Nigeria’s historical background is divided into the pre-colonial (the period before colonization) and the colonial period (the period whereby colonists came into Nigeria). Nigeria is a result of the colonial times that arose out of the European escapades with its eventual culmination in the colonisation of Africa. Pre-colonial Nigeria consists of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. This includes Borno empire, Hausa states, Sokoto-caliphate in the north, the Igbo segmentary societies in the east, Benin kingdom and the Oyo empire in the west and several ethic societies in the Benue valley. They all differ in historical, social and cultural make-ups. Nigeria as a country has borders consisting of Bights of Benin and Biafra on the south, Benin on the west, Niger on the north and Cameroon on the east. The exact time when men began to live on Nigeria cannot be stated but according archaeological findings man had settled in Nigeria since the Palaeolithic period 500,000-9000BC. They were also able to prove that Nigeria was involved in the stone age time. The stone-age is divided into three with several periods such as the early stone age (3,000,000-35,000BC), middle stone age (35,000-15,000BC) and late stone age (15,000-500BC).

The early man was able to adapt to the environment by being able to provide the basic needs for survival such as food, clothing, survival tools and so on. Archaeologists were able to discover some of these tools that were created by the early man. These tools were called the Oldowan- type tools. They were made of pebbles they were made into cutting and chopping tools. The tools were called Oldowan tools by archaeologists because these tools were first discovered in Olduvai George in Tanzania. After these tools were discovered in Tanzania similar artifacts were found by foreign archaeologists from a site in St Acheul at France (north of Nigeria). These pebbled tools had cutting edges and were trimmed on both sides. They were also described to have possessed a sharp oval shape. These tools also evolved due to the change of time; from the stone age the early man advanced to the middle and late stone age. The early man also advanced by devising another tool by the name “The Chopper” which was first discovered at the Sango bay on the west shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda, East Africa. Technology then began to advance to the bronze and metal age. Even before the age of colonialism took place Nigeria already had a mind of evolution and to change their own country and their selves.

Nigeria had already passed the stone age and began to possess the spirit of civilization. This formation allowed the country Nigeria to be able to advance and develop both in the technological and scientific aspects. There are major landmarks in Nigeria that were made possible through the excavation done in some areas that were remote. Some of these places Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin and many others.

The terracotta was discovered in many places such as Wamba, Katsina-Ala and Jema. It first originated from the tin miners in Nok during the year 1936. The Nok culture is said to be a transitional civilisation between the stone and iron age because of the combination of the stone and iron object. Nok culture existed between the 2nd and 5th century. This discovery was finalised through the help of carbon dating. Benin was also known for its important art work. Their carvings were usually done with the use of wood and ivory and casted in bronze and brass. The bronze cast was said to have been introduced by an Ife-artist. All these civilisations are also known to be tourist attractions but they also signified the foundations and showcased the results of scientific and technological development.

Nigeria also represents a geo-political entity. It started from the colonialization that took place during the year 1900. Then the first amalgamation in Nigeria took place may 1906 of the British office. The amalgamation had an aim, an economic aim that is to use the better financial position of the protectorate of Southern Nigerian to cover the costs of administration and development in the financially weak colony and protectorate of Lagos. The second amalgamation then took place during January 1914. Southern Nigeria was amalgamated by the British government for the same reason as of the first. The southern protectorate was mostly aimed for the amalgamation because they were into trade and had a lot of profit were coming in and they gained a lot of surpluses. the amalgamation took place and brought a result of Indirect rule upon Nigeria. This could be described as the British government ruling over Nigeria with the use of the local personnel or traditional rulers.

This brings about the fact that Pre-colonization also occurred during the traditional political institutions. Nigeria has three major ethnic groups by the names of Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. The Yoruba’s are all related to their language and have beliefs that their origin was from Oduduwa whom is also known as the founder of the Yoruba people. Ile-Ife is also presumed to be their ancestral home. There have been different versions of tales on their origin. Their political structures consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town had a king known as Oba that stayed at a place called Aafin. He always had a crown, slippers, horsetail and a sceptre. The Oba enjoyed a lot of privileges to a certain point. The Oyo empire is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in Yorubaland. The head of the empire is referred to as Alaafin and there was a cult by the name Oyomesi cult that played a mediatory role in any Oyomesi and the Alaafin. There also existed an army that had a head by the title Are-Ona-Kankonfo. They performed functions such as to ensure stability in the empire, expansion of land and checking territories.

The Igbos are usually best known for their segmentary way of life because they had no centralised state. It was also believed that they came from the side of the Israelites because of their similar culture to Hebrews. The only authentic version of their seemed to be the one of the Nri. It was said that eri descended from the sky and sailed down the river Anambra. When he had arrived at Agueri he met a group of people that had no memory of their own and so he settled with them. As time went by their population began to increase and extend their settlements. The family was known to be the smallest unit in Igbo society. Every family had a head by the title Ofo (the fathers) because they literally had centralized democracy. There also lived the Okpara that held the Ozo title and was also of need during discussions of issues. There were secret associations that played a huge role of by being an intermediary between the living and the ancestors. They also performed rituals or offered sacrifices at different shrines to ward off evil or appease the Gods.

All in all, this basically describes or gives the form of how politics was like during the pre-colonial times.