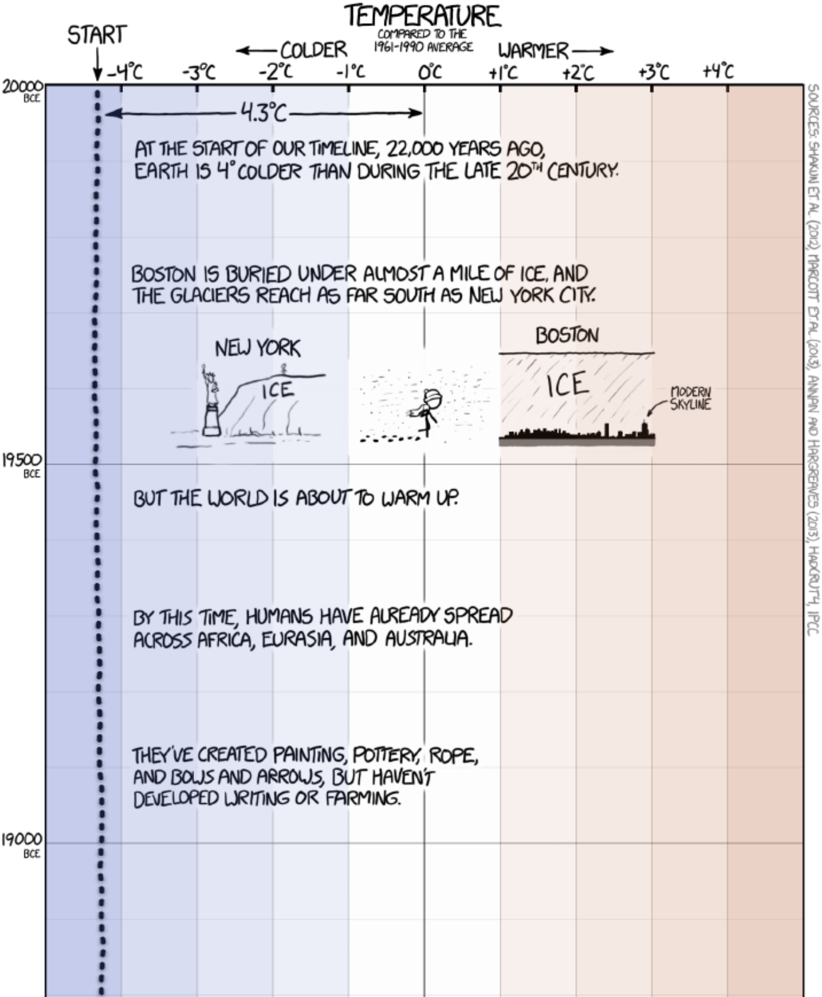
A TIMELINE OF EARTH'S AVERAGE TEMPERATURE

SINCE THE LAST ICE AGE GLACIATION

WHEN PEOPLE SAY "THE CLIMATE HAS CHANGED BEFORE," THESE ARE THE KINDS OF CHANGES THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT.



AT THE START OF OUR TIMELINE, 22,000 YEARS AGO, EARTH IS 4° COLDER THAN DURING THE LATE 20TH CENTURY.

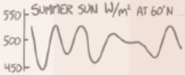
BOSTON IS BURIED UNDER ALMOST A MILE OF ICE, AND THE GLACIERS REACH AS FAR SOUTH AS NEW YORK CITY.

BUT THE WORLD IS ABOUT TO WARM UP.

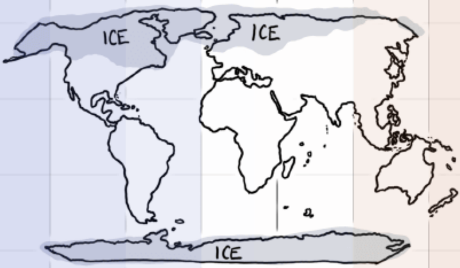
BY THIS TIME, HUMANS HAVE ALREADY SPREAD ACROSS AFRICA, EURASIA, AND AUSTRALIA.

THEY'VE CREATED PAINTING, POTTERY, ROPE, AND BOWS AND ARROWS, BUT HAVEN'T DEVELOPED WRITING OR FARMING.

CHANGES IN THE EARTH'S ORBIT MEAN THAT MORE SUNLIGHT REACHES THE POLAR ICE...



18500
BCE

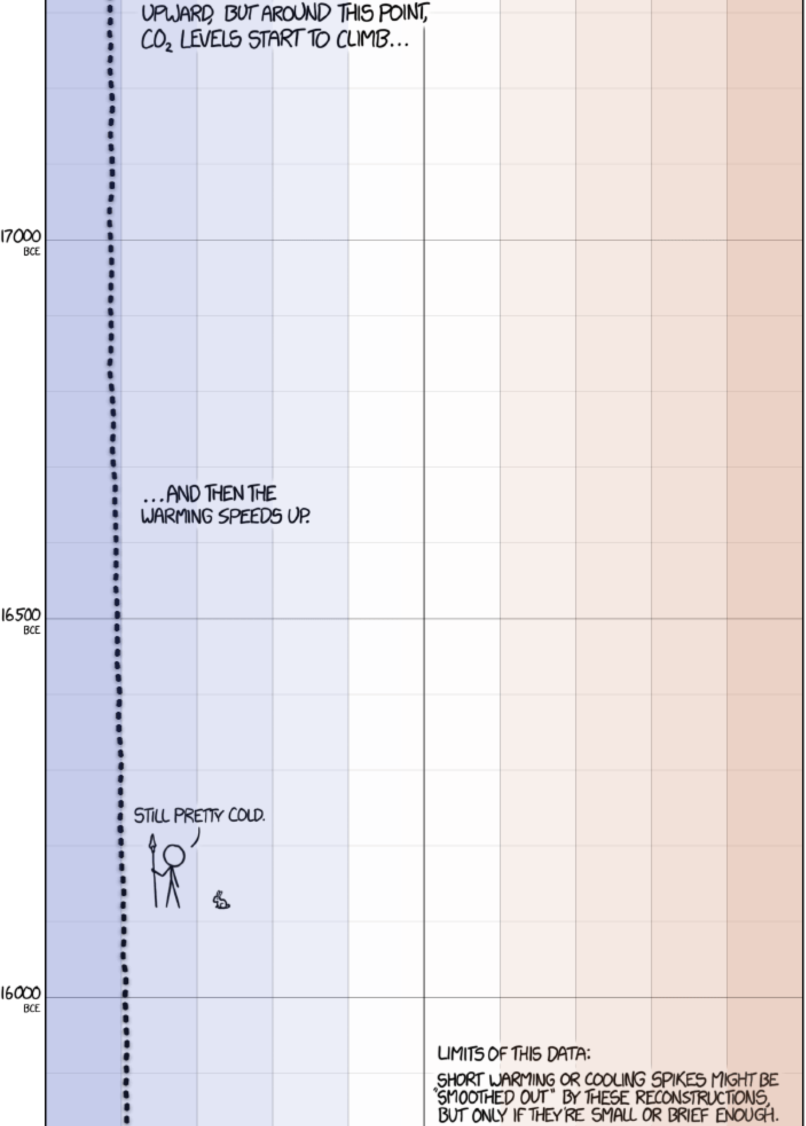


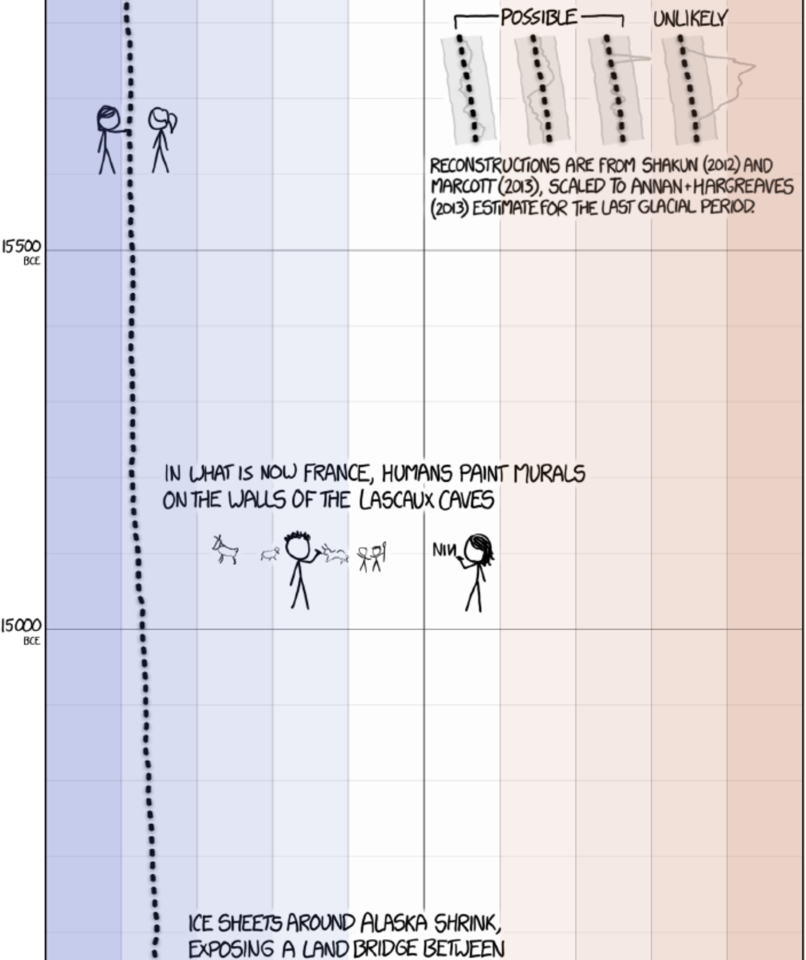
18000
BCE

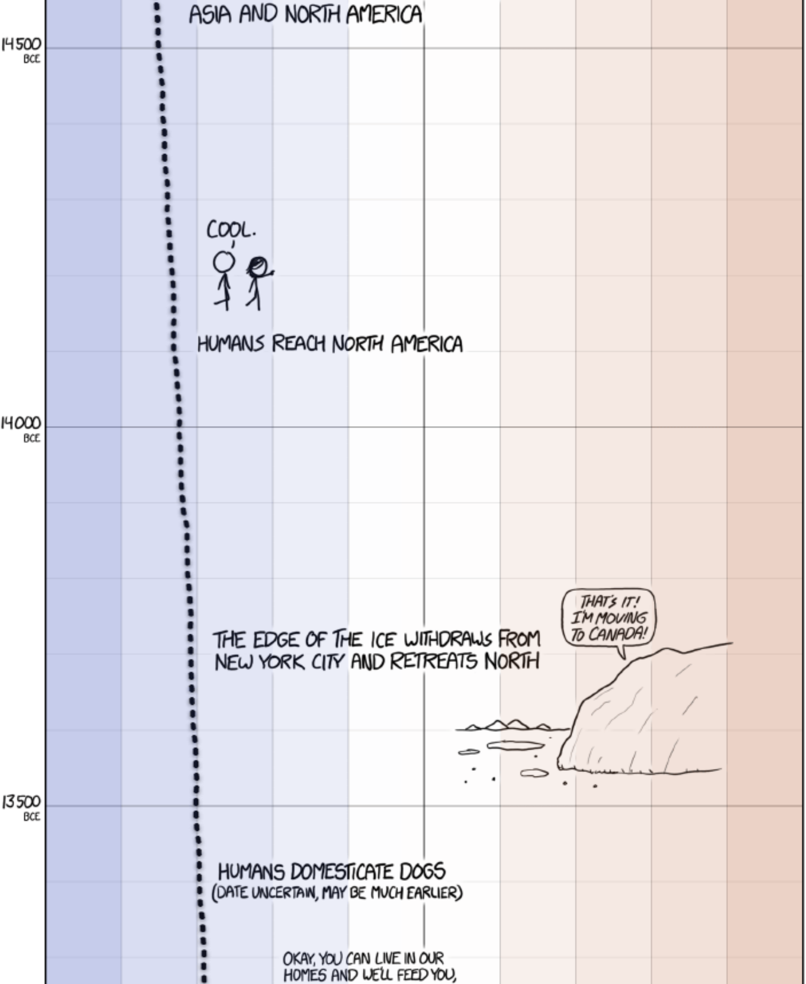
...AND THE ICE SHEETS START TO MELT.

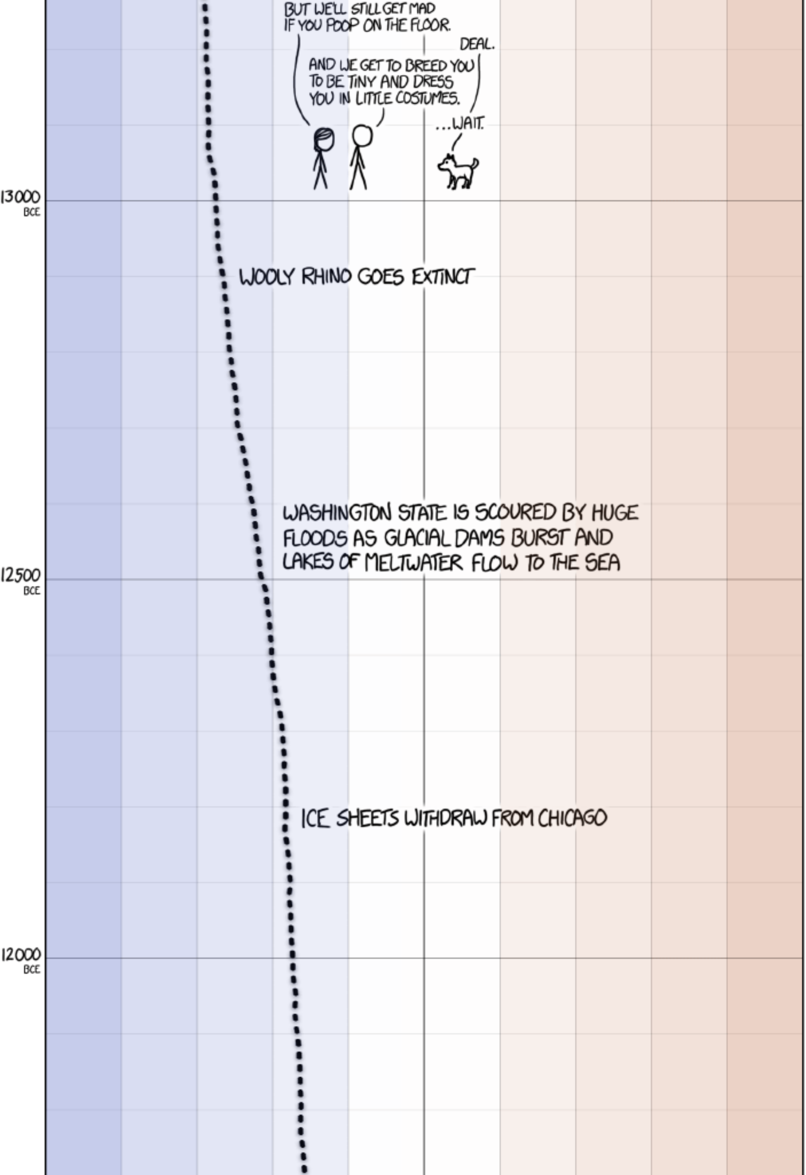
17500
BCE

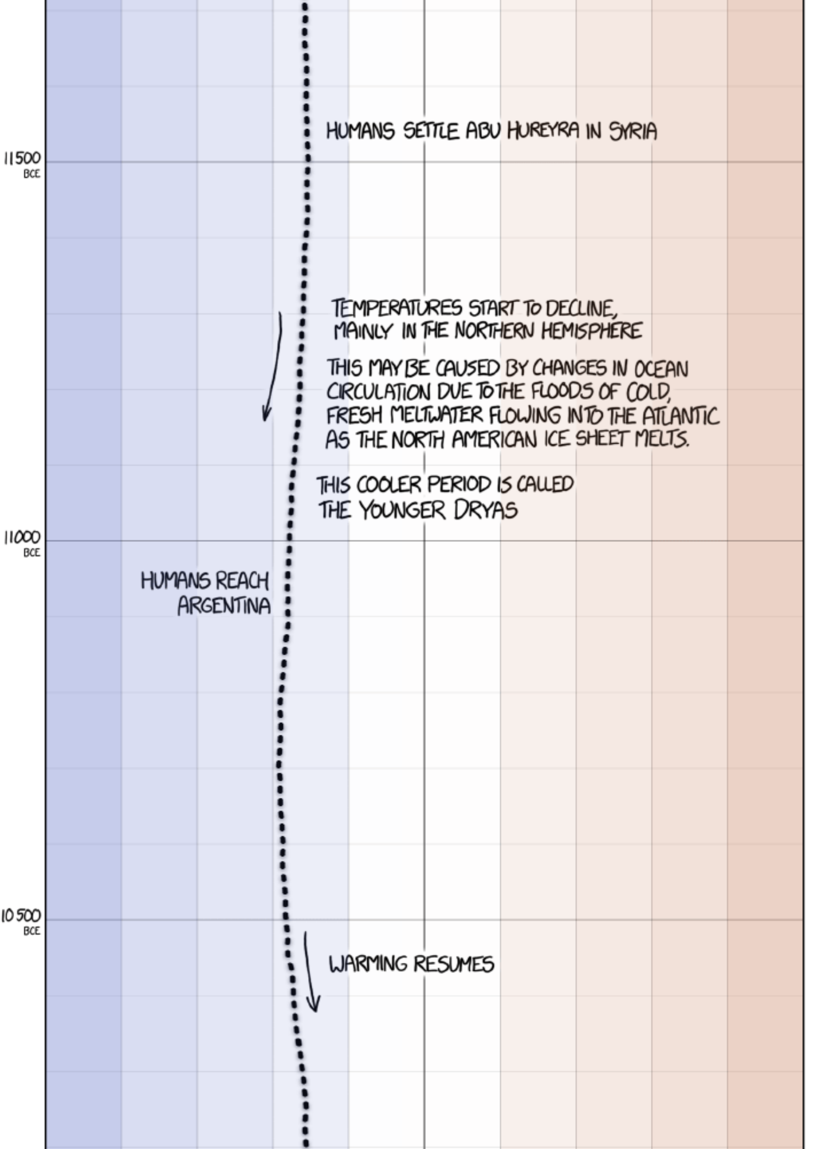
TEMPERATURES HAVE BEEN CREEPING




POSSIBLE
UNLIKELY
RECONSTRUCTIONS ARE FROM SHAKUN (2012) AND MARCOTT (2013), SCALED TO ANNAN+HARGREAVES (2013) ESTIMATE FOR THE LAST GLACIAL PERIOD.
15500 BCE
IN WHAT IS NOW FRANCE, HUMANS PAINT MURALS ON THE WALLS OF THE LASCAUX CAVES
NIN
15000 BCE
ICE SHEETS AROUND ALASKA SHRINK, EXPOSING A LAND BRIDGE BETWEEN







HUMANS SETTLE ABU HUREYRA IN SYRIA

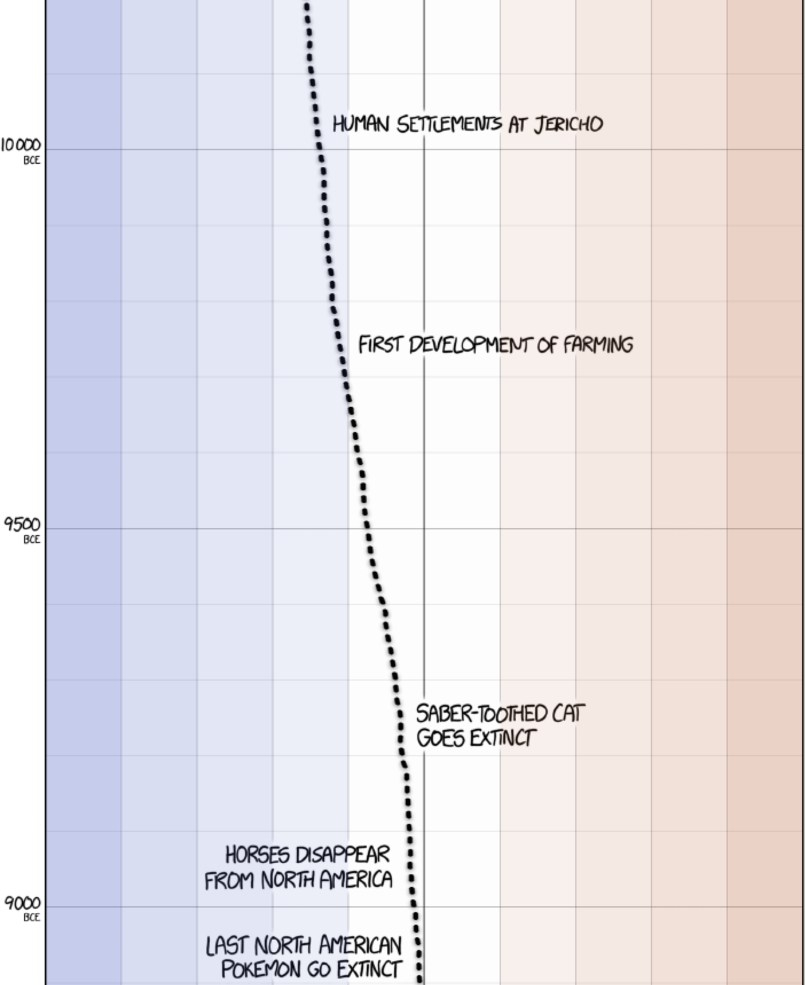
TEMPERATURES START TO DECLINE,
MAINLY IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

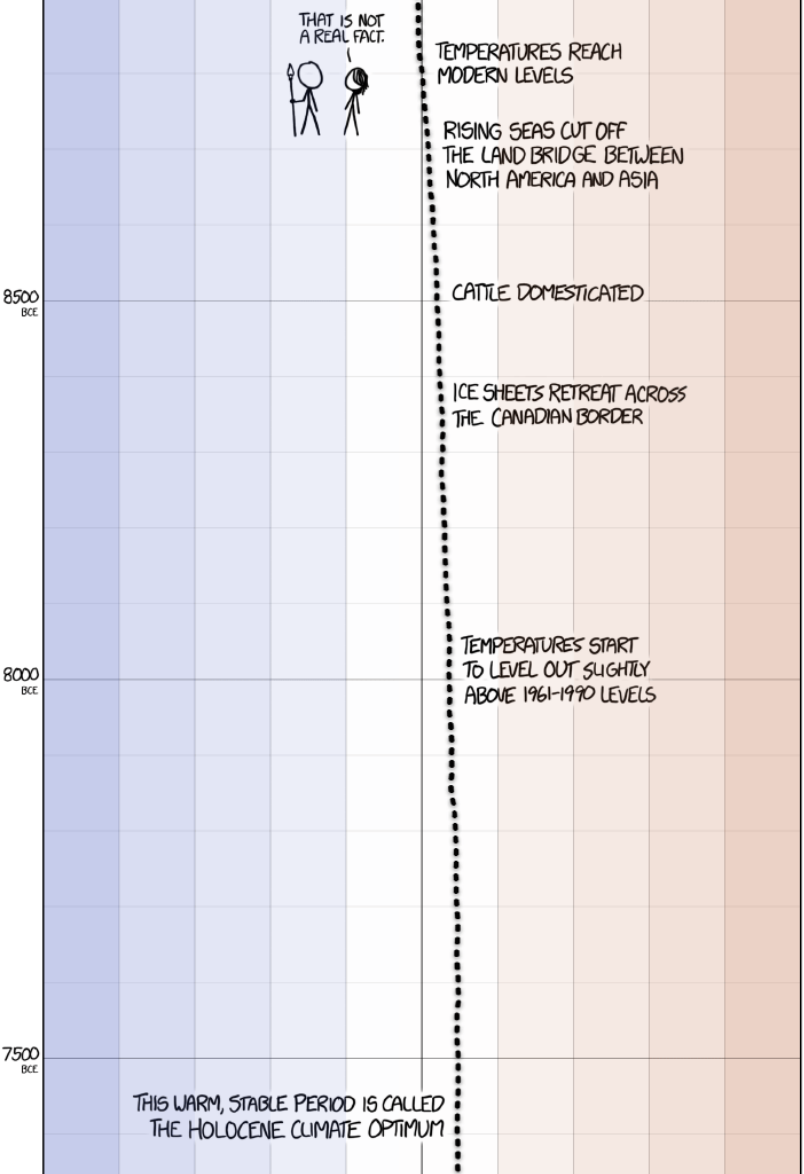
THIS MAY BE CAUSED BY CHANGES IN OCEAN CIRCULATION DUE TO THE FLOODS OF COLD, FRESH MELTWATER FLOWING INTO THE ATLANTIC AS THE NORTH AMERICAN ICE SHEET MELTS.

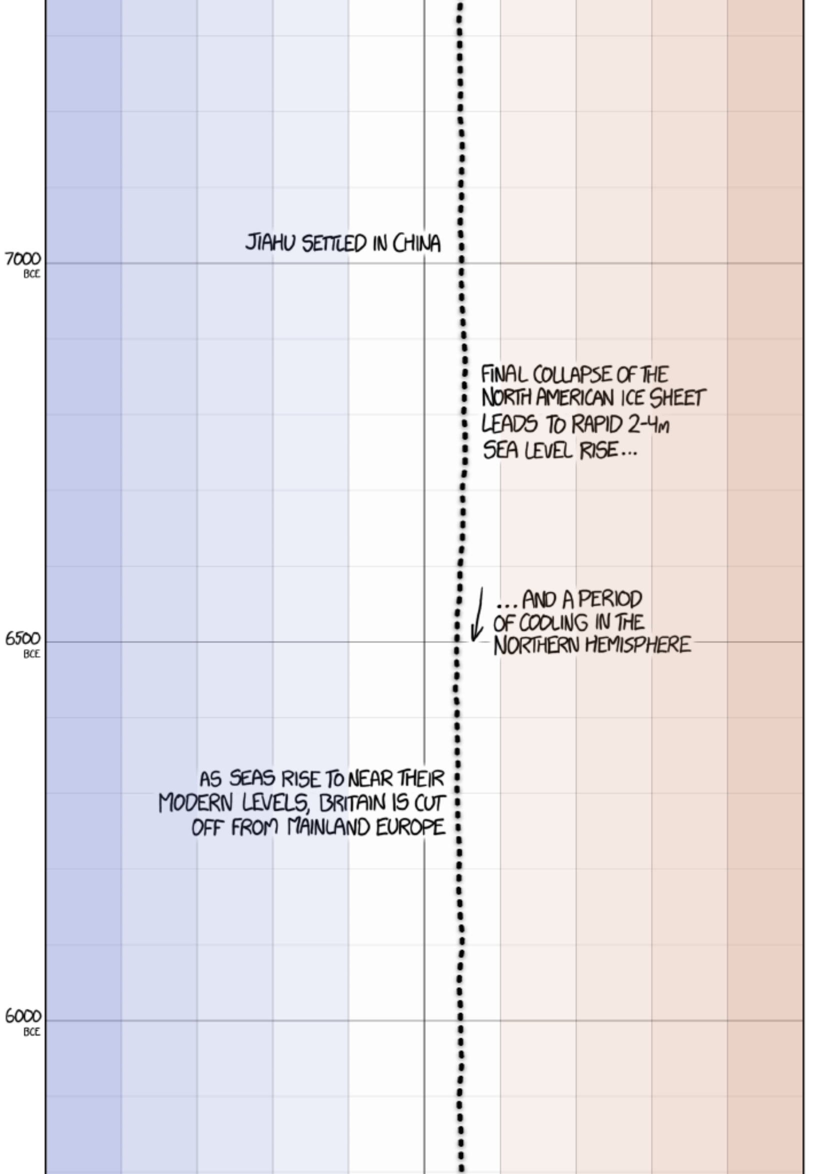
THIS COOLER PERIOD IS CALLED
THE YOUNGER DRYAS

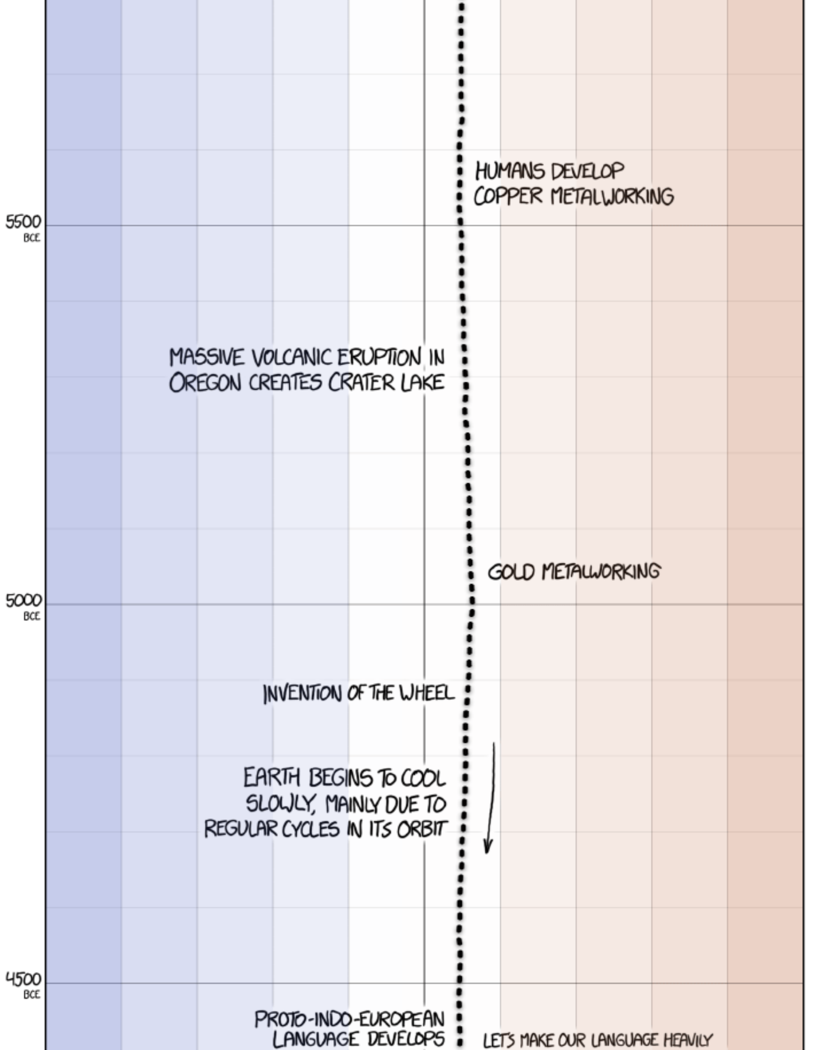
HUMANS REACH
ARGENTINA

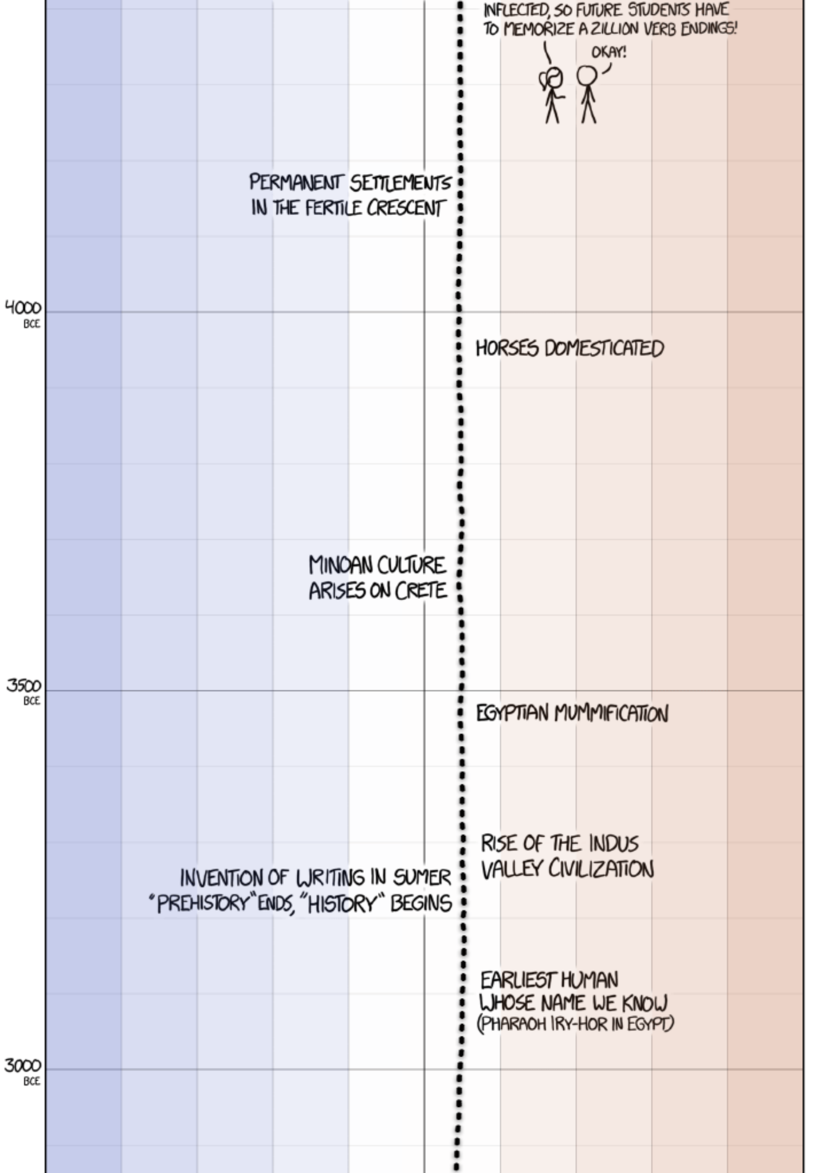
WARMING RESUMES

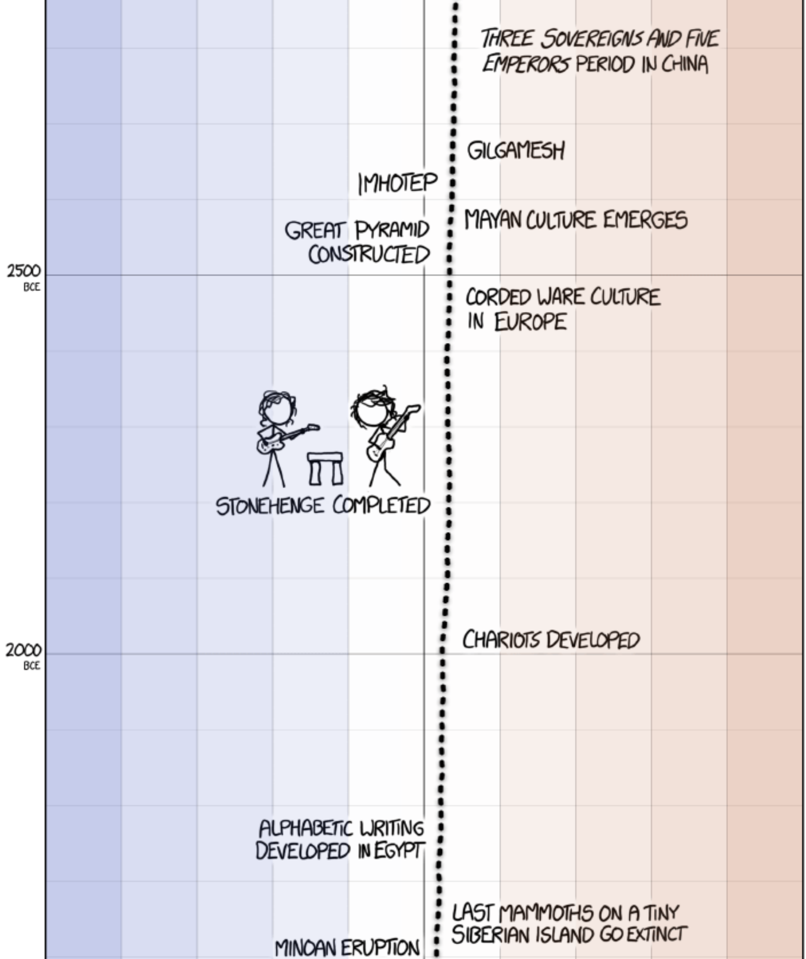


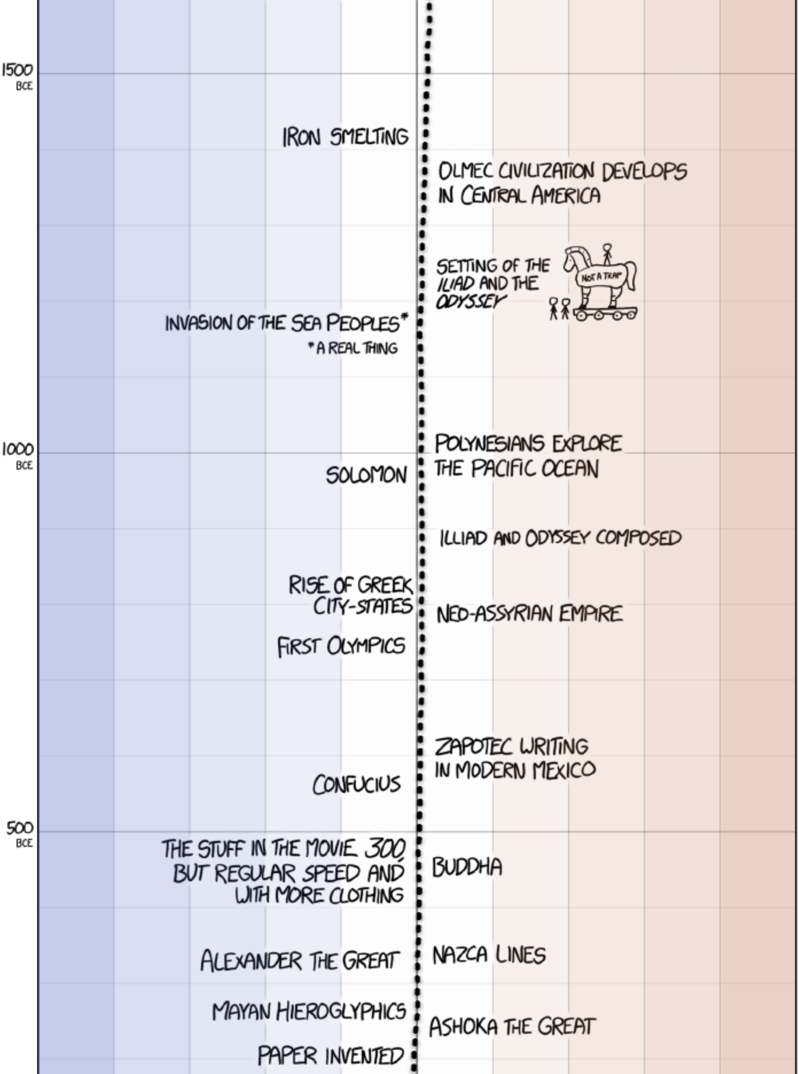
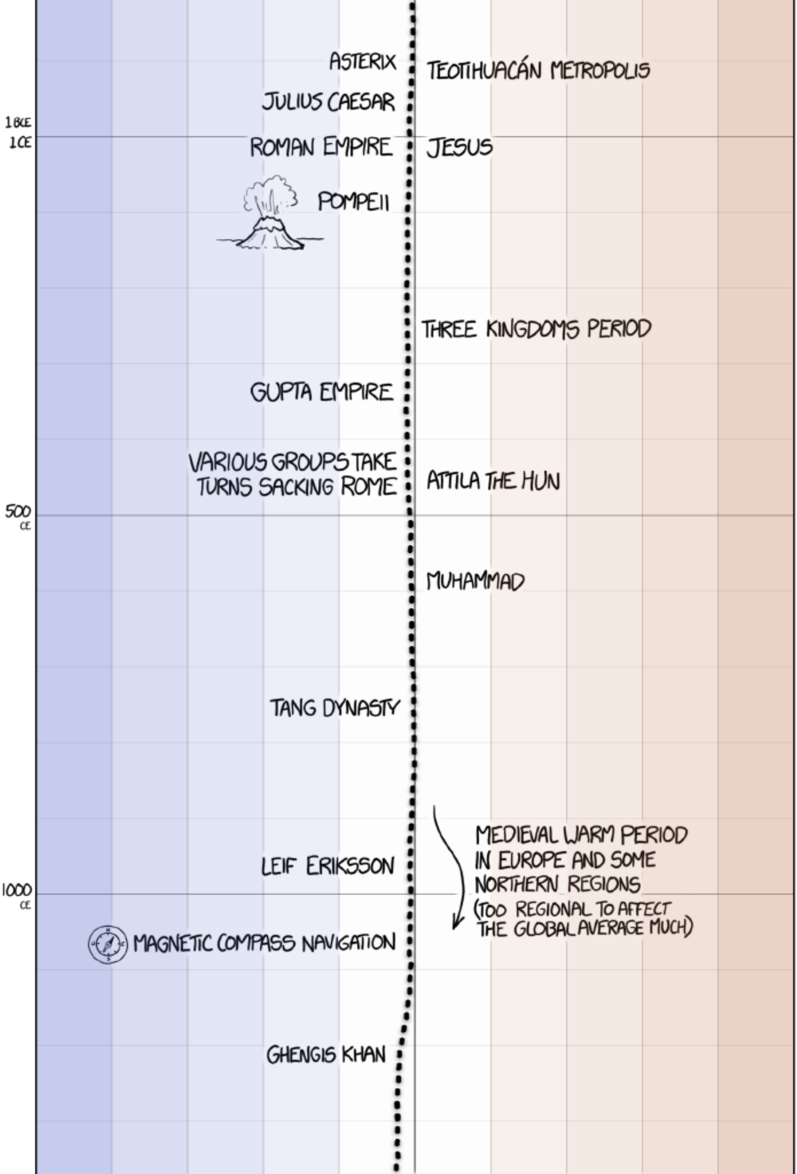
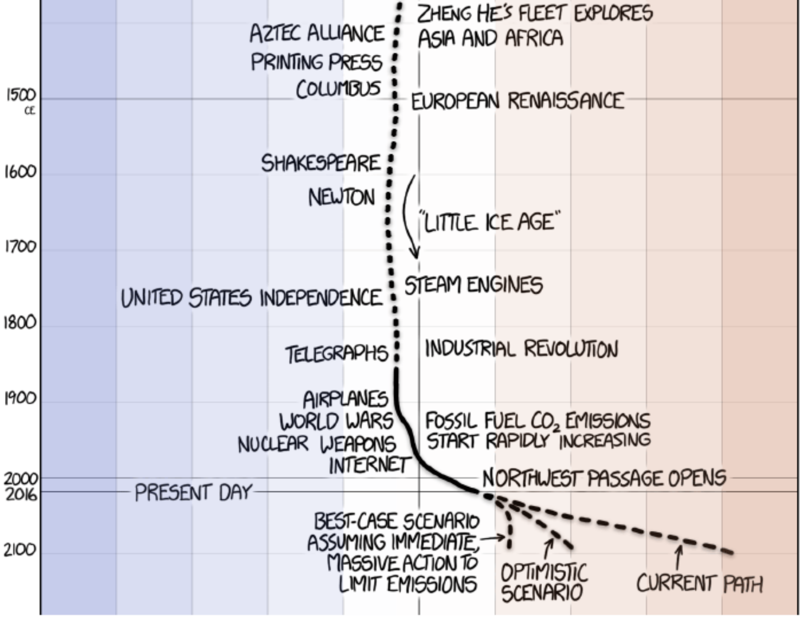







