehistory: before the invention of writing. Dating of the prehistoric era varies geographically
2. Writing is a technology for storing, manipulating and communicating data. It was invented independently in three places: in Sumer in the Near East (present-day Iraq) around 3100 B.C., around 1500 B.C. in China, and around 500-300 B.C. in Mesomerica.

B. Subfields of Anthropology

1. cultural anthropology
2. linguistic anthropology
3. physical or biological anthropology
4. archaeology

II. Archaeology

A. Basic concepts

1. Culture: Shared ideas
2. Material Culture: Physical manifestations of culture
3. Artifacts: Any object or material made or used by a human being in the past.
4. Features: An artifact that cannot be moved such as a house foundation, pyramid, or a hearth.

5. Ecofacts: Remains of animals or plants that result from human activities but were not intentionally modified.
 6. Human skeletal remains: Remains of humans or human ancestors resulting from either accidental or intentional burial or some other preservation activity (e.g., mummification).
 7. Sites: Accumulations of artifacts, features, ecofacts and/or human skeletal remains that represent places where people lived, died, or carried out certain activities in the past.
 8. Associations: The proximity of an archaeological artifact or feature to other artifacts or features in the same matrix
 9. Context: The relationship between an artifact and its setting.
 10. Stratigraphy: Layering of soil or rock deposits
 11. Fossils- Petrified remains of a once-living organism.
 12. Law of superposition: the deepest levels are the oldest.
 13. Midden: Deposit of prehistoric garbage
- B. Dating and Divisions of Time
1. Discovering Geologic Time and the Antiquity of the Earth
 - a. 1600s: Prevailing Orthodoxy: European views of life and history: Earth 6000 years old, Medieval Concept of Order
 - b. 1700s Recognition of artifacts as objects created by human beings
 - c. Contributions from Geology
 - i Uniformitarianism—James Hutton 1785

ii Stratigraphy and the law of superposition

2. The Discovery of Prehistory

- a. Georges Cuvier (1812) Catastrophism and extinctions
- b. Diluvium: Results of a great flood
- c. Jon Frere- Acheulian hand axe below the diluvium\
- d. Brixham Cave in England : Proclamation by the British Royal Society in 1859

3. Geologic Time Periods

<u>Era</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Epoch</u>
Cenozoic (65 MYA-present)	Quaternary (2 MYA-present)	Holocene (12,000 years ago-present
		Pleistocene (2.0 million years ago-12,000 years ago)
	Tertiary (65-2 MYA)	Pliocene (5.5-2.0 MYA)
Mesozoic (225-65 MYA)		Miocene (25-5.5 MYA)

MYA= Million Years Ago

4. Cultural Divisions of Time

- a. Historical-Danish Three Age System
- b. Modern
 - a) Paleolithic
 - b) Neolithic

5. Dating methods

- a. Historic records.
- b. Dendrochronology
- c. Radiocarbon dating
- d. Potassium-argon dating