

Paleolithic Age the first period of the Stone Age, called the Old Stone Age, from about 2 million years ago to around 8000 B.C.E.

Neolithic Age the later part of the Stone Age, called the New Stone Age, lasted from around 8000 to 3000 B.C.E.

Fertile Crescent an arch-shaped region in Southwest Asia, with rich soil

Catal Hoyuk a Neolithic town discovered in central Turkey

Most people in the Neolithic Age settled in fertile areas near sources of water.

1. From Old Stone Age to New Stone Age

The Old Stone Age, or **Paleolithic Age**, began about 2 million years ago, with the first tool-making hominins, and lasted until about 8000 B.C.E. It was during this time period that early modern humans developed. Like the hominins before them, early humans were hunter-gatherers. They wandered from place to place, hunting animals and gathering plants for food. Often, they took shelter in caves where cave painters left clues about their prehistoric ways of life.

The New Stone Age, or **Neolithic Age**, began when people started to farm and produce their own food. The discovery of farming did not happen all at once. Over thousands of years, people gradually learned to raise animals and plant crops. They eventually began to rely on these farms for their food. Now, rather than having to roam long distances in search of things to eat, people could settle down in one place.

The Neolithic Age began around 8000 B.C.E. and lasted until about 3000 B.C.E., when people learned to make tools out of metal instead of stone. During this time, farming developed in many places throughout the world, including parts of Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Many Neolithic settlements were located in the **Fertile Crescent**, east of the Mediterranean Sea, where the land was fertile (good for growing crops). Here, people built towns such as Jericho (JER-ih-koh), **Catal Hoyuk** (CHAHT-ul hoo-YOOK), and Jarmo.

People in settlements like these lived very different lives from earlier hunter-gatherers. They could now concern themselves with other matters such as building permanent shelters and forming larger communities. They could make better tools and clothing. And they could swap items they had with other communities to get the things they lacked. As you will see, these changes made life safer, more comfortable, and more interesting.

Early Neolithic Settlements, About 8000 B.C.E.

