

## ACTIVITY 1.1

**Out of Africa: Early Humans Settle Around the World<sup>1</sup>**

*It is over 70,000 years ago: Imagine that you are a craftsperson who has recently polished a reddish stone about three inches long. You have carved a simple geometric design onto the stone, using the point of another stone. You are sitting in a cave in a cliff overlooking a lovely body of water that will later be called the Indian Ocean. It is a beautiful place to live. You have a cool breeze from the sea in summer and you build a small fire for warmth in the winter. A flowering shrub grows above your cave. Later, this place will be known as Blombos Cave in South Africa because of the name of the shrub. The carving that you made on the stone will later be known as the oldest example of a complex carving made by a human. Why would your people migrate from this area?*

Using DNA samples, fossils and ancient artifacts, scientists have come to believe that modern humans originated in Africa around 200,000 years ago. Humans remained in Africa (and only in Africa) for thousands of years. Sometime between 80,000 and 60,000 years ago, humans began to migrate out of Africa, first to Asia and later to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Australia. The Great Human Migration had begun. By 40,000 years ago, humans migrated to Europe, probably by two different routes. Around 15,000 years ago, humans migrated to North America from Asia, and finally to South America. Most of this migration occurred slowly and gradually and occurred over long periods.

Because this happened so long ago and there are no written records, we do not know exactly *why* humans migrated out of Africa or why they kept migrating until they had settled throughout the world. However, we do have evidence that gives us some clues about these prehistoric times: We know that early human migrants were hunter-gatherers. We also know that climatic changes occurred. We know that human language and communication developed, as did technology, enabling the production of better tools. Many other reasons may also have led to early migrations.

The reasons for migrating are often described in terms of push factors (negative reasons for wanting to leave a place) and pull factors (positive reasons for wanting to go to a place.) When making any voluntary decision, people consider the benefits and costs, or the advantages and disadvantages, of doing something or not doing it. If the benefits of migrating are greater than the costs, the decision will be to migrate. If the costs of migrating are greater than the benefits, the decision will be not to migrate.

<sup>1</sup>The vision in the first paragraph and information in the second paragraph of the reading are adapted from “The Great Human Migration: Why humans left their African homeland 80,000 years ago to colonize the world” by Guy Gugliotta, *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 2008.

ACTIVITY 1.2

**Push or Pull Migration Factors for Early Hunter-Gatherers<sup>1</sup>**

<p>1. Massive droughts occur where you are now living. The inland river that has served as the water supply for your clan is almost dry. Your clan migrates to a new area.</p> <p>Reason for migration: _____</p> <p>Push or pull? _____</p>	<p>5. You are living in a grassland area. Some people in your clan have figured out how to make stone tools that help in hunting. You have heard that more and better stones are available in an area not too far away.</p> <p>Reason for migration: _____</p> <p>Push or pull? _____</p>
<p>2. Your clan hunts springbok and other animals for food. The herds have grown and can no longer find enough plants to eat; the herds have left your area. Your clan migrates to a new area.</p> <p>Reason for migration: _____</p> <p>Push or pull? _____</p>	<p>6. A neighboring clan has superior tool-making skills compared to your clan, making them better hunters. Because this clan has more food, they become stronger and grow larger. They are expanding closer to where you live. Your clan migrates to a new area.</p> <p>Reason for migration: _____</p> <p>Push or pull? _____</p>
<p>3. Hunters from your clan discovered a coastal area that would make living easier than it is inland. Shellfish are abundant there, which would supplement your hunting and gathering. The climate is also warmer. Your clan migrates to a new area.</p> <p>Reason for migration: _____</p> <p>Push or pull? _____</p>	<p>7. Language is developing among people. You have heard from hunters in another clan about a land bridge that crosses to a new area where there is an abundant supply of animals and plants. Your clan migrates to a new area.</p> <p>Reason for migration: _____</p> <p>Push or pull? _____</p>
<p>4. You live in an inland area where the climate is gradually becoming colder. This is changing the availability of plants that your clan gathers, as well as the availability of animals for hunting. Your clan migrates to a new area.</p> <p>Reason for migration: _____</p> <p>Push or pull? _____</p>	<p>8. You are living in a valley near a small river. Your clan has increased in size. Finding enough food to feed everyone is becoming increasingly difficult. Some people are starving. Your clan migrates to a new area.</p> <p>Reason for migration: _____</p> <p>Push or pull? _____</p>

<sup>1</sup>The source of ideas for these push or pull scenarios is *The Journey of Man: A Genetic Odyssey* (2002) by Spencer Wells, chapters 4 and 5.

ACTIVITY 1.2, CONTINUED

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ACTIVITY 1.2, CONTINUED

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