

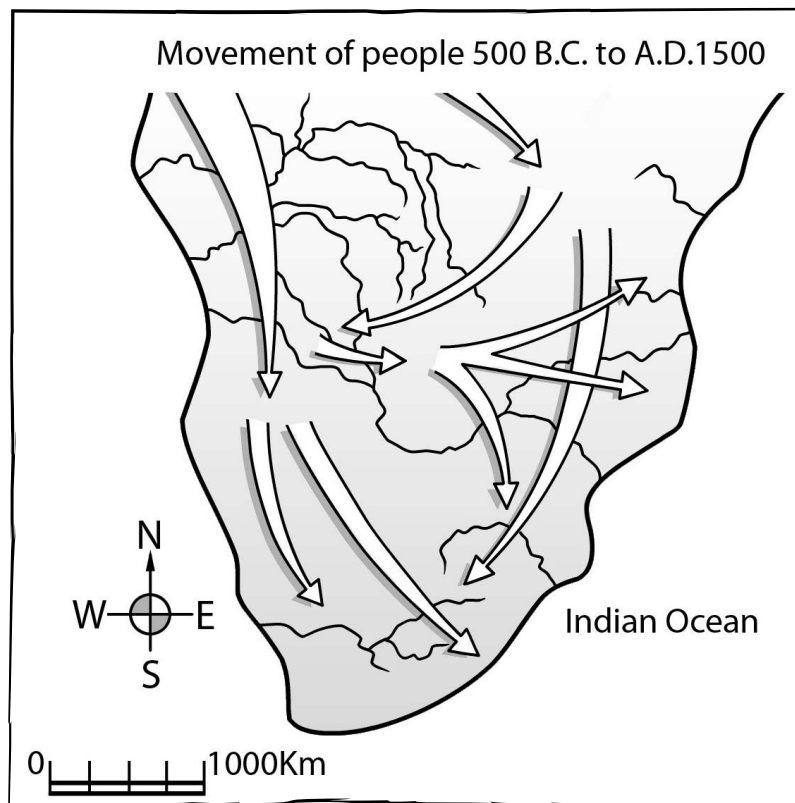
# Where the first farmers came from?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Archaeologists believe that the first farmers in Southern Africa were around during the Iron Age, some 1700 to 2000 years ago. These people moved south for better grazing for their herds as well as fertile soils for their crops. They are believed to have come from Central and East Africa and brought many changes with them.

Unlike the then inhabitants of Southern Africa, for example the Khoi-khoi herders and San hunter-gatherers, they were less nomadic and relied mainly on farming for their food. The new inhabitants of Southern Africa were more settled, lived in kraals, planted crops and kept herds of cattle, sheep and goats.

All these people spoke Bantu languages and shared the land and interacted with one another. Some even inter-married, fought over land and traded.



## Activity

In the space provided construct a mind map on the first farmers based on the information in the paragraphs below.

### Paragraph 1

About 1700 to 2000 years ago, Central African farmers began to move south into Southern Africa. Historians and archaeologists believe that this migration of farmers took place slowly. They moved southward because the water sources in the Sahara were drying up and the farmers were looking for new fields and pastures.

## Paragraph 2

The early farmers encountered the herders and hunter-gatherers in Southern Africa. They traded with them or used them as slaves, and sometimes they fought to use the land and for food.

## Paragraph 3

These early farmers were Bantu speakers. They kept large herds of cattle. The amount of cattle each farmer had was a sign of their wealth. Cattle were also used for lobola (payment for a bride). Cattle were valued for their milk and for their hides, but were usually only killed for their meat on ceremonial occasions.

## Paragraph 4

The hunting of game and the slaughtering of goats and sheep for meat, provided a good source of food. The early farmers also grew their own crops, such as millet, sorghum, beans and melons along with other grains and vegetables. The farmers close to the sea fished and collected shellfish.

## Paragraph 5

Archaeologists found evidence of settlements established more than 1400 years ago. These settlements showed that several thousand people lived in each settlement. The remains of small beehive-shaped houses made from grass matting and clay, occupied by early Iron Age farmers, were found and date as far back as AD420. Early farmers used metals. They smelted iron and used it to make tools. They also traded using iron. They traded with people as far east as the Indian Ocean. The early farmers also produced finely worked gold and copper ornaments and hunted for ivory.

## Paragraph 6

The Bantu speaking early farming communities each had their own chief and elders. The elders always had to be consulted about major decisions.

