

Solutions

1. C – To help readers understand how recently humans appeared in Earth's history.

The author compares Earth's history to a single calendar year to make the vast timescale easier to imagine. This comparison shows that modern humans would only appear in the final few minutes of New Year's Eve, emphasising how recently our species arrived.

2. D – 4.5 billion years.

The second paragraph states that scientists estimate the Earth formed around **4.5 billion years ago**, while **Homo sapiens** have existed for only about **300,000 years**.

3. B – Happening slowly over a long period of time.

The text explains that evolution takes place over many generations through small changes that are passed on to offspring. Therefore, *gradual* means something that happens slowly rather than all at once.

4. B – Different human species existed at the same time and followed different evolutionary paths.

The passage explains that scientists no longer think of human evolution as a straight line. Instead, it is compared to a tree because many different human species lived at the same time before some eventually became extinct.

5. C – Their ability to solve problems and work together.

The text explains that humans were not the strongest or fastest animals. Instead, our greatest advantage was our large brains, which enabled us to communicate, solve problems and cooperate in large groups.

6. B – It helped people cook food, keep warm and protect themselves.

The passage explains that controlling fire was a major breakthrough because it provided warmth, frightened away predators and allowed food to be cooked. Cooked food also provided more energy, which may have helped our brains develop.

7. C – The period when humans first began farming and settling permanently.

The Agricultural Revolution began around **12,000 years ago**, when some people stopped moving from place to place and started growing crops and keeping animals. This led to permanent settlements, towns and eventually great civilisations.

8. B – The internet became widely available less than 40 years ago.

The author uses examples such as the internet, smartphones and artificial intelligence to show how recently modern technology has developed compared with the **300,000-year** history of our species.

9. B – New evidence can change previously accepted ideas.

The passage explains that scientists regularly discover new fossils, tools and DNA evidence. These discoveries sometimes overturn ideas that were once thought to be correct, showing that scientific knowledge continues to develop.

10. B – Human history is short compared with Earth's history, and our understanding of it continues to develop.

This is the central idea of the passage. The author explains that although humans have existed for around **300,000 years**, this is only a tiny fraction of Earth's history. The passage also highlights that new scientific discoveries are constantly improving our understanding of our ancient past.