Following Ancient Clues

Use scientific evidence to trace early migration into the Americas.

5.1a "Various forms of scientific evidence suggest that humans came to North America approximately 25,000 to 14,000 years ago and spread southward to South America."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each type of scientific evidence scientists use. Circle words or phrases that show a route or date is possible rather than certain.

Evidence of Early Migration

1. Scientists study clues to learn about the first people in the Americas. Archaeologists find stone tools, hearths, and other objects left at ancient campsites. They date some materials by measuring changes in atoms over time. Evidence from several sites suggests that people were in North America sometime between about 25,000 and 14,000 years ago. This range is based on scientific study, not one clue alone.

2. During parts of the Ice Age, lower sea levels exposed land between Siberia and Alaska. This area, often called Beringia, could have provided one route into North America. Scientists compare evidence from ancient campsites with studies of ice, plants, and sea levels. These clues help researchers consider when travel routes may have been open. They do not prove every journey.

3. After people reached North America, groups gradually moved into many different environments. Archaeological sites farther south, including sites in South America, show that people eventually spread through the continents. The exact routes and dates are still studied. Because evidence can be incomplete, scientists revise explanations when new discoveries are carefully dated and compared with earlier findings.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Name two kinds of evidence scientists use to learn about the first people in the Americas.

2. What time range does the passage give for people being in North America?

3. What was Beringia, and why could it have been a migration route?

4. Why do scientists revise their explanations about early migration?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence evidence explanation about early migration into the Americas. Include the time range, name two kinds of evidence, and use careful words such as suggests, may, or could.

ANSWER KEY

Following Ancient Clues

GRADE 5 · 5.1a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each type of scientific evidence scientists use. Circle words or phrases that show a route or date is possible rather than certain. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two kinds of evidence scientists use to learn about the first people in the Americas.	**Ancient campsites and objects such as stone tools or hearths, and materials dated by measuring changes in atoms. Studies of ice, plants, and sea levels are also acceptable.**
2	What time range does the passage give for people being in North America?	**Between about 25,000 and 14,000 years ago.**
3	What was Beringia, and why could it have been a migration route?	**Beringia was exposed land between Siberia and Alaska. Lower sea levels during parts of the Ice Age could have made it a route into North America.**
4	Why do scientists revise their explanations about early migration?	**Evidence can be incomplete, and new discoveries can be carefully dated and compared with earlier findings.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Scientific evidence suggests humans arrived in North America between about 25,000 and 14,000 years ago. Ancient campsites and dating methods support this claim. Beringia may have been one route, and sites farther south suggest that people later spread into South America.

Accept equivalent evidence named in the passage, including tools, hearths, dated materials, and environmental studies. Student explanations should use cautious language because the exact routes and dates are still being studied.