During this long period in prehistory, people eked out a living as best they could in a harsh environment. Climate was dry and warm-to-hot in most parts of Texas. Survival depended upon wit, patience, ingenuity and effective use of resources.

In a narrow area bounded by the Pecos, Rio Grande and Devils rivers, artists painted dramatic figures on rock walls and cliffs. The uppermost surfaces could be reached only by climbing a scaffolding or ladder. These figures certainly look to have ritual significance, but-in the absence of written records-we can only guess at their meaning.

Desert dwellers were willing to consider almost anything as a possible source of food. They pounced upon lizards that darted from the brush. They scooped up mussels and snails from streams that flowed intermittently. They pulverized food with grinding stones. They dug pit ovens into the earth and hovered over the pits for days, baking tough plants into edible form.

Desert dwellers were willing to consider almost anything as a possible source of food. They pounced upon lizards that darted from the brush. They scooped up mussels and snails from streams that flowed intermittently. They pulverized food with grinding stones. They dug pit ovens into the earth and hovered over the pits for days, baking tough plants into edible form.

Several kinds of wild roots dug for food during the Archaic Period. Left to right: False garlic, camas bulbs, wild onions, yam. Archaic hunters chased after rabbits with cudgels and sticks. They hunted deer with atlatl and darts. When shaping their stone points, they typically chipped out notches or a stem at the end for tying to a spear.

Archaic women's tool bundle contains sleeping mats, baskets, sandals, false garlic, atlatl, darts, digging sticks, and a digging stick. Food gathering usually meant travel over rocky and prickly terrain. Archaic peoples protected their feet by wearing plant-fiber sandals. They wove baskets and waterproofed them with a patching of pitch.