

# Two competing human migration theories: Multi-regional theory vs Out of Africa theory

Lesson Map: <http://esriaustralia.com.au/education/SpatialActivity47>

## Engage

*What stories do you know concerning the origin of humans?*

- ? What stories or accounts of human origins have you heard of? [*Big bang theory; theory of evolution; multiple creation stories i.e. Biblical creation story*]
- ? Why do you think there are so many different versions and stories? [*different religious beliefs; happened so far back in the past; significant gaps in the evidence etc.*]
- Click on the lesson map URL above to open the lesson story map. It presents two contesting theories regarding human origins and migration.

## Explore

*What is the Multi-regional theory?*

- In the Story Map, scroll to the title 'Where it begins'.
- As you continue to scroll, a map of Africa and some text will appear. You may wish for your students to take notes throughout the presentation or you may wish to pause to have discussions.
- ? What environmental conditions may require humans to adapt physically? [*Typically colder regions may have resulted in denser body hair growth; Typically hotter regions may have resulted in darker skin pigmentations*]
- ? What examples can you think of in nature where interbreeding has led to unique physical characteristics? [*e.g. Labradoodle – cross between a Labrador and a poodle; Liger – interbreeding between a tiger and lion*]

Download student worksheet [here](#).

Time  
30 minutes

### Activity

Investigate two competing theories on human origins and migration

### Learning Outcome

Students will be able to:

- Investigate the spatial migration journey for each theory
- Understand the difference between each theory
- Analyse the problems and issues that exist for historians regarding the concept of contested history

### ACARA Curriculum Link

[Year 7 History – The ancient world](#)

[ACOKFH001](#) | [ACHHS205](#) | [ACHHS206](#)  
| [ACHHS214](#)

### Acknowledgements:

Accompanying lesson material has been amended to align with the Australian National Curriculum.

### Teacher Feedback:

To share your feedback on this, or any Spatial Activity, please contact [education@esriaustralia.com.au](mailto:education@esriaustralia.com.au)

- Summarise multi-regional theory and continue to scroll through story map.

## Explain

*Why are there multiple theories on human origins and migration?*

- Scroll to 'The Out-of-Africa theory' in the story map.
- As you continue to scroll, a map of Africa and some text will appear. You may wish for your students to take notes throughout the presentation. This time you will notice that there are discussion questions throughout the text.
- ? Discuss: Where did Homo-sapiens migrate to next and when did they reach this area? *[migrated out of Africa, through Egypt, into the Middle-East; 100,000 years before present]*
- ? What difficulties may have arisen for these modern humans when migrating to various areas? *[Very low level of technology means that travel would have largely been by land/foot; small journeys could be made across bodies of water but usually where land could be seen in the distance - it would have been time-consuming and slow; difficulty of acclimatizing to new environments and traversing difficult terrains; difficulty to move family and belongings over long distances]*

## Extend

*Why is it important for historians and scientists to be aware of these contesting theories?*

- Scroll to the image of the world with the textbox titled 'Discussion questions'. Summarise the Out of Africa theory. Open a discussion concerning the discussion questions:
- ? What gaps do you think may exist with regards to evidence available to historians and scientists? *[Some evidence may be waiting to be discovered through archaeological digs that may inform these theories; other evidence may have decayed or been damaged and can no longer provide answers to the gaps in the theories]*
- ? Are historians and scientists able to overcome these challenges? If so, how? If not, why? *[How can they overcome: further archaeological discoveries. Why not: historians, archaeologists and scientists are attempting to answer questions that date back to over 150,000 years ago – host problems arise with this]*
- ? What is meant by the term 'contested theories' and why is this important to keep in

mind when studying human origins and migration? *[the term ‘contested theories’ means that there are two points of view on the same subject matter. It’s important for historians to keep this in mind as there is not a definitively correct theory and as new evidence emerges, these theories may be revised.]*

→ Close the Story map when finished.

---

## Next Steps:

---

### *Request a free ArcGIS Online Account for your school:*

Australian schools can request a free ArcGIS Online account as part of Esri Australia’s Classroom GIS Initiative. A school subscription provides additional map layers, content, features and privacy.

Learn more about ArcGIS Online, and apply for your ArcGIS Online School subscription at <http://esriaustralia.com.au/education>