

Video: The muddle in the middle-Pleistocene

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During the late middle Pleistocene—between 400 000 and 150 000 years ago—the populations occupying Earth, and Africa specifically, looked very differently from what they do now. There is evidence for at least three forms of human relatives inhabiting Africa, including *Homo heidelbergensis*, *Homo naledi* and *Homo sapiens* (modern humans).

Some, or all of these hominids made tools such as those associated with the middle stone age culture that began around 305 000 years ago. The question is, which of these human relatives got so crafty? Traditionally, it is thought that the larger brained species like *Homo heidelbergensis* and *Homo sapiens* should be associated with more complicated tool kits. But the answers may not be so simple. With three forms of early human relatives around, things are much more complicated, explains Professor Lee Berger.

Provided by Wits University

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