

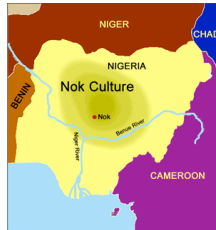
Name: _____

Date: _____

The Nok

In 1928, archaeologists unearthed artifacts from an amazing culture that flourished from about 500BCE to 200CE. The archaeologists referred to the ancient culture as Nok, the name of a modern Nigerian village where they made their discovery.

Nok artifacts included sculptures of animals and people made of terra cotta. Terra cotta is clay that has been baked in an oven. The complex Nok sculptures were probably based on woodcarvings, but any wooden artifacts would have disintegrated long ago in the humid climate of West Africa. The sophistication of the artifacts leads



archaeologists to believe that the Nok civilization may have been much older than even the oldest artifact.

The Nok discovered that they were able to “smelt” iron by heating certain rocks to a high temperature. Iron is very malleable. A malleable material can be reshaped, and the Nok used iron to make weapons and plows. Most ancient cultures discovered other metals such as copper and bronze before iron, but the Nok apparently moved directly from the Stone Age to the Iron Age without having a Copper or Bronze Age.



Nok Figurine

Fill in the Blanks

In 1928, a c_a_o_o_i_ts uncovered an ancient *unn_m_d civilization in the present day village of N____, Nigeria. The ancient Nok c_l_u_e apparently flourished for at least *____ years. The artifacts of the region included figurines made of t____c_____, or clay that has baked in an o____. The s_____ of the figurines lead archaeologists to believe the N____ culture was even o_d_r than the oldest *s_u_p____re.

The a_____ Nok culture s_____ iron by h_____ rocks to a high t_m_e_a_u_e. Iron can be r_s_a_ed to make w_____ and p_____. Iron can also be used for cooking and heating because it conducts heat well. The Nok apparently moved from the S_____ to the I_____ Age. Most cultures discovered c_____ and b_____ before iron. We don't know if the Nok discovered the secrets of i_____ on their own, or if they learned about it from another c_l_u_e.

Answer in Complete Sentences

1. The text states that the ancient Nok culture existed at the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers. Use a dictionary to find the meaning of confluence.

2. Why do we refer to an ancient African civilization as the Nok?

*3. Why do archaeologists believe that the Nok civilization may have been much older than its oldest artifact?

*4. List five tools or weapons made from iron that would advance an ancient civilization.
