Why are legends handed down by storytellers useful?

We can read about things that happened 5000 years ago in the Near East, where people first learned to write.

But there are some parts of the world where, even now, people cannot write.

The only way that they can preserve their history is to recount it as sagas—legends handed down from one generation of storytellers to another.

These legends are useful because they can tell us something about the migrations of people who lived long ago, but none could write down what they did.

Anthropologists wondered where the remote ancestors of the Polynesian peoples now living in the Pacific Islands came from.

The sagas of these people explain that some of them came from Indonesia about 2084 years ago.

But the first people who were like ourselves lived so long ago that even their sagas if they had any, are forgotten. So archaeologists have neither history nor legends to help them find out where the first ‘modern men’ came from.  Fortunately, however, ancient men made tools out of stone, especially flint, because this is easier to shape than other kinds.

They may also have used wood and skins, but these have rotted away.

Stone does not decay, and so the tools of long ago have remained when even the bones of the men who made them have disappeared without a trace.

Anthropologists can learn something about the history of ancient peoples who have not left written records by studying the sagas that have been handed down from one generation of storytellers to another.

Ancient men preferred to use flint to make tools because it was easier to shape than other kinds of stone.

In most countries, the money to preserve ancient buildings and works of art comes from tourism, but tourism can also destroy the things we seek to preserve.

The children sat in a circle while the actor recounted the story of the beginning of the world.

These days, scientists can test their theories about the migrations of early peoples by looking at the geographical distribution of particular genetic types within modern populations.

Recently, anthropologists at the British Museum presented an exhibition about the ceremonies and traditions of the Mexican Day of the Dead.

Rock and cave paintings made in the remote past have now been found in most parts of the world.

Left where they fall, dead trees gradually decay, providing a home for mushrooms and insects, so that the cycle of life begins again.

The painting was missing, and whoever had taken it had simply vanished without a trace.

An archaeologist studies the remains left by people who lived long ago, such as their dwellings, their tools, and their burials, so as to learn how and where they lived.

The earliest written records come from the Near East and are about 5,000 years old.

For the period before written records began, we had to rely on sagas, stories handed down orally from one generation to another.

Stone tools, which, unlike wood and skins, do not decay, also provide evidence of our remote ancestors.

Tools that were made of stone were used for scraping and cutting.

Legends, which have been recorded in the form of sagas, provide some information about the migrations of ancient peoples.

The remains, which were found at the back of the cave, were dated to about 20,000 years before the present.

What did he say to you?

He told everybody that he had been ill.

Did you say that you have written a novel?

I can’t tell you about it now.

Do you mind my asking where you got it from?

I bought it from a second-hand shop in South London.

Would you mind helping me lift this box, please?

The children helped me make the tree decorations.

Your mother may have called when you were out.

You may have left your umbrella in the waiting room.

He may have changed his mind.

Ancient rock paintings have been found in many parts of Spain and Portugal.

Of all the wonderful places in Italy, Florence and Venice are the two that most tourists wish to see.

We often know little about the history of our times.

Climb into bed and I’ll read you a bedtime story.

I wonder if we've made a mistake here.

I love wandering around second-hand bookshops.

There’s no one like you.

Please do as I say.

What we have to do now is find out why the accident happened.

I’m sure l have already paid this bill, but I can’t find the receipt.

Property developers often have little regard for ancient/old buildings.

World leaders are often old men.

Mr. Briggs is an old friend of mine.

We need some basic tools like a hammer and a screwdriver.

A dentist’s instruments need to be constantly sterilized.

The old church is full of beautiful stone sculptures.

Rocks had fallen from above, making the roads impassable.

I’ve such bad skin, I’m always coming out in spots.

Shoes made of real leather have become so expensive.

Do you happen to know where he comes from?

It so happens that he comes from the same town as me.

Can you tell me what happened at college yesterday?

In illiterate societies, storytelling is a way of passing knowledge of the past from one generation to another.

Ancient people have likely left us information that has been moved from one place to another.

Anthropologists have been curious about how the Polynesian islands came to be inhabited.

Though wood and skins rot away, anthropologists can learn a great deal from ancient tools made from stone.

In some parts of the world, people are still unable to write.

They can preserve their history by handing down legends.

The reason why these legends are useful is that they tell us about migrations.

There weren’t any of them who could write down what they did.

The only way they can preserve their history is to tell stories.

The people who lived long ago could not record their history.

Some sagas tell us about theorigins of Polynesian peoples.

Tools made of stone, especially flint, were made by men who lived long ago.