Human Origins in myth and history

- History was not written down, but passed down orally resulting in belief systems and written texts such as the Bible.
- paleoanthropologist = A student of the earliest humans and the setting in which they lived..

Early Myths

- myth = An interpretive story of the past that cannot be verified historically but has a deep moral message
-Purpose of myths= explain how the world came to be as it is
- Although myths aren't 100 percent the truth, historians accept myths as important, because history and myth share a common goal - to explain how the world came to be.
- Creation stories may be similar, but also significantly different in the way they portray humans relationship to the Gods,to the rest of the creation, and to one another.
- One of the earliest known stories is the Enuma Elish epic of the people of Akkad in Mesopotamia which dates back to 2000 B.C.E.
- India's many stories gave some development to the Hindu religious traditions
- Most known story in the Book of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible
- Because of these stories, none thought it necessary to look for evidence
- caste = A hierarchical ordering of people into groups. Fixed from birth, based on their inherited ritual status and determining whom they may marry and with whom they may eat.

The Evolutionary Explanation

-Scientists questioned how every species could have been created separately (said in the Bible) if there were many similar characteristics between certain species.
-Scientific method was used by the mid - 18th century. Based on truth with evidence unlike religious texts.
- Charles Darwin (1809 - 82) and Alfred Russel Wallace (1823 - 1913) provided evidence to show that each species could not have been created separately.
- Both scientists traveled to come to this conclusion and later published their work in a joint paper on the basic concepts of evolution.
- Darwin concluded that from a single, common ancestor, new species evolved over time.
- 1859 Darwin published his findings "On the origins of Species by means of natural selection"
- (1855) Wallace published a paper suggesting a common ancestor for primates and men
-The search for the “missing link” started in Europe
-(100,000 years ago) new humans emigrated to the rest of the world from Africa= “Noah’s Ark” Theory

The New Challenges

- Darwin challenged stories that people believed especially the Bible
- teleology = the philosophical study of the final causes or purposes. Teleology refers especially to any system that interprets nature or the universe as having design or purpose. it has been used to provide evidence for the existence of God.
- A change of wording in the first part of Darwin's edition (his book) to a later edition, suggests that a more conventional Christian religious thinker criticized his work.
- In 1871, Darwin published The Descent of Man "main is descended from some lowly organized form"
- Paleoanthropology (explores the nature of early humans in their environment) developed.
-Differences and similarities in the proteins and DNA of animals(including humans) living today suggest that the data up to which they might have shared common ancestors before separating into different streams of evolution
-Humans and chimps DNA: 97% similarity
-Humans and gorillas DNA: 96% similarity