

Science Time

Program Content for September 16, 2015

Read the article “New species of human ancestor unearthed in South African cave” on page A3 of the Friday, September 11, 2015 edition of The Seattle Times.

Pre-reading and Vocabulary: Define each term and then use it in a sentence to demonstrate your understanding.

1. species
2. hominin
3. paleoanthropologist
4. fossil
5. excavate

Comprehension Questions

1. What tip did cavers give to scientists two years ago?
2. What is the name of the once previously unidentified early human species found in Rising Star cave?
3. How many scientists were on the international team that announced the discovery of the new species last week?
4. Why was the new hominin species named Homo naledi?
5. Why is the number of fossil elements (1,550) of H. naledi found in Rising Star cave of importance?
6. Parts from how many different individuals have been recovered so far in the cave chamber?
7. Describe how the scientists studying the bone chamber gained access to the site.
8. Why is the discovery of so many bones in one chamber of scientific interest?
9. Why is the age of H. naledi predicted to be 2.5 to 2.8 million years old?
10. Why was H. naledi placed in the genus Homo and not Australopithecus?
11. What do the “extremely curved fingers” of H. naledi suggest about its behavior?

Prompts and Extensions

1. View a [list](#) of must read books for kids if you are interested in learning more about human origins.
2. Read the abstract and paper that was published in the open access journal eLife about H. Naledi [here](#). The journal article also provides access to multiple images of H. naledi.
3. Explore the website [Becoming Human](#): watch a documentary, complete an interactive timeline of human ancestry, and catch up on the latest human origins news stories.
4. Resources, resources, resources. Spend all day exploring human ancestry [here](#)

Science Time is posted to the Web on Wednesdays. Please share this NIE Science Time program with other teachers. To sign-up for the electronic edition for your class, please register

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