

# STUDYING THE ORIGIN OF HUMAN BEINGS

Linguistic level: A2/B1

## INTRODUCTION

Scientists resort to numerous research methods to look into the different periods of prehistory and history, and to learn more about the principal hominids. The characteristics of human beings are the result of the evolution they have undergone over time. These changes are closely related to the conditioning factors and circumstances around them, and have determined what they looked like, what they ate, where they inhabited, how they expressed themselves, what they produced and what they believed in.

This project aims to help students to identify the different periods in prehistory and history, and to describe the characteristics of human beings. Students are encouraged to maintain discussions in groups and develop their capacity to reflect on what life was like in past times.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Objectives specific to the content area

- Recognise different sources of information in Prehistory.
- Understand that the age of rock layers and fossils is related to their location.
- Learn about the specific characteristics of human beings.

### Key competences

- Understand the past and present social reality.
- Communicate and enter into dialogue with those around one, with the aim of establishing links and building constructive relationships.
- Understand and interpret icons, symbols and other ways of representing information, especially those relating to maps and images.
- Make use of different types of reasoning and look for multi-causal explanations and predict the effects of social developments.

### Collaborative work

- Develop the skills needed to work in pairs and small groups, valuing the ideas of others and being able to agree on solutions through consensus.
- Set goals, be able to revise plans, look for solutions to problems and implement them.

## LANGUAGE CONTENT AND COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOMES

### Vocabulary

- **Prehistory:** *tool, tool use, tool manufacturing, bipedalism, hominid*
- **Lifestyle:** *hunting, fishing, gathering, cave painting, bartering, worship/bury the dead, nomadic/sedentary, wear animal hides, practise agriculture, keep livestock*
- **Appearance:** *protruding eyebrows, sunken/straight forehead, brain size, fine jaw, prominent chin, walk upright*
- **Research methods in history:** *source of information, validity, trace fossils, material culture*
- **General content area:** *rock layer, weather erosion, coexist*

### Structures

- **Register:** formal
- **Language:** statements, past simple, present continuous
- **How to argue:** *It might be a ..., but ...* Use linking words like: *because, however or although.*

### Cultural and contextual elements

- Use different graphic sources to interpret relevant information in prehistory.
- Be aware of the world locations where the first hominid species developed.
- Become familiar with the initial art expressions and tools found, contrasting them with those found in Spain.
- Examine the climate change that took place towards the end of the Palaeolithic Age, and look at the consequences it brought to some areas.

### Communication activities

- Communicate simple messages, verbally and in writing.
- Speak, listen and participate in dialogue in small groups.
- Communicate with an increasing degree of competence in a foreign language.

### Cognitive and thinking processes

- Endeavour to understand how life developed in other periods in the past and imagine the different techniques used to survive.
- Use critical reasoning and group work to identify specific human characteristics and to argue about questions without a closed or a single answer.

### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

	<b>D (20–40%)</b>	<b>C (40–60%)</b>	<b>B (60–80%)</b>	<b>A (80–100%)</b>
<b>Content-related activities</b>	Does not complete the activities, completes only some or makes many mistakes.	Completes the activities, but makes some mistakes.	Completes the activities, mostly correctly.	Completes all the activities with very few or no mistakes.
<b>Applying content</b>	Does not apply methods for studying Prehistory and does not identify human characteristics, failing to establish relationships between them.	Imprecisely applies methods for studying Prehistory and explains few characteristics of human beings, failing to establish relationships between them.	Applies methods for studying Prehistory and explains some characteristics of human beings, failing to establish relationships between them.	Applies methods for studying Prehistory correctly and explains relevant characteristics of human beings, establishing relationships between them.
<b>Use of language</b>	Does not understand all the instructions, simply underlines text and does not participate in oral discussions.	Understands instructions, but makes many mistakes in written and oral tasks and uses the terminology imprecisely.	Understands instructions, makes few mistakes in oral and written production and uses terminology correctly.	Understands instructions, produces excellent written and oral work and uses terminology and expressions correctly.
<b>Accuracy and following instructions</b>	Very untidy and hard to understand.	Untidy, but can be understood. Follows instructions.	Follows instructions, but makes some mistakes.	Very clear, follows instructions perfectly.

Extra credit may be awarded to students who attempt the Extension activity correctly.

## ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

### Materials you will need:

- Worksheets 1 and 2
- Web links under 'Useful links'
- Contents of Unit 7 of Oxford CLIL Social Sciences ESO 1

### Timing

2 sessions (1 hour and 50 minutes)

#### Session 1 (55 minutes):

- Introducing the topic and activities: 5 minutes
- Activity 1: 10–15 minutes
- Activity 2: 20–25 minutes
- Class discussion and conclusions: 10 minutes

#### Session 2 (55 minutes):

- Introducing the topic and activities: 5 minutes
- Activity 1: 15 minutes
- Activity 2: 25 minutes
- Class discussion and conclusions: 10 minutes

### Instructions

- Carry out this project once the contents of Unit 7 of Oxford CLIL Social Sciences ESO 1 have been covered.
- Introduce the topic to your students:  
Write some of the keywords from the unit on the board and encourage students to explain what they mean. The specific content vocabulary must be carefully addressed. Discuss how human beings have evolved over time and what areas have been affected by this evolution (settlements, eating, tool making, society building, art expressions, production, etc.).
- Hand out Worksheet 1 (Session 1) or Worksheet 2 (Session 2) to your students.
- Students may work individually, in pairs or in small groups.
- Students discuss the questions posed in each worksheet, share their findings and draw some conclusions. The teacher must guide the process, while trying not to give solutions until the end of the session.
- Introduce the Extension activity. This activity is optional. The students will get extra credit for it and the teacher may present some of their results to the rest of students in Session 2.

## Answer key

### Worksheet 1

#### Activity 1

*With this activity we expect to encourage critical reasoning while students learn about different sources of information in order to research history, their validity and ways to contrast the information. Some of the sources of information that might be discussed are: primary sources, secondary sources, written sources and non-written sources.*

#### Activity 2.1

*Title: The fossilisation process*

- 1. An animal falls into a lake and it dies.*
- 2. The soft body parts, such as skin and muscles, rot away. The bones remain.*
- 3. Over time, sediments of sand and mud layers cover the body. They harden and form sedimentary rock layers. Minerals in the bones are dissolved away. These are replaced with minerals in the ground. This takes a very long time.*
- 4. The weather erosion exposes the fossil to the surface.*

#### Activity 2.2

*Rock layers are deposited from the bottom up, so the materials located in a lower position are older than those located further up. As the figure shows, fossil remains are found in rocks of different ages. The deeper we dig, the further back in time we can research. Human fossils are found in newer rock layers than dinosaur fossils. According to this figure, humans and dinosaurs never coexisted.*

#### Activity 2.3

*There are some fossil remains from a human body. Also, there are two stone tools. We could study the fossil of the skeleton and interpret the age, gender, species and other relevant information. The position of the body may indicate burial practices. Also, the two tools placed by the body show evidence of the ability to produce tools for specific tasks as well as of the way of life.*

### Worksheet 2

#### Activity 1

*The image shows a living being using a stick to fish for termites. The position of this living being is not clear; it seems to be standing on two legs, but is partially relying on the termite mound. The drawing could represent a hominid in the process of becoming a Homo sapiens, or an ape nowadays.*

*Some arguments to support the first interpretation could include tool use and bipedalism. Others may argue that these characteristics are not exclusive of human beings. In fact, apes today use primary tools and walk upright for short periods.*

### Activity 2.1

*Title: Characteristics of human beings*

- A. Bipedalism: type of locomotion involving movement on two feet.*
- B. Tool manufacture: the drawing shows how Stone Age humans made hand axes. The human uses a hammer made of antler to sharp the edge of the rock.*
- C. Brain capacity: large and complex brain.*
- D. Human vocal tract: spoken language is a complex system of communication that relies on human physical ability to produce sounds.*

### Activity 2.2

*These are some examples of relationships between the human characteristics:*

- The brain is the centre coordinating all linguistic activity.*
- Bipedal locomotion frees hands and makes them available for tool making.*
- A large and complex brain relates to the ability to make complex tools and devise systems of communication.*

### Activity 2.3

*Most of the characteristics seen so far are not exclusive to human beings. For example, birds are bipedal, elephants have brains, chimpanzees use tools and orcas use a complex language system.*

### Activity 2.4

*The stick used as a tool to dip for termites is an example of tool use. In this case, the tool has been obtained and used straight from nature. The piece of antler used to sharpen a stone tool is an example of tool manufacture. In this case, a tool obtained straight from nature is being used as a hammer to produce another tool. Tool manufacture represents higher cognitive functioning.*

### Activity 2.5

Not applicable

### Extension activity

Introduce the following options and let students choose one of them.

#### Option A

In pairs, students add other essential features to the list of characteristics of human beings (physiological, emotional, cultural and social). Encourage students to search for information on other sources. Then, share ideas as a class.

**Option B**

Explore research methods in the archaeological site of Atapuerca. Review the resources available and write a brief report about Atapuerca: (a) location and situation; (b) types of rocks and landforms; (c) age of human fossils found in each rock layer; and (d) importance of this archaeological site for studying human evolution.

**Useful links**

- a) *Jane Goodall Institute, Tool use:*  
<http://www.janegoodall.org/media/videos/tool-use>
- b) *Fundación Atapuerca:*  
<http://www.atapuerca.org/>
- c) *Into the depths of human history* (El País):  
[http://elpais.com/elpais/2014/08/25/inenglish/1408962924\\_960182.html](http://elpais.com/elpais/2014/08/25/inenglish/1408962924_960182.html)
- d) *Atapuerca dig yields exciting new find* (El País):  
[http://elpais.com/m/elpais/2013/08/06/inenglish/1375792164\\_416099.html](http://elpais.com/m/elpais/2013/08/06/inenglish/1375792164_416099.html)

**Guidelines for mixed abilities and special needs**

Part of the lesson is designed so that students work collaboratively. The teacher should take care in grouping students of different ability levels, so that they can help each other.

