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Difference Between Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens

December 4, 2017 • by Lakna • 6 min read

Main Difference – Neanderthals vs Homo Sapiens

Homo neanderthalensis and *Homo sapiens* are two species in the later stages of human evolution. *Homo neanderthalensis* is commonly called Neanderthal. *Homo sapiens* is called ‘wise man’ in Latin: the only known extant human species. Neanderthal is the closest relative of humans. However, there is a significant difference in both species due to biological, anthropological, ethological, linguistic, and other factors. The **main difference** between Neanderthal and *Homo sapiens* is that **Neanderthals were hunter-gatherers whereas *Homo sapiens* spend a settled life, producing food through agriculture and domestication.** *Homo sapiens sapiens* and *Homo sapiens idaltu* are the two subspecies of *Homo sapiens*. The modern human belongs to *Homo sapiens sapiens* while the other is an extinct subspecies.

Key Areas Covered

1. Who are Neanderthals

– Definition, Anatomy, Anthropology

2. Who are Homo Sapiens

– Definition, Anatomy, Anthropology

3. What are the Similarities Between Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens

– Outline of Common Features

4. What is the Difference Between Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens

– Comparison of Key Differences

Key Terms: Build, Forehead, Human Evolution, *Homo sapiens idaltu*, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, Neanderthals, Symbolic Expressions

NEANDERTHALS

VERSUS

HOMO SAPIENS

Neanderthals are an extinct species of humans, that was widely distributed in ice-age Europe	Homo sapiens refer to the primate species to which modern humans belong
Evolved about 400,000 to 40,000 years ago in Europe and Southwestern to central Asia	Evolved about 200,000 years ago in Africa
Had no subspecies	Homo sapiens sapiens and Homo sapiens idaltu are the two subspecies
Lived in Europe and Southwestern to central Asia	Live all over the world
Had a receding forehead with prominent brow ridges	Have a flat and near vertical forehead
Have a short and stocky body	Have a lighter build
Brain was larger compared to the body	Brain is smaller compared to the body
Average male height was 5 ft 5 in. and female height was 5 ft 1 in.	Average male height was 5 ft 7.5 in. and female height was 5 ft 2 in.
Weight of males was 143 lbs and weight of females was 119 lbs	Weight of males was 119-141 lbs and weight of females was 168-183 lbs
Lived in caves, hunting animals and gathering food	Spends a settled life, producing food through agriculture and domestication

Who are Neanderthals

Neanderthals (*Homo neanderthalensis*) refer to an extinct species of humans, who were widely distributed in ice-edge Europe. They were the closest extinct human species relative to *Homo sapiens*. They lived in Southwestern to central Asia about 400,000 to 40,000 years ago. The main characteristic features of Neanderthals are their receding forehead and prominent brow ridges. Neanderthals skull also comprised a large middle part of the face, a huge nose, and angled cheek bones. Since Neanderthals lived in cold environments, their huge nose was used to humidify and warm the cold, dry air. The body of Neanderthals was shorter and stockier than the modern man. The size of the brain was the same as the modern man. But, their brain was proportionally larger to their body. A Neanderthal is shown in *figure 1*.



Figure 1: Neanderthal

Neanderthals lived in caves and wore clothes. They were very skilled hunters of large animals, used sophisticated tools, and were capable of controlling fire. Neanderthals ate plant food as well. Sometimes, they used symbolic and ornamental objects. The dead bodies of Neanderthals were deliberately buried and graves were marked as well. Neanderthal might be extinct due to gradual or dramatic climate changes. If not, they might have interbred with *Homo sapiens* until they were absorbed by *Homo sapiens*.

