

Preface

“The past is a bucket of ashes,” said the poet Carl Sandburg. Surely he was wrong. The past is not cold, dead, and spent. It is alive in everything we are and will be. We live in a universe filled with its traces. The stars in the night sky shine with a light that began its journey millions of years ago. The fossilized remnants of remarkable creatures that once walked the earth lie entombed in the soil beneath our feet. Cooking hearths and food scraps, pyramids and pottery, stone tools and bone awls, cave paintings and ivory sculptures—all date to the ancient human past, yet exist in the present. The past is not a bucket of ashes, but rather, as writer L. P. Hartley put it, “the past is a foreign country.” In this book, we will visit that country.

The Past in Perspective: An Introduction to Human Prehistory focuses on the dim echoes of the human past, presenting an accessible chronicle of human physical and cultural evolution. The readers of this text are undergraduates with no previous coursework in archaeology; for many it will be their only academic exposure to our prehistoric past. Rather than overwhelm beginning students with an all-inclusive, detailed survey of human antiquity, this text looks at the major themes of the human evolutionary story. It begins with the evolution of our earliest hominid ancestors, traces the evolution of the modern human species, and follows the various pathways our ancestors took in the development of food-producing societies and complex civilizations. My goal throughout is to instill in readers an appreciation for the long chronicle of humanity and the ongoing processes we use to construct and assess that story.

HOW THE TEXT IS ORGANIZED

Chapters 1 and 2 provide context and background for the discussion of human prehistory. Chapter 1 places the study of the human past in the context of science, specifically the science of anthropology. Chapter 1 also explains how a scientific approach to the study of prehistory developed. Chapter 2 is a brief overview of key methodologies employed by archaeologists and paleoanthropologists in their study of the human past. It represents a brief introduction to archaeology.

Following these introductory chapters, Chapters 3–15 go on to present a chronological survey of the human past. Each chapter follows a consistent format with these headings: Chapter Overview, Prelude, Chronicle, Issues and Debates, Case Study Close-Up, Visiting the Past, Summary, and To Learn

More. A consistent format provides a pedagogical advantage, and the trajectory of human physical and cultural evolution becomes far more apparent and connected. What we know, what we don't know, and what are still topics of vigorous debate will be clear to the reader.

The **CHAPTER OVERVIEW** introduces the primary topic of the chapter in several brief paragraphs.



The **PRELUDE** represents a conscious attempt on my part to provide a pedagogical “hook” for each chapter. Personal anecdotes or fascinating historical incidents, for example, immediately engage students in the key issue or issues of the chapter, whether it is upright locomotion, the origins of artistic expression, or the power of ancient civilizations.



The **CHRONICLE** presents in narrative form a consensus view of that part of the human past that is the chapter's focus. It represents the heart of each chapter, providing our current understanding of the time period covered, the hominids discussed, and the cultural evolutionary developments reflected in the time period.



ISSUES AND DEBATES discusses the answers we have been able to provide for key questions about human physical and cultural evolution as well as the unresolved issues that remain and the ongoing debates. These sections provide differing—and sometimes competing—perspectives. Students are thus exposed to the sometimes messy, always exciting, and inevitably human process of science fraught with disagreements, reassessments, shifting paradigms, and only hard-won consensus.



The **CASE STUDY CLOSE-UP** is a detailed examination of one or more sites considered diagnostic or emblematic of the time period or primary issue of the chapter.



VISITING THE PAST directs readers to key sites mentioned in the chapter that are open to the public, suggests museums where the materials from important sites discussed in the chapter are displayed, and directs the reader to Internet sites that provide the opportunity for “virtual visits” with detailed discussions, photographs, videos, and animations related to the chapter topic.

Each chapter **SUMMARY** provides a brief recapitulation of the key issues in the chapter.

TO LEARN MORE is divided into four sections: (1) “Technical Summaries,” where students can find primary sources, including articles in professional journals and books; (2) “Popular Summaries,” including secondary sources like magazine articles and trade books; (3) “On the Web,” providing Internet sources related to the chapter topic; and (4) “Online Learning Center,” describing the resources available at the Web site that accompanies this book.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

In addition to a consistent chapter format, I've included a number of other features that make this text a more useful learning tool.

- A **timeline** opens every chapter and helps place the key events and sites mentioned in the body of the chapter within a global historical context.
- To help students better orient themselves on the world stage, I've included abundant **maps** throughout the book. Each chapter (3–15) presents a map or, in some cases, multiple maps in which each of the sites mentioned in the chapter are located. Chapters 3–15 also include a **list of sites**—broken out by continent, region, or country—that are mentioned in the chapter, along with the page number where they can be found.
- A list of **Key Terms** at the end of each chapter provides an alphabetical listing of important terms that appear in boldfaced type within the chapters and includes page numbers for where they can be found. Definitions can be found in the end-of-book glossary.
- The text's **visual appeal** enhances its readability. Full-color photographs are cross-referenced to pertinent text discussions. Detailed, colorful charts and drawings, as well as abundant color photographs, underscore significant points in the text. Captions add information rather than simply label the art.
- The **Glossary, References**, and a comprehensive **Index** make information readily accessible.
- An **Online Learning Center (OLC)**, found at <http://www.mhhe.com/feder4>, now accompanies *The Past in Perspective*. The OLC includes learning objectives for each chapter, interactive timeline study guides to reinforce the information in the text, links to Web sites with more information about the archaeological sites in the text, and self-quizzes to test understanding of the material in each chapter.



WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE FOURTH EDITION?

Anyone familiar with previous editions of *The Past in Perspective* will find the features that have made this book unique—the engaging writing style, the consistent organization of chapters, the personalization of the past—are all still there. These key aspects have not been altered. At the same time, the focus of the content of the book has been, not so much shifted, but expanded. In this, the fourth edition, there have been substantial additions of material pertinent to the more recent past, especially the development of early state societies. Specifically, there have been significant changes, improvements in, and additions to the following chapters:

- Following its substantial reconfiguration in the previous edition, **Chapter 1** has been reworked only slightly.

- **Chapter 2** provides additional discussion of the ways in which archaeological sites come into existence and how they are preserved. Also, the section on how archaeologists trace raw materials has been improved.
- When I began writing the first edition of this book more than ten years ago, all I could say about the period between 7 and 4 million years ago was how important it was in the evolution of the hominids while I bemoaned the fact that we knew so little about it. In **Chapter 3** of this edition of the book, there is a substantial discussion of a number of different hominids who may have taken the first literal and figurative steps in human evolution sometime around 6 million years ago.
- New material in **Chapter 4** reflects the exciting, if vexing fact that nothing about hominid evolution is entirely settled. The specimen called the “Hobbit” found on the island of Flores is examined here, along with other new fossil discoveries that have expanded our understanding of the geographical expansion of the hominid family beyond Africa.
- Previous editions of the book presented the evolution of premodern and modern human beings in separate chapters. This was never completely satisfying and led to redundancy with, especially, material on the Neandertals presented in each of those separate chapters. **Chapter 5** here combines the material presented in those two chapters (5 and 6 in the previous edition of the book). All of the important information remains, but redundancy has been eliminated.
- New material is presented in **Chapter 6** showing that the production of art and the use of symbols precedes the Upper Paleolithic.
- As soon as the book is printed, new sites are found that cause us at least to reconsider the nature and timing of the earliest human settlement of Australia and the New World. **Chapter 7** presents the data produced since the last edition went to press.
- **Chapter 8** provides a greatly expanded discussion of post-Pleistocene adaptations, especially in Europe, North America, and Australia.
- The discussion of phytoliths, genetics, and isotope analysis as these relate to the origins of domestication, has been enhanced in **Chapter 9**. The demographic implications of the Food Producing Revolution are presented in far greater detail.
- There is a new and greatly expanded discussion of the roots of complexity in Mesoamerica and South America in **Chapter 10**.
- The most substantial changes to *The Past in Perspective* occur in its final chapters, effectively, the last one-third of the book. Where previous editions provided only two, albeit lengthy and dense chapters on the development of civilization—one on the Old World and the other on the New World—this edition presents a greatly expanded presentation of the evolution of the state in four chapters. **Chapter 11**’s focus is on Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Pakistan. **Chapter 12** moves on to China, southeast Asia, and Crete. **Chapter 13** now presents the development of civilization in Mesoamerica with far more detailed examinations of the

Maya and Teotihuacán. **Chapter 14** focuses on the evolution of the state in South America. These chapters have been, essentially, rewritten from the ground up with substantially more content, but presented in the same, accessible and engaging format and style that has always characterized the book.

- **Chapter 15** provides an expanded look at Adena and Hopewell.

In an old television ad, viewers were told that “the world is a carousel of color.” You will immediately notice that now, so is *The Past in Perspective*. There no longer are a limited number of color images in a handful of inserts in the book; the fourth edition of *The Past in Perspective* has color imagery throughout. The use of color is far more than simply a cosmetic change; students will gain a far greater appreciation, especially for the artistic achievements of ancient humanity, when they can view images of these achievements in color.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL FOR INSTRUCTORS

- Instructor’s Manual and Testbank include multiple-choice and short-answer/essay questions, as well as chapter overviews, lists of key words, and suggested sources for videos, CD-ROMs, and Internet sites.
- Instructor’s Online Learning Center is password-protected access to additional professional and teaching resources.
- PageOut allows instructors to create a course Web site using a template provided by McGraw-Hill.

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Textbooks require the enthusiastic support and tireless assistance of a wide group of people; *The Past in Perspective* has been lucky enough to have always

had the highest levels of such support and assistance. For this edition I have been the grateful recipient of the wonderful work of the best copyeditor on the planet, maybe even the whole galaxy, Joan Pendleton. Cassandra Chu's design of the book takes my breath away, and Art Editor Robin Mouat constantly performs the miracle of making the book look as good as I hope it reads. I have worked on several books with Photo Researcher Brian Pecko and I have come to the conclusion that there's simply no image Brian can't track down. Brian's work contributed greatly to the appearance of this book. Marketing Manager Dan Loch is relentless and, my best suggestion to you is to simply adopt the book just to get Dan off your case.

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Especially at a large publishing house, every project needs a champion, someone who makes sure the book isn't constrained by the practical concerns of the publisher. Senior Editor Kevin Witt has been *The Past in Perspective's* champion. Kevin never doubted that the new, “colorful” edition was worth the effort, energy, and resources and I am enormously in his debt.

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