

# Important events in evolution

## Significant events which impacted the history of Earth

**790,000 years ago**

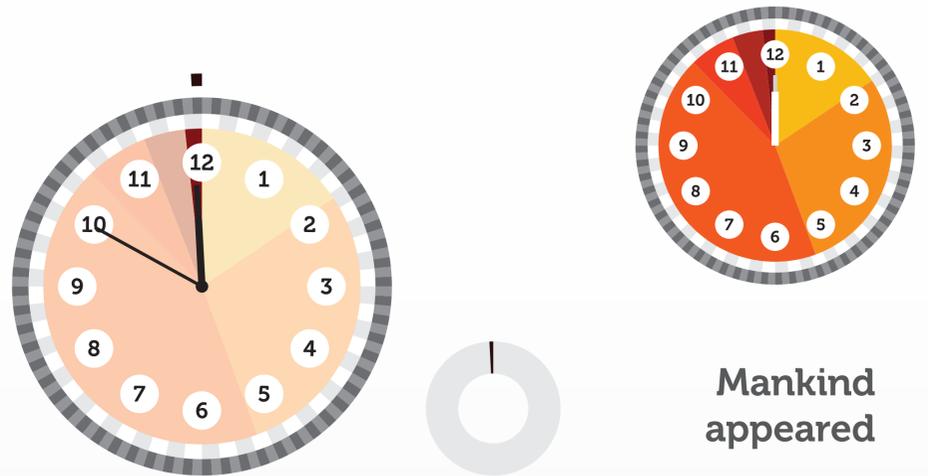
Earliest evidence of the control of fire

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**The archaeological evidence leaves no doubt that the control of fire is an ancient tradition.**

**A site dated with high accuracy is *Gesher Benot Ya'akov* in Israel, near the Jordan River. There, 790,000 years ago, *Homo erectus*, an ancestor of *Homo sapiens*, was using tools and toasting olive, barley and grape seeds while heating wood and stones.**

**400,000 years ago in *Schöningen*, Germany, *Homo heidelbergensis*, a more robust version of *Homo sapiens*, left traces of having hunted 22 horses, butchering them and using fire to cook the meat. By the way, this place is the oldest site offering evidence of group hunting.**



In England, in a site called *Beeches Pit* which was inhabited by *Homo heidelbergensis* 400,000 years ago, there is proof that they used a hearth 3 feet in diameter.

A recent and innovative theory, based on this evidence, argues that learning to cook using fire allowed hominids to become modern humans. The benefits of cooking are:

- An increase in the intake of calories.
- A reduction in the time used for eating and the gain of hours left for other activities.
- A decrease in the size of the guts as food is digested, absorbed and assimilated with less cost. The result is an upright position since a smaller stomach takes up less space in the womb.
- An increase of energy obtained from the same raw material. This allows for a larger brain, because the brain consumes an enormous amount of energy.
- Time to socialize, because a campfire at night allowed eating in groups while protecting from predators.
- Division of labor by gender: male hunters and female gatherers and cooks

