

Question
No.

The Model Hints have been constructed to train students about how to write relevant and succinct answers in exam condition.

2.(b)

Discuss various theories hypothesised for the origin of homo sapiens. Support your argument with suitable examples. (200 words)

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Location of earliest homo sapien fossils

As of now, the oldest unambiguous fossils classified as H. sapiens come from Ethiopia and date to perhaps 160,000 years ago. Additional fossils, discovered in one of the Klasies River mouth caves in South Africa, are possibly as old as 100,000 years. Other Homo sapiens fossils of about the same age have been found in Border cave in South Africa.⁵¹ Remains of anatomically modern humans found at two sites in Israel, at Skhul and Qafzeh, which used to be thought to date back 40,000 years to 50,000 years, may be 90,000 years old. There are also anatomically modern human finds in Borneo, at Niah, from about 40,000 years ago and in Australia, at Lake Mungo, from about 30,000 years ago.

These modern-looking humans differed from the Neandertals and other early H. sapiens in that they had higher, more bulging foreheads, thinner and lighter bones, smaller faces and jaws, chins (the bony protuberances that remain after projecting faces recede), and only slight brow ridges.

Theories

Single origin theory: The presumed place of origin of the first modern humans has varied over the years as new fossils have been discovered. When earlier Homo sapiens were found in Africa, paleoanthropologists postulated that modern humans emerged first in Africa and then moved to the Near East and from there to Europe and Asia. Single-origin theorists think that the originally small population of H. sapiens had some biological or cultural advantage, or both, that allowed them to spread and replace Neandertals, Denisovans, and other hominins. The main evidence for the single-origin theory comes from the genes of living peoples. In 1987, Rebecca Cann and her colleagues presented evidence that the mtDNA from people in the United States, New Guinea, Africa, and East Asia showed differences consistent with a common ancestor living only 200,000 years ago. Cann and colleagues further claimed that because the amount of variation among individuals was greatest in African populations, the common ancestor of all lived in Africa.⁵⁶ (It is generally the case that people living in a homeland exhibit more variation than any