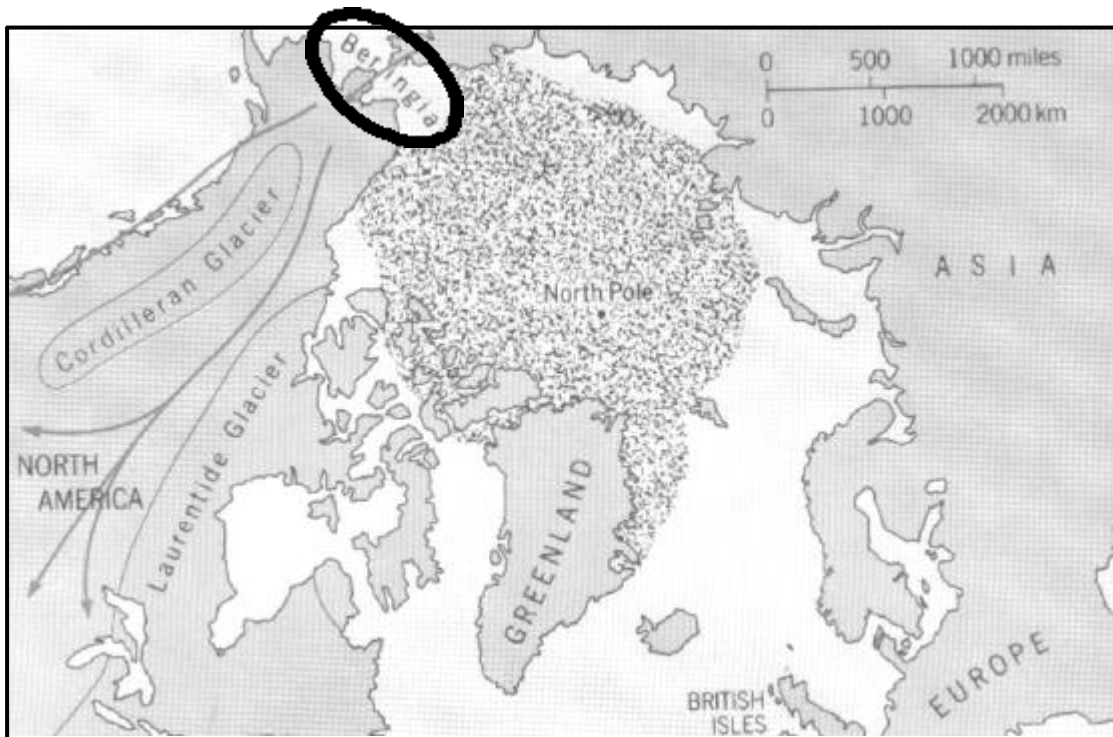


# The First Americans

Modern humans first appeared in Africa. From Africa they spread all over the rest of the world. The most important question however is how did humans reach America?

Today North and South America are joined together as one huge island, separate from Europe by an ocean. Thousands of years ago there was a land bridge in the north. This was called the Beringia Straights. This land bridge linked the Americas with Asia and people could walk from Asia to America and they did not need boats to travel. See the map below.



People did not set out to walk to America. They were nomads who followed the animals that they hunted and needed new land where they could gather fruit and berries. Slowly over hundreds of years they followed the animals and travelled huge distances. By about 11,000 years ago these people had spread across America.

These Indians settled all over North and South America. There were many different groups of Indians. They spoke many different languages. They lived in very different ways. If the Indians lived near the sea then they fished. If they lived in woods or on the plains of America then they hunted animals.

## Dividing up the Indian Cultures

Many different Indian cultures grew up in America. Historians divide up the Indian cultures in different ways. This is so they can understand the Indians much better. They are divided into environments (where people live) and languages (how people speak).



### Environments



Some historians divide up the different Indian cultures by the environment they lived in. For example, Indians living along the North West Coast of America lived mainly by fishing. But Indians living on the Plains, far from the sea, lived by hunting buffaloes.

### Languages

Another way to divide up the different Indian cultures is by language. There were probably about 200 different languages spoken by the Indians before white people arrived. These 200 languages can be put into language groups.



The Indians did not write down their languages. So our knowledge of Indians comes mainly from what white people saw and wrote. Many of these white people did not like the Indians.

## TASKS

**Copy out the paragraph below. Choose the correct word from the brackets.**

The first people to reach America came from (*Asia/Africa*) across the land called (*Belgium/Beringia*). Over thousands of (*days/months/years*) they spread down through America. By about 11,000 years ago these people had spread all across (*Wallasey/America*).

**Write out the sentences below, putting the correct 'heads' and 'tails' together.**

### HEAD

Historians divide up Indian cultures  
One way is to divide up by environment  
Another way is to divide up

### TAILS

by language.  
in two ways.  
that is the land and the way they live.