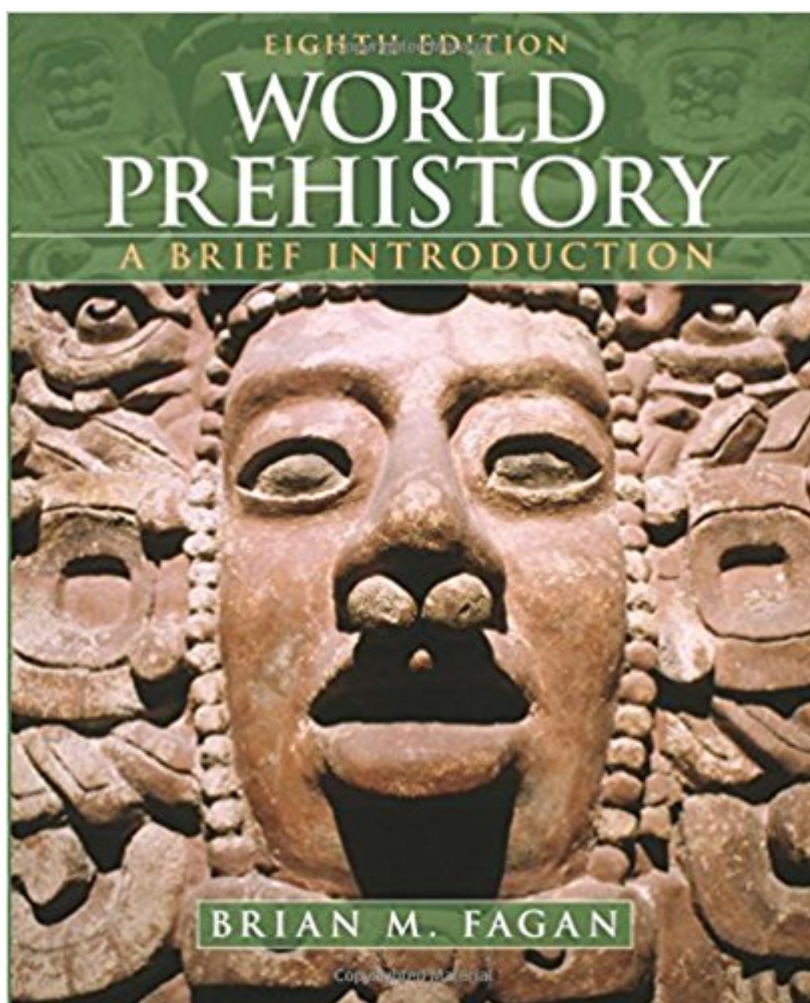


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# World Prehistory: A Brief Introduction



## Synopsis

For one semester or quarter courses in World Prehistory. Written by one of the leading archaeological writers in the world—in a simple, jargon-free narrative style—this brief, well-illustrated account of the major developments in the human past makes world prehistory uniquely accessible to complete beginners. Written by Brian Fagan, World Prehistory covers the entire world, not just the Americas or Europe, and places major emphasis on both theories and the latest archaeological and multidisciplinary approaches. His focus is on four major developments in world prehistory: 1) The origins of humanity. 2) The appearance and spread of modern humans before and during the late Ice Age— including the first settlement of the Americas. 3) The beginnings of food production. 4) The rise of the first civilizations.

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## Customer Reviews

Written by one of the leading archaeological writers in the world—in a simple, jargon-free narrative style—this brief, well-illustrated account of the major developments in the human past (from the origins of humanity to the origins of literate civilization) is ideal for those with no previous knowledge of the subject. Up to date and state of the art in content and perspective, it covers the entire world (not just the Americas or Europe), placing major emphasis on both theories and the latest archaeological and multidisciplinary approaches. The main focus is on four major developments—the origins of humanity; the appearance and spread of modern humans before and during the late Ice Age, including the first settlement of the Americas; the beginnings of food production; and the rise of the first civilizations. Features special boxes on Science (e.g., key dating

