

WHEN DID HUMANS GET TO THE AMERICAS?

Purpose

This activity asks you to evaluate theories about when humans first migrated to the Americas. The story of early human history is one that's filled with unanswered questions and requires research from multiple disciplines to uncover answers—you'll see here that it's a lot like being a detective in a mystery.

Key information

In the 1960s, scholars thought they had solved the mystery of when humans arrived in the Americas. But new evidence emerged in the past few decades that challenged the accepted theory of these early human migrations.

Process

1. Review [Migration Mystery Theories](#) to analyze four theories about when humans (*Homo sapiens*) first arrived in the Americas. Complete the worksheet on the next page as you review the theories. Your teacher might have you work in a group.
2. After you've completed the worksheet and ranked each theory, write a claim about the most credible theory.

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Theory	When was the theory proposed?	What types of qualifications do each of the proponents of these theories have?	What types of evidence are used to support each of the theories?	Rank how credible each theory is 1 = Least / 4 = Most
Beringia				
Coastal migration/kelp highway				
Solutrean hypothesis				
Cerutti mastodon				

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Winning theory	
Evidence that supports why this theory is most credible	
Evidence that supports why the other theories were not as credible	
Write a claim that answers this question: What is the most convincing theory about when humans first arrived in the Americas? Support your claim with evidence. Your response should be three to five sentences.	