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# Human Migration 3

## Early Migration Routes

DIRECTIONS: READ THE ARTICLE ON THIS SIDE OF THE SHEET. THEN ANSWER QUESTIONS ON THE BACK.

### Early Migration Routes

When humans first left Africa, they followed the coasts, where resources were abundant. The first wave moved across the Middle East, into southern Asia, and eventually all the way down to Australia [source: National Geographic]. This occurred roughly between 90,000 and 30,000 years ago [source: Haywood]. Additional waves of migration followed. Between 40,000 and 12,000 years ago, humans moved north into Europe. However, their range was limited by an ice sheet that extended into the northern part of continental Europe.

The icy conditions at the time also helped expand early humanity's territory. A massive sheet of ice, combined with lower sea levels, formed a bridge between Siberia and Alaska that we call **Beringia**. The first humans crossed over 30,000 years ago, moving down the west coast of North America [source: National Geographic]. Other sources suggest a more recent North American migration, starting about 15,000 years ago [source: Haywood]. New evidence seems to keep pushing the date of first North American habitation further and further back. Humans eventually spread into South America and pushed east into what is now the eastern United States and Canada. This theory of North America's settlement is supported by mtDNA evidence and a similarity in the dental structures of Siberian and North American populations of the era.

There have long been competing theories that early humans crossed the Atlantic Ocean, either from Africa to South America or the Caribbean, or from Europe to Greenland to North America. While it may have been possible to make such a trip using available seafaring technology, it is unlikely that a large-scale migration occurred in such a way.

The initial spread of humanity across the Earth was driven primarily by food and climate. Nomadic tribes of up to a few dozen people likely followed the migration patterns of the herd animals they hunted. Climate change opened new areas for hunting, even as technology such as mastery of fire and meat preserving allowed humans to live in less-than-ideal conditions. The human ability to adapt to new circumstances not only gave early humans an advantage over *Homo erectus*, it also facilitated global expansion.