



woolly mammoth

Millions of years ago when dinosaurs ruled the world, a gigantic rock crashed into our planet. Clouds of dust blocked out the sun and nothing grew.

The dinosaurs and almost all other life on Earth died ... but somehow, little hairy creatures survived. These little mammals made their homes in spaces dinosaurs left behind.

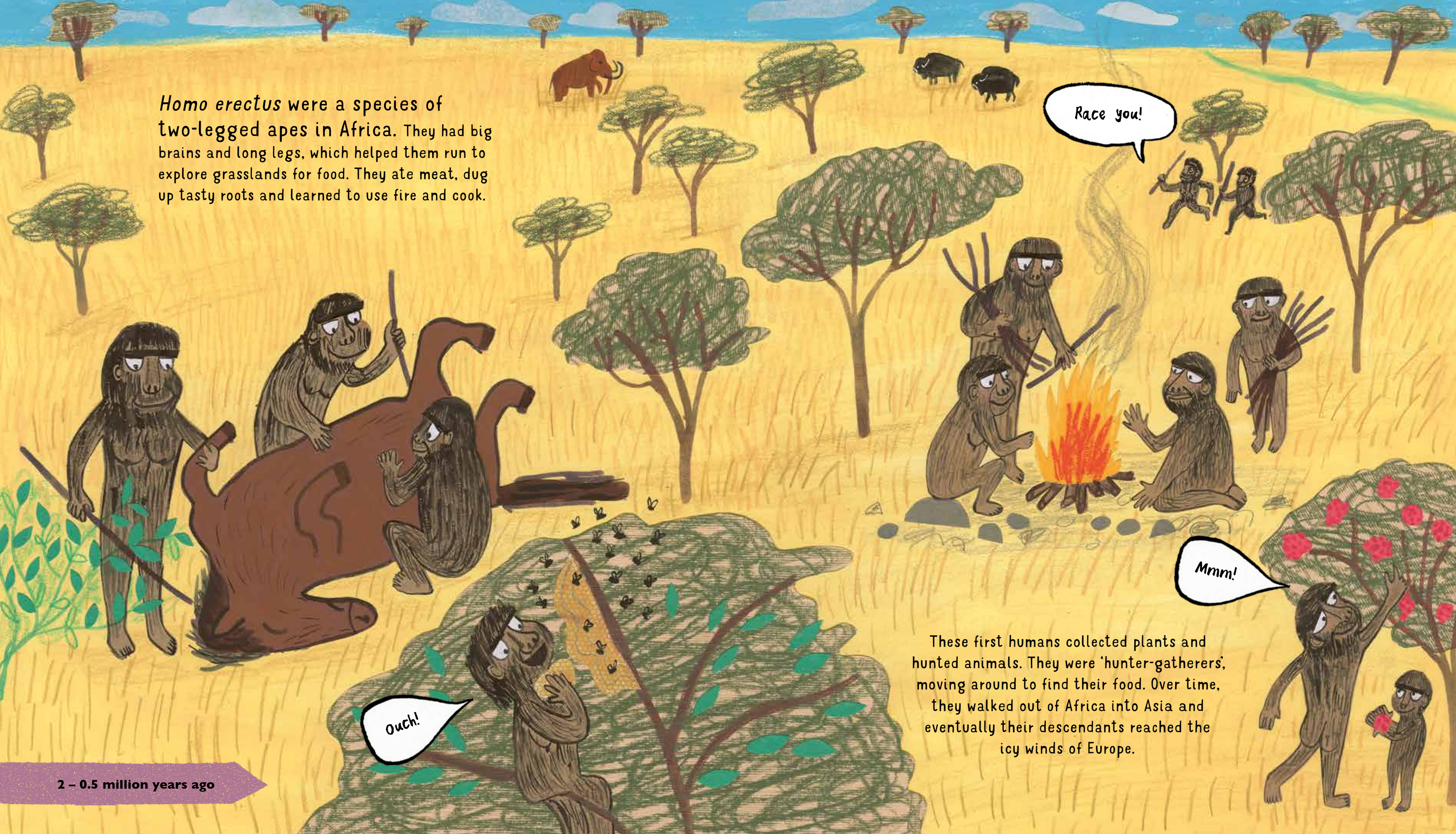
In Africa, apes and monkeys lived amongst the trees. Some apes started to walk on the ground on two legs, exploring open spaces.

great apes

little mammals



*Homo erectus* were a species of two-legged apes in Africa. They had big brains and long legs, which helped them run to explore grasslands for food. They ate meat, dug up tasty roots and learned to use fire and cook.



Race you!

Mmm!