methods and other scientific approaches), Sites (e.g., sites of unusual importance or interest, and Voices (e.g., quotes from writings of ancient times). Human Origins. African Exodus. Diaspora. The Origins of Food Production. The First Farmers. Chiefs and Chiefdoms. State-Organized Societies. Mesopotamia and the Eastern Mediterranean World. Egypt and Africa. South, Southeast, And East Asia. Lowland Mesoamerica. Highland Mesamerica. Andean Civilizations. For anyone interested in Archaeology, World Prehistory, Human Antiquity. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Brian Fagan is one of the leading archaeological writers in the world and an internationally recognized authority on world prehistory. He studied archaeology and anthropology at Pembroke College, Cambridge University, and then spent seven years in sub-Saharan Africa working in museums and in monument conservation and excavating early farming sites in Zambia and East Africa. He was one of the pioneers of multidisciplinary African history in the 1960s. From 1967 to 2003, he was Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he specialized in lecturing and writing about archaeology to wide audiences. He is now Emeritus. Professor Fagan has written six best-selling textbooks apart from this book: *Ancient Lives: An Introduction to Archaeology*; *In the Beginning*; *Archaeology: A Brief Introduction*; *People of the Earth*; *World Prehistory*, all published by Prentice Hall that are used around the world. His general books include *The Rape of the Nile*, a classic history of Egyptology; *The Adventure of Archaeology*; *Time Detectives*; *Ancient North America*; *The Little Ice Age*, *The Long Summer*, and *Fish on Friday*. He is General Editor of the *Oxford Companion to Archaeology*. In addition, he has published several scholarly monographs on African archaeology and numerous specialized articles in national and international journals. He is also an expert on multimedia teaching and has received the Society for American Archaeology's first Public Education Award for his indefatigable efforts on behalf of archaeology and education. Brian Fagan's other interests include bicycling, sailing, kayaking, and good food. He is married and lives in Santa Barbara with his wife and daughter, four cats (who supervise his writing), and, last but not least, seven rabbits.

This book is poorly written, full of constantly shifting dates that contradict from one page to another, wild suppositions stated as fact, and baseless claims about the nature of the human past. There are sparse maps that poorly delineate important sites, and most important sites mentioned in the text are not depicted, at the expense of others randomly-selected artifacts. The author seems to enjoy repeating phrases so much that I will never be able to hear "increasing complexity" or

"intermediaries between the living and the supernatural" again without wanting to burn all copies of this book. The glossaries of sites, cultural and technical terms did not include many important places and terminology discussed in the text, almost to the point of being worthless. Like so many textbooks, it is far overpriced, but this one takes the cake by being a flimsy paperback with black and white photos for the same price one would expect for a more robust and fleshed-out full-color hardback. This book had far too many easy-to-detect typos for the 8th edition. Even the professor of my class agreed this text was horrible. Shame on you, Brian Fagan!

It saddens me to have to send this textbook back as trade-in so I can afford the textbooks for my next semester. The author explains in detail the origins, interactions and complexities of human prehistory without resorting to technical language. I've had my 14 year old cousin read this book and she not only understood it but loved it. 'I wish my school's books were this cool' she said. That alone speaks volumes for the book and the author.

This taught me how our ancestors lived before! It enlightens my mind !

Its a school book. Enough said.

Got to me in good condition.

The idea for a standardized "World Prehistory" course covering the time from the evolution & dispersal of Homo sapiens from Africa to recorded history (roughly the Bronze Age) is a great idea. It sets the stage for the more common World History courses that cover the time period from the first Bronze Age cities up to the Industrial Age. However, this particular textbook is only okay. It's nowhere near as interesting as Brian Fagan's more well-known books (e.g. Floods, Famines & Emperors; The Long Summer; The Great Warming) that dealt primarily with the effects of climate change on historical societies and were often as thought-provoking as Jared Diamond's Guns, Germs and Steel. Here's a couple points I was dissatisfied with: 1) The photos are all black & white and rather low quality. Another issue is that we get a lot of photos of ruins but only a few artist reconstructions of what these ancient towns & cities looked like when people actually inhabited them. This makes it difficult for the reader to imagine how sophisticated these societies were and how they managed space & resources. 2) The book is a bit too heavy on data (names, dates) and too light on theory. This leaves the reader with a general idea of what happened where, but not why or

how. The discussions of the Neolithic & Urban revolutions seemed quite brief & simplistic. The Upper Paleolithic Revolution that gave rise to behaviorally modern humans wasn't even mentioned.<sup>3</sup>) The Upper Paleolithic era when humans dispersed across the globe is presented as rather boring. Readers don't hear much about the strange world the Ice Age hunter-gatherers encountered, teeming with now-extinct megafauna like woolly mammoths and cave bears and with various now-sunken continents like Doggerland, Sundaland, Sahul and Beringia.<sup>4</sup>) Fagan does an adequate job of covering the prehistory of the Near East, Africa, the Americas, Polynesia, India, East & Southeast Asia, but conspicuously leaves out Europe (other than Minoan & Mycenaean Greece), Central Asia, Australia, and Arctic areas

Fagan is kind of repetitive. The book covers a lot in term of period of time and it's my class test book. Although the book was new, seller did not provide me with the code for online access to the course's material and I had to buy it separately.

We ordered this book for her course this spring. It arrived in excellent condition as described and was exactly what she needed. Absolutely no complaints about the product or the service.

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