Timeline of Human Evolution

Compiled by Ed Uthman, September, 2013

All figures are approximate. Most figures and species assignments are controversial.

Mya = million years ago; kya = thousand years ago

How far back?	What possibly happened?
6 – 5 Mya	Divergence of hominins (tribe Hominini, human-like primates) from remainder of hominids (order Hominidae, which
	includes ancestors of great apes). Most recent common
	ancestor of humans and chimpanzees; Sahelanthropus
	tchadensis? Possible bipedalism
4.2 Mya	Definite bipedalism; Australopithecus species, including A. anamensis, then A. afarensis ("Lucy"), then A. africanus
2.6 Mya	Oldest known tools (Oldowan culture)
2.5 Mya	Homo habilis, first species of genus Homo and probable tool user
1.9 Mya	Homo erectus (called Homo ergaster in Africa, Homo georgicus in Georgia) appears in Africa, Georgia, East Asia ("Peking Man"), Southeast Asia ("Java Man"). So-called "Out of Africa I"
1.5 Mya	Possible controlled use of fire (by <i>Homo erectus</i>)
700 kya	Homo heidelbergensis, possible descendant of H. erectus,
	appears in Africa, then in Southern Europe and Britain.
500 kya	Widely accepted date of use of cooking
400 – 300 kya	H. heidelbergensis begins evolutionary split, developing into
	Homo neanderthalensis in western Eurasia and Homo sapiens in Africa.
350 kya	Homo neanderthalensis emerges, eventually covering wide swath from Gibraltar, through Israel, to Siberia.
200 – 130 kya	Homo sapiens appears in Africa.
100 kya	H. sapiens appears in Israel ("Out of Africa II")
95 kya	Homo floresiensis ("the Hobbit") living on the island of Flores in Malay Archipelago
60 – 40 kya	H. sapiens is in Australia.
50 kya	H. sapiens in Africa undergoes rapid advancement in
	toolmaking and complex behaviors ("the Great Leap Forward")
45 – 40 kya	H. sapiens enters Europe.
30 kya	H. erectus may have persisted this late on islands of Southeast
-	Asia
28 kya	Last evidence of <i>H. neanderthalensis</i>
14 kya	H. sapiens in the Americas
12 kya	Last possible date of <i>H. floresiensis. H. sapiens</i> is final surviving hominin.
5.2 kya	Invention of writing; end of pre-history