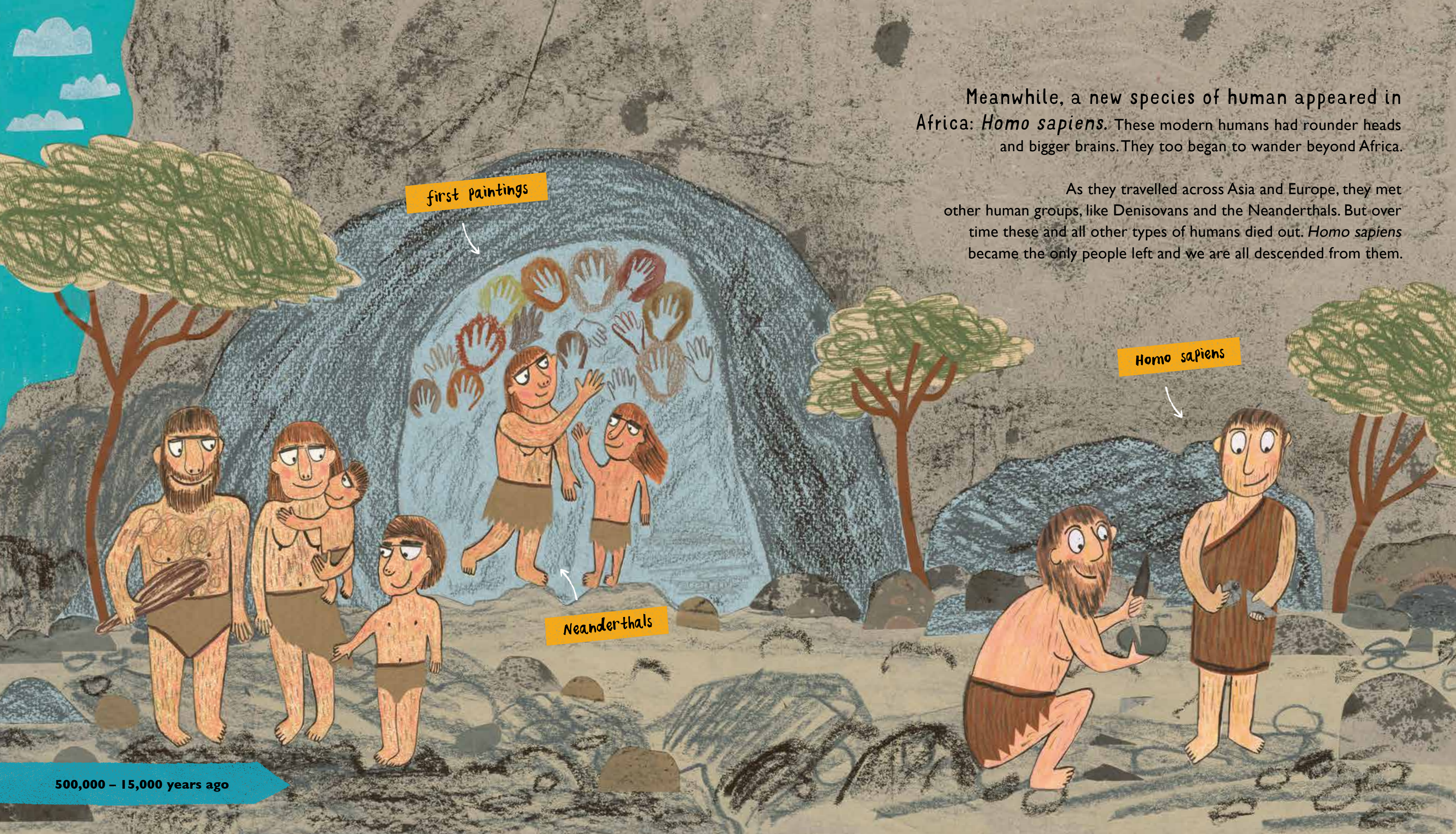
ouch!

These first humans collected plants and hunted animals. They were 'hunter-gatherers', moving around to find their food. Over time, they walked out of Africa into Asia and eventually their descendants reached the icy winds of Europe.



Meanwhile, a new species of human appeared in Africa: *Homo sapiens*. These modern humans had rounder heads and bigger brains. They too began to wander beyond Africa.

As they travelled across Asia and Europe, they met other human groups, like Denisovans and the Neanderthals. But over time these and all other types of humans died out. *Homo sapiens* became the only people left and we are all descended from them.



500,000 – 15,000 years ago



The world warmed, ice melted and families began to grow their own food.

In Mexico, people grew maize, and in the Yangtze Valley in China, they planted rice in fertile fields. They built villages and kept animals for meat, milk and skins.

The hunter-gatherers had become farmers.

Farmers were able to grow more food than they needed. They began to store it and swap it for other things. This made some people rich.

More children were born and survived to become adults. So the number of humans on Earth began to grow.





Families settled in river valleys where crops grew well. Villages grew and spread into cities.

Rich people paid others to work. Some made jewellery and tools from a newly discovered mix of metals called bronze. This was the Bronze Age.



What can you see?

making bronze

animal skin

4,000 – 12000 BCE

Cities grew and people lived in crowded spaces. They caught diseases from animals and there were outbreaks of measles, smallpox and tuberculosis. Battles broke out over precious supplies protected by soldiers on horseback.

In the Middle East and Egypt, harvests were recorded with simple marks and pictures. Over time, these marks formed words that became alphabets. Writing spread across the world.