First Farmers in Southern Africa

Khoisan people were nomads living in South Africa

People moved from place to place
Animals were hunted and moved around
People gathered plants - seasonal, therefore had to move often
People had no or little impact on the environment

Nomadic Lifestyle

First farmers +/- 10 000 yrs ago

Planting seeds of wild plants
Tame and breed animals, cattle, sheep, goats
Settled in one place

Did not have to walk far for food
Food - meat and milk
Work - pulling ploughs
Transport
Shelter and clothing - animal skins

History of Farming

Farming in South Africa

Black farmers moved from: Northern, Eastern and central parts of Africa

Started +/- 2 000 yrs ago

Changes as a result of farming

Before Farming

Environment

People

Society

People stayed in one place for a long time
Impacted on/disturbed the environment
Less traveling, permanent homes
Bigger families

Chiefdoms formed in villages
More conflict and political interaction

Natural resources used up for shelter/food
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**Living arrangements**

- **Chiefdoms**
  - Consisted of more than one village
  - Ruled by a CHIEF

- **Homesteads**
  - Built around a central cattle 'kraal'
  - Few huts with thatched roofs, walls of mud and cow dung
  - Fence from thorn tree branches surrounded the area

- **Villages**
  - Consisted of many homesteads
  - CHIEF lived in largest homestead
  - Huts arranged according to social hierarchy

**Agriculture**

- **Crops**
  - Planted vegetables
    - millet
    - sorghum
    - pumpkin
  - Planted fruit trees
    - melons
  - Gathered fruit and vegetables
  - Not enough food to gather
  - Too many people to feed

- **Livestock**
  - Built 'kraals' for livestock and put up high fences
  - Hunted for food
  - Too many people to feed
  - Started keeping own cattle
  - Stored grains and seeds for winter months

- **Benefits**
  - Milk, meat, vegetables - healthy diet
  - Manure of cattle - used to fertilise the soil
  - Stored grains and seeds for winter months

**Cattle**

- Uses
  - meat
  - milk
  - skin & horns - clothing, shields, weapons
  - cow dung - fuel and huts were plastered with dung
  - traded for other goods
  - used as payment for 'lobola'

- **Belonged to individuals**
  - Only men owned cattle
  - Wealthiest & most powerful = most cattle
  - Sacrificed for dead ancestors
  - Wealthiest & most powerful = most cattle

- **Cattle Uses**
  - meat
  - milk
  - skin & horns - clothing, shields, weapons
  - cow dung - fuel and huts were plastered with dung
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- **Lobola**
  - The payment the husband makes to his bride's family when they get married.

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Social, Political & Economical Structures

A hierarchical society is a society that is divided into different social classes and where everyone is not equal.

Social hierarchy

Social classes: rich/poor, powerful/powerless

Elders & Chief - political power based on cattle owned

Wealthiest, biggest homestead

Political authority - made decision (consulted other wealthy men)

Chief

Role:
- Feed people - famine
- Care for women if husband died
- Care for less fortunate
- Lend cattle to poor men
- Welcome visitors

Political organisation

Not all highly organised chiefdoms

All had a government, responsible for solving problems

Men, women and children

Men
- Older men - decisions, kept law & order
- Men - carving, smelting iron
- Young men - warriors, guarding village

Women
- Weaving, sewing, cooking, stored food in clay & straw pots
- Young girls - helped mothers - collected water, ground crops, cleaning

Children
- Economically active from young age
- Teens - responsibilities of adults

Economical structures

Skills
- Metalworking
- Encouraged trade
- Specialised crafts

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Comparing Early Farmers in South Africa to the Khoisan

Early Farmers
- Started to plant crops
- Settled permanently in an area
- Took ownership of the land (began to think that they owned the land)
- Land belonged to community - chief and elders decided how to divide it up
- Changed the environment, wanted fertile soil and good grazing
- Lived in homesteads in villages
- Lived in huts with thatch roofs and mud and cattle dung walls, around cattle 'kraal'
- Chief's homestead was in middle, social hierarchy determined where your homestead was
- Chief had political authority

Khoisan
- Early Khoikhoi were nomads
- Gathered food - berries, roots
- Adapted to the land and environment, did not change it permanently
- Lived in clans - everyone worked together
- Did not take ownership of land
- Huts built with pole frames and grass matting in a circle
- Cattle in the middle of camp to protect them
- Chief and elders made decisions

Similarities
- Hunted for food
- Owned livestock like cattle and goats
- Started to settle on land (not moving around as much)

Archaeologists found evidence that they lived together peacefully:
- Khoisan artefacts found on farming sites
- Farmers adopted 'click' sound from Khoisan language - isiXhosa and isiZulu
- Rock paintings of Khoisan show farmers' cattle and tools

How did they live together in peace?
- Farmers traded iron tools, weapons for meat and animal hides
- Khoisan shared rainmaking skills
- Khoisan married farmers
- Both told stories for entertainment and sharing
- Farmers hired Khoisan to work as hunters or herders
- Farmers introduced agriculture and metal working technology

What proof do we have that Khoisan and farmers lived in cooperation?
- Farmers traded iron tools, weapons for meat and animal hides
- Khoisan shared rainmaking skills
- Khoisan married farmers
- Both told stories for entertainment and sharing
- Farmers hired Khoisan to work as hunters or herders
- Farmers introduced agriculture and metal working technology

Can you think of reasons why they sometimes disagreed with each other?
- Farmers traded iron tools, weapons for meat and animal hides
- Khoisan shared rainmaking skills
- Khoisan married farmers
- Both told stories for entertainment and sharing
- Farmers hired Khoisan to work as hunters or herders
- Farmers introduced agriculture and metal working technology