

Stone Age

The term 'Stone Age' can be broken down into 3 time zones.

Paleolithic - to 10,000 BC

People were hunters and they found food by roaming from place to place in different seasons.



Mesolithic - to 4000 BC

Sea levels rose and Britain became an island (before this time Britain was joined to the mainland of Europe). During the Mesolithic period, tools were developed to become smaller and finer. The invention of canoes meant that people were better able to hunt for fish as well as animals.



Neolithic - to 2300 BC

The way people lived changed a lot because they began to settle into farming villages instead of moving from place to place. People started to look after animals and grow their own crops.



Stone age tools



Early Stone Age people hunted with sharpened sticks. Later, they used bows and arrows and spears tipped with flint or bone.

Bronze Age

Around 2500 BC settlers from mainland Europe brought a new skill to Britain. They were metalworkers who knew how to work with copper.

Some settlers who arrived belonged to the Beaker culture. Beaker people lived in clans led by powerful chiefs. They held religious ceremonies at stone circles, and buried their dead in circular graves.

They received their name from their distinctive bell-shaped beakers

Stonehenge is one of hundreds of stone circles that have been found in Britain. During the early Bronze Age, circles built from stone or wood played a very important part in the religious life of the British people.



Stonehenge

Iron Age

In the Iron Age, a metal called iron replaced bronze as the main material for making tools and weapons. People lived in tribes and they were often at war with each other. Iron Age people began to protect themselves by settling in hillforts, which were groups of round houses and farming land protected by stone walls.



STONE AGE
10,000 BC to 2300BC

BRONZE AGE
2300 BC to 800 BC

IRON AGE
800 BC to AD 43

Vocabulary

Chronology - the arrangement of dates or events in the order in which they occurred.

BC - Before Christ. A way of dating years before the birth of Jesus. The bigger the number BC, the longer ago in history it is/

AD - Anno Domini - "in the year of our Lord". AD is used to show dates after the birth of Jesus.

Archaeology - The study of the buildings, graves, tools and other objects that belonged to people who lived in the past, in order to learn about their culture and society.

Historical evidence - Anything left over from the past is a source of evidence.

Hunter-gatherers - People who found food from their local environment and then moved from site to site depending on the season.

Prehistoric Sites

Skara Brae - Skara Brae is a stone-built Neolithic settlement, located on the Bay of Skail on the west coast of Mainland, the largest island in the Orkney archipelago of Scotland.



Stonehenge - A prehistoric monument in Wiltshire, England. It consists of a ring of standing stones, with each standing stone around 13 feet high, 7 feet wide and weighing around 25 tons.



Maiden Castle - one of the largest and most complex Iron Age hillforts in Europe . It is located in Dorset, England. It was built around 100 BC and once protected hundreds of residents.



Lascaux Caves - The Lascaux caves in France are famous for their cave paintings –estimated to be around 20,000 years old. They were discovered in 1940 by a group of teenagers in the hills outside the town of Montignac.

The cave paintings are some of the oldest and best-preserved examples of prehistoric art in the world. Their purpose is unknown, but the subject of the paintings is almost entirely animals, including horses, bulls and deer. A few also feature human figures and may depict hunting scenes.



What have Prehistoric people ever done for us?

Most of the major technological achievements were made during the prehistoric period, such as control of fire, metalworking and farming, without which our modern life would not be possible. British culture, though disturbed and modified by incursions of Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings, was also forged in this period, and one prominent archaeologist, **Francis Pryor**, believes it is essentially the same.

"I genuinely believe that the British belief in individual freedom has prehistoric roots."

What do you think he means by this?

Vocabulary

Farmers - The Neolithic or new Stone Age saw the beginnings of agriculture. Animals such as the cow and sheep provided meat, milk, wool, leather and bone. Grain was the first food that could be stored for long periods of time.

agriculture - The practice of farming and growing crops

era/ period - A length of time covering many years

flint knapping - the art of creating tools by chipping rocks.

settlement - a group of dwellings that form a community.

smelting - A process to separate metal from rocks by heating and melting the metal.

Nomadic people - A group of people that move from place to place in search of food and shelter.

incursions - an invasion or attack