# Worksheet 1

## STUDYING THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN BEINGS

HOW CAN WE INVESTIGATE THE PAST?

### Activity 1

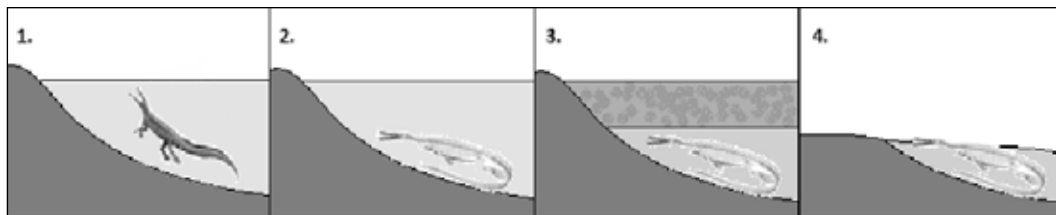
Work with a partner. Try to answer these questions:

1. What did your partner do last night at 9pm?
2. What important facts occurred in Spain two hundred years ago?
3. What important facts occurred ten thousand years ago?

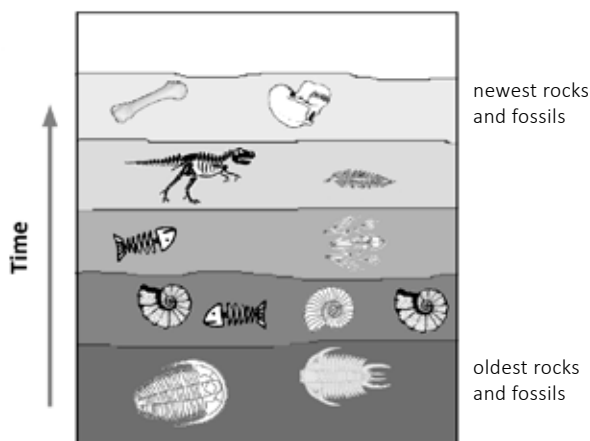
Describe the sources of information that could be used to obtain the answer to each of the questions. Discuss the validity of each answer.

### Activity 2

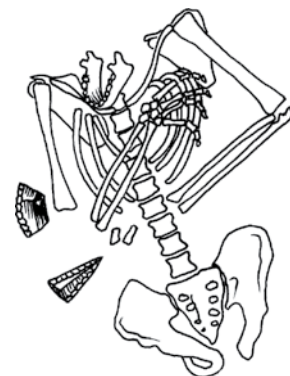
1. Title this set of figures. Write a description for each phase (1, 2, 3 and 4).



2. Observe the following figure. Why are the layers of rocks located in a lower position older than those in the upper layers? Did humans and dinosaurs ever coexist?



3. Apart from fossils, there are other types of human traces from the past. For example, the "material culture" refers to the ancient objects produced by humans over history. Is there any fossil represented in this figure? Is there any trace of material culture? What can you learn from the past by using these sources of information?





## STUDYING THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN BEINGS

WHAT IS A HUMAN BEING?

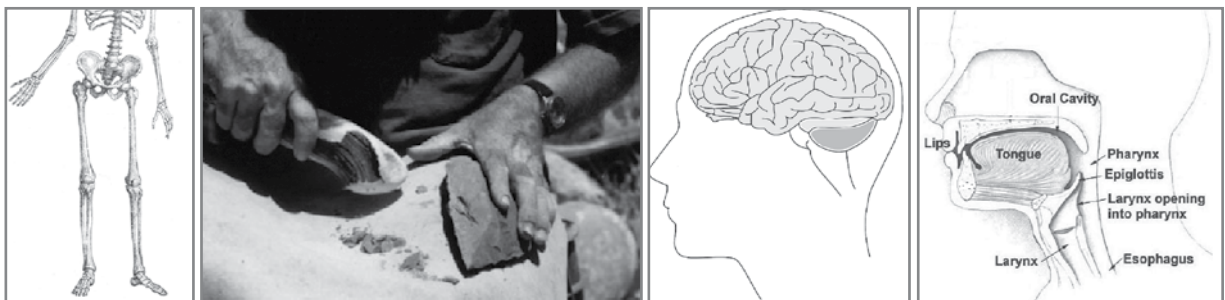
### Activity 1

This drawing shows an *entity* that is using a small stick as a tool to “fish” for termites on a mound. In small groups, discuss if that entity is an animal or a human being. Justify your answer.



### Activity 2

1. Write an appropriate title for this set of images. Comment on each of them individually.



- Identify relationships between the human characteristics represented in the images.
- Are these characteristics exclusive to human beings or are they shared with other animals?
- What is the main difference between the tools represented in Activities 1 and 2?
- Write an essay to respond to this question: *What is a human being?* Remember to structure your writing via linking words.