Who are Homo Spaiens

Homo sapiens refer to the primate species to which modern humans belong. They evolved about 200,000 years ago in

is commonly called the “Herto man”. *Homo sapiens idaltu* evolved about 160,000 years ago in Pleistocene Africa. The modern human belongs to *Homo sapiens sapiens*. The skull of the modern human is a thin-walled, vaulted

structure with a flat, and near vertical forehead. These changes bear a large brain. The average size of the brain is 1300 cm^3 . The brain to body ratio is less when compared to Neanderthals. The modern human has a lighter build in their skeleton when compared to his old ancestors. The jaws are less heavily developed with smaller teeth. *Homo sapiens* is shown in figure 2.



Figure 2: Homo Sapiens

Modern humans use more refined and specialized tools such as sewing needles and spear throwers. They spend a settled life and are aware of domestication. Abstract thinking, planning depth, cultural diversity as well as symbolic expressions such as art and music are characteristic features of modern humans.

Similarities Between Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens

- Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens* are two species of the Genus: Homo.
- Both Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens* are primates.
- Both Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens* have brains with similar sizes.

Difference Between Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens

Definition

Neanderthals: Neanderthals are an extinct species of humans, that was widely distributed in ice-age Europe.

Neanderthals: Neanderthals evolved about 400,000 to 40,000 years ago in Europe and Southwestern to central Asia.

Homo sapiens: *Homo sapiens* evolved about 200,000 years ago in Africa.

Subspecies

Neanderthals: Neanderthals had no subspecies.

Homo sapiens: *Homo sapiens sapiens* and *Homo sapiens idaltu* are the two subspecies of *Homo sapiens*.

Habitat

Neanderthals: Neanderthals lived in Europe and Southwestern to central Asia.

Homo sapiens: *Homo sapiens* live all over the world.

Forehead

Neanderthals: Neanderthals had a receding forehead with prominent brow ridges.

Homo sapiens: *Homo sapiens* have a flat and near vertical forehead.

Body

Neanderthals: The body of the Neanderthals was short and stockier.

Homo sapiens: *Homo sapiens* have a lighter build.

Body to Brain Proportionality

Neanderthals: The brain of the Neanderthals was larger when compared to their body.

Homo sapiens: The brain of *Homo sapiens* is smaller compared to the body.

Height

Neanderthals: The average height of the Neanderthal males was 5 ft 5 in and that of Neanderthal females was 5 ft 1 in.

Homo sapiens: The average height of the males was 5 ft 7 1/2 in and that of females was 5 ft 2 in.

Neanderthals: The weight of the Neanderthal males was 143 lbs and that of Neanderthal females was 119 lbs.

Homo sapiens: The weight of the males was 119-141 lbs and that of females was 168-183 lbs.

Life Style

Neanderthals: Neanderthals lived in caves, hunting animals and gathering food.

Homo sapiens: *Homo sapiens* spends a settled life, producing food through agriculture and domestication.

Symbolic Expressions

Neanderthals: Neanderthals used symbolic and ornamental objects occasionally.

Homo sapiens: *Homo sapiens* uses much more complex symbols as well as languages for communication.

Tools

Neanderthals: Neanderthals used sophisticated tools for hunting and other purposes.

Homo sapiens: *Homo sapiens* uses much more sophisticated tools than Neanderthals.

Conclusion

Neanderthal and Homo sapiens are two species of humans. Neanderthals are the closest extinct species of Homo sapiens. They lived in caves, hunting and gathering food. Homo sapiens is the modern human species, who is much wiser than Neanderthals in expressions as well as other lifestyle factors. The main difference between Neanderthals and Homo sapiens is the structure of the body and skills.

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1. "NHM – Homo sapiens Modell 1" By Wolfgang Sauber – Own work (CC BY-SA 4.0) via Commons Wikimedia
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About the Author: Lakna

Lakna, a graduate in Molecular Biology & Biochemistry, is a Molecular Biologist and has a broad and keen interest in the discovery of nature related things

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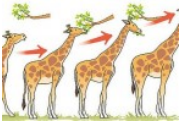
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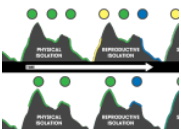
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