



**Homo habilis**

**Nickname:** Handy Man

**Where Lived:** Eastern and Southern Africa

**When Lived:** 2.4 million to 1.4 million years ago

**Characteristics:**

- slightly larger braincase and smaller face and teeth than in older hominin species
- long arms & projecting lower jaw

**Year of Discovery:** 1960

**Height:** average 3 ft 4 in - 4 ft 5 in

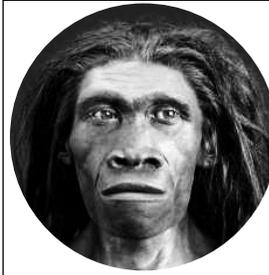
**Weight:** average 70 lbs

**How They Survived:**

- thick tooth enamel
- strong jaws
- flexible and versatile diet, including some tougher foods like leaves, woody plants, and some animal tissues
- no routine eating of hard foods like brittle nuts or seeds, dried meat, or very hard tubers.
- butchery of large animals, direct evidence of meat and marrow eating

**Evolutionary Tree Information:**

- one of the earliest members of the genus *Homo*
- co-existed with *Homo erectus* in Eastern Africa for almost half a million years.



**Homo erectus**

**Where Lived:** Northern, Eastern, and Southern Africa; Western Asia; East Asia

**When Lived:** Between about 1.89 million and 143,000 years ago

**Characteristics:**

- with relatively elongated legs and shorter arms (modern human-like body proportions)
- lived on the ground, with the ability to walk and possibly run long distances
- expanded braincase relative to the size of the face
- cared for old and weak individuals
- used hand axes, the first major innovation in stone tool technology

**Year of Discovery:** 1891

**Height:** Ranges from 4 ft 9 in - 6 ft 1 in

**Weight:** Ranges from 88 - 150 lbs

**How They Survived:**

- honey and underground tubers may have been significant food sources
- first major innovation in stone tool technology
- earliest evidence of campfires

**Evolutionary Tree Information:**

- coexisted with *Homo rudolfensis*, *Homo habilis*, and *Paranthropus boisei*
- coexisted with *Homo sapiens* and possibly *Homo*

Information from Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History  
<http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/human-fossils/species/>



**Homo heidelbergensis**

**Where Lived:** Europe; possibly Asia; Africa

**When Lived:** About 700,000 to 200,000 years ago

**Characteristics:**

- very large browridge
- larger braincase and flatter face than older early human species
- first early human species to live in colder climates
- oldest definite control of fire and use of wooden spears
- first early human species to routinely hunt large animals
- first species to build shelters, creating simple dwellings out of wood and rock

**Year of Discovery:** 1908

**Height:** Males: average 5 ft 9 in (175 cm); Females: average 5 ft 2 in

**Weight:** Males: average 136 lbs (62 kg); Females: average 112 lbs

**How They Survived:**

- capable of controlling fire by building early fireplaces (evidence found in Israel)
- first to build simple shelters
- first hunter of large game animals
- evidence of what may be human ritual: individuals deliberately thrown inside a pit.

**Evolutionary Tree Information:**

- includes early humans from Spain, England, and Italy



***Homo neanderthalensis***

**Nickname:** Neanderthal  
(‘th’ pronounced as ‘t’)

**Where Lived:** Europe and southwestern to central Asia

**When Lived:** ≈400,000 - 40,000 years ago

**Characteristics:**

- first early human fossils ever found
- closest extinct human relative
- large middle part of the face, angled cheek bones, and nose for humidifying and warming cold, dry air
- shorter and stockier bodies
- brains as large as and often larger than modern humans
- made and used sophisticated tools
- controlled fire
- lived in shelters
- made and wore clothing
- occasionally made symbolic or ornamental objects
- deliberately buried dead and occasionally marked graves with offerings, such as flowers

**Year of Discovery:** 1829

**Height:** Males: average 5 ft 5 in; Females: average 5 ft 1 in

**Weight:** Males: average 143 lbs; Females: average 119 lbs

**How They Survived:**

1. specialized seasonal hunters
2. big game animal remains hunted and butchered
3. exploited marine resources such as mollusks, seals, dolphins and fish
4. ate plants
5. tools chipped down by the removal of flakes off the surface.
6. hunted with thrusting (rather than throwing) spears
7. high frequency of fractures, like injuries among professional rodeo riders
8. scrapers and awls (larger stone or bone versions of the sewing)

**Evolutionary Tree Information:**

- modern humans belong to the same genus (Homo)
- little direct interaction for tens of thousands of years with modern humans until during one very cold period, modern humans spread across Europe
- most recently dated Neanderthal fossils come from western Europe



***Homo floresiensis***

**Nickname:** the Hobbit

**Where Lived:** Asia

**When Lived:** About 100,000 – 50,000 years ago

**Characteristics:**

- more recently discovered early human species, found only on Island of Flores, Indonesia.
- made and used stone tools
- tiny brains
- large teeth for size
- shrugged-forward shoulders
- no chins
- receding foreheads
- relatively large feet due to their short legs
- coped with predators such as giant Komodo dragons
- may have used fire
- island dwarfism—from long-term isolation with limited food resources and lack of predators

**Year of Discovery:** 2003

**Height:** 3 ft 6 in - estimate from a female skeleton

**Weight:** 66 lbs - estimate from a female skeleton

**How They Survived:**

- selectively hunted *Stegodon* (extinct type of elephant)
- hunted small elephants and large rodents

**Evolutionary Tree Information:**

- debate over how *H. floresiensis* is related to other species in the genus (evolve from an earlier population of *H. erectus* or from a smaller species?)



***Homo sapiens***

**Where Lived:** Evolved in Africa, now worldwide

**When Lived:** About 200,000 years ago to present

**Characteristics:**

- gathered and hunted food
- evolved behaviors to respond to survival challenges
- lighter build of skeletons
- very large brains
- a thin-walled, high vaulted skull; flat, near vertical forehead
- smaller teeth.

**Discovery:** no particular *Homo sapiens* individual

**How They Survived:**

- made, used, and specialized Prehistoric stone tools
- composite stone tools, fishhooks and harpoons, bows and arrows, spear throwers and sewing needles
- farming and herding animals
- settlements
- interaction with each other and surroundings
- broad social networks
- exchanged resources over wide areas
- created art, music, adornment, rituals, and symbols

**Evolutionary Tree Information:**

- did *not* evolve from any of the apes living today
- most likely evolved from *Homo heidelbergensis*, common ancestor shared with Neanderthals