The first areas of Kentucky to be occupied during the Archaic Period were 8,000-1,000 B.C.

**Trade**
Long distance exchange began toward the end of the Archaic Period in some Kentucky regions. Groups traded ornaments made from marine shell, copper, or nonlocal stone.

**Technology**
During the Archaic Period, several new technologies appeared: Hunters used the atlatl to increase the power and distance of their spears. Women used hand-held pestles to crack nuts on pitted sandstone slabs. Axes made from hard, dense rocks like granite were used for chopping wood. Weavers made items from plant fibers including mats, bags, and fish nets. Baskets were twined, coiled or plaited.

**Health**
Archaic peoples had a very high infant mortality rate. The average life span for an adult was about 60 years. All Archaic people had abscessed teeth. That's because food processing on sandstone grinding slabs introduced large amounts of grit into their diet. This grit quickly wore down their teeth. They also suffered from arthritis and other inflammatory diseases.

**Settlement**
Archaic peoples camped in the open near streams and lived in rock shelters. Home territories were smaller than in Paleoindian times and sometimes overlapped.

**Society**
Like their Paleoindian ancestors, Archaic peoples were nomadic hunter-gatherers, although the foods they are were different. Archaic peoples hunted white-tailed deer, small animals, birds, and fish. Their diet also included hickory nuts, fruit, and seeds. Toward the end of the Archaic period, people began to experiment with growing their own plant foods.

Differences in cultural traditions appear at this time. Despite this diversity, Archaic peoples continued their ancestors' tradition of living in small family groups. Several groups would join together annually to court, share food, trade and entertain. Few social distinctions existed, other than those based on age, sex, and personal abilities.