

The First Farmers in Southern Africa

In Term One we learnt that the first people to live in South Africa were the San hunter-gatherers around 18000 BC. By 100 BC Khoi-Khoi pastoralists moved to the region. These two groups co-habitated side-by-side, eventually amalgamating and becoming known as the Khoisan. By about 250 AD, farmers began migrating from Central Africa in search of water for their crops and grazing land for their livestock. They settled in villages all over Southern Africa. They spoke **Bantu** languages. The word *ba* means many and *ntu* means person, thus Bantu means people. Examples of the Bantu people are the isiXhosa who settled in the Eastern Cape, the isiZulu who settled in Kwa-Zulu Natal, the Basotho people from Lesotho and the Setswana people from Botswana etc. Europeans settled in South Africa by 1652 AD, with the Dutch bringing Malay/Indonesians to the Cape by 1655. The first British settlers arrived in 1820 and introduced the Indians to Natal by 1860. Chinese migrants arrive in 1870 with the hopes of becoming prosperous on the diamond mines of Kimberley and the gold mines in the Witwatersrand.

By now, you would have noticed that we use many dates in history. We learn about events in history in **chronological order**, this means the order in which things occurred from the earliest of times to our time. In the past people in Christian countries used the term **BC (Before Christ)** and **AD (from the Latin word Anno Domini which means After Christ)** when they spoke about time. For example, Jesus was born in year 0. Today we often use the terms **BCE (Before Common Era)** and **CE (Common Era)** instead of BC and AD.

We use timelines in history to see how events progressed over time. Timelines are written in order of events from earliest to latest.

Classwork Activity:

Fill in either the missing dates or events in the timeline below which indicates how we become a Rainbow Nation:

18000 BC ----- San first inhabitants in South Africa

----- ----- Khoi-khoi herders move to the region

----- ----- Bantu farmers migrate from the North

1652 AD -----

----- ----- Malays brought to the Cape by the Dutch

----- ----- Arrival of the British

1860 AD ----- First Indian indentured workers at Natal

1870 AD ----- First Chinese migrants



The Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages

The Khoisan made use of **stone tools**. For example they would sharpen stones to use as a weapons or to cut their meat. They were nomadic and did not remain in one place for long, however they did take shelter in caves, as is evident from their rock art. This period was known as the **Stone Age**. As sub-saharan Africa (find out what that means!) lacked bronze metals, they did not go through a **Bronze Age** with the likes of Europe and Asia at the time. However, by the time African farmers had arrived in Southern Africa they were making use of **iron to make weapons and tools**. They began making farming implements with the iron and thus started improving their farming methods and techniques. This period became known as the **Iron Age**. As a result, these African farmers started settling in areas permanently as they had to focus on their crops all year round. **Homesteads** (groups of houses) started developing, which soon advanced into villages and complex societies.

Classwork Activity:

Discuss the contrasting lifestyles between the Khoisan and the African Farmers in the space below:

Colour in the following picture of an African homestead and thereafter label all the things that you observe in the picture:

