

Before There Were Lights

How did people light their homes before electricity?

¹ Have you ever thought of making a lamp out of a hollow stone? That's what people did as much as 15,000 years ago. In the hollow part of the stone, they probably put some animal fat. A part of a plant lying in the fat was the wick. Scientists have also found other early lamps made out of shells and animal horns. In time, people shaped lamps out of clay.

² About 3,000 years ago, someone came up with the idea of shaping animal fat to make candles. Because they were made of animal fat, they were smoky and smelly.

³ Even 200 years ago, candles and oil lamps were the only sources of light. Most people worked during daylight hours and went to bed when it was dark. Candles and lamp oil cost a lot of money, so people used them as little as possible.



1. How could someone make a lamp out of a hollow stone?

2. What else might you have used to make a lamp a very long time ago?

_____ an animal horn

_____ a plastic dish

_____ a leaf

3. When were the first candles made?

4. The first candles were made of _____.

_____ wax _____ stone _____ animal fat

5. Long ago, why did people go to bed early?

6. Were candles and lamp oil cheap or expensive?

7. Name two reasons people still use candles today.
