Pinning down the origins of human language is one of the most difficult problems for evolutionary theory. Languages leave no fossils to inspect and date, our closest primate relatives have nothing like it, and working backward from today's languages gets us back about 6,000 years – only about 10% of the time that Homo sapiens has lived on earth. Intensive study of the grammars of today's languages does, however, allow us to make reasonable conjectures about how human language developed. Language is used for both thought and communication. The design features that all grammars share suggest that the role of language in thinking came first and that it was only over time that it became an instrument of communication.