INFLECTED, SO FUTURE STUDENTS HAVE TO MEMORIZE A ZILLION VERB ENDINGS!
OKAY!
PERMANENT SETTLEMENTS IN THE FERTILE CRESCENT
4000 BCE
HORSES DOMESTICATED
MINOAN CULTURE ARISES ON CRETE
3500 BCE
EGYPTIAN MUMMIFICATION
RISE OF THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION
INVENTION OF WRITING IN SUMER
"PREHISTORY" ENDS, "HISTORY" BEGINS
EARLIEST HUMAN WHOSE NAME WE KNOW
(PHARAOH IRY-HOR IN EGYPT)
3000 BCE


THREE SOVEREIGNS AND FIVE EMPERORS PERIOD IN CHINA
GILGAMESH
IMHOTEP
MAYAN CULTURE EMERGES
GREAT PYRAMID CONSTRUCTED
2500 BCE
CORDED WARE CULTURE IN EUROPE
STONEHENGE COMPLETED
CHARIOTS DEVELOPED
2000 BCE
ALPHABETIC WRITING DEVELOPED IN EGYPT
LAST MAMMOTHS ON A TINY SIBERIAN ISLAND GO EXTINCT
MINOAN ERUPTION


1500 BCE
IRON SMELTING
OLMEC CIVILIZATION DEVELOPS IN CENTRAL AMERICA
SETTING OF THE ILIAD AND THE ODYSSEY
NOT A TRAP
INVASION OF THE SEA PEOPLES*
*A REAL THING
1000 BCE
POLYNESIANS EXPLORE THE PACIFIC OCEAN
SOLOMON
ILLIAD AND ODYSSEY COMPOSED
RISE OF GREEK CITY-STATES
NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE
FIRST OLYMPICS
ZAPOTEC WRITING IN MODERN MEXICO
CONFUCIUS
500 BCE
THE STUFF IN THE MOVIE 300 BUT REGULAR SPEED AND WITH MORE CLOTHING
BUDDHA
ALEXANDER THE GREAT
NAZCA LINES
MAYAN HIEROGLYPHICS
ASHOKA THE GREAT
PAPER INVENTED