



Stone Age



The Stone Age



There are no written records of what life was like tens of thousands of years ago during this period of prehistory. Our ancestors didn't have writing, couldn't take photographs and lived a very long time ago so it's hard to know exactly what life was like. The Stone Age lasted for a very, very, very long time! It is divided into three sections – you can find out their names on the timeline below. Our ancestors began to use stone tools for hunting and later on for farming. The Stone Age ended when humans began to use metal to make tools and weapons. Some important discoveries have helped archaeologists and historians understand more about how early humans lived and how they changed over time. Stone Age tools give us clues about how early humans hunted and farmed. Other clues, such as cave paintings and the discovery of ancient sites help us to understand their daily life and culture.





Main Events

Palaeolithic			Mesolithic	Neolithic	
<p>c.2,500,000 BCE <i>Palaeolithic</i> period begins with the first evidence of humans (many historians think that some evidence shows the Stone Age started even before this – maybe another 900,000 years before!). This time period covers about 99% of human time!</p>	<p>c.60,000 BCE <u>Homo sapiens</u> begin to <u>migrate</u> and become more <u>nomadic</u>, living in caves and moving with the seasons.</p>	<p>c.15,000 BCE Lascaux cave paintings created. This supports the migration of <u>homo sapiens</u> and depicts a spiritual connection to the animals depicted.</p>	<p>c.9,600 BCE <i>Mesolithic</i> period begins as the last ice age ends and people can live in Britain once again. Rising sea levels caused by the melting of ice cut Britain off from mainland Europe. By c.6,500BCE, Doggerland was completely submerged, isolating Great Britain from mainland Europe.</p>	<p>c. 4500 BCE <i>Neolithic</i> period begins as farming begins to replace hunting and gathering as the main way of getting food. People began to adapt to changing environmental conditions.</p>	<p>c.3000 BCE Stonehenge first built (ditch around an open space). <u>Settlement</u> at Skara Brae built around this time. End of the Stone Age and beginning of the Bronze Age in Britain.</p>

What should I already know?

- We know about history because of historical sources, such as objects or pictures from the time. Remember learning about significant people such as Emmeline Pankhurst and Rosa Parks and the impact they made (Y2). Remember the significance of Henry VIII on our local area (the area between Woking and Hampton Court Palace). Remember learning about how Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas and the significance of this within history. The events of Neil Armstrong walking on the moon (Y2).

Food and Farming	Conflict	Beliefs
<p>Early Stone Age humans moved in <u>nomadic</u> groups as they tried to find food and shelter to survive. They used fire to cook and scare off predators. They would have slept in the open air, in caves or temporary shelters. People lived on a diet of fruits, seeds, grasses and wheat (historians have proof of this by examining teeth from Stone Age remains). Sometimes people would eat meat that had been found by scavenging for dead animals.</p> <p>As tools and weapons became more developed, Stone Age humans started to hunt and kill animals to eat and became <u>hunter gatherers</u>. They hunted sabre-toothed cats, woolly mammoths, bison and deer.</p> <p>About 10,000 years ago, as the climate warmed, crops like wheat and barley became easier to grow. Humans no longer needed to move around as much to find food and started building permanent homes to live in near land that they could farm.</p>	<p>Stone Age humans became much better at hunting using spears, axes and bows and arrows. However, it is unlikely that these tools were used in battle with other groups. The population density was so low that different groups would rarely bump into each other and with plenty of space to go around, fighting was rare. As humans began settling in small communities and storing food, it is likely that conflict started to increase as rivals competed for resources.</p> 	<p>Early Stone Age people were developing religious beliefs to help them understand the world around them. One of the most famous historical sites in Britain, Stonehenge, was first built in the Neolithic period and was probably used for religious and burial ceremonies and processions – but we don't really know! Maybe one day more artefacts will be found that will help us to understand it better.</p>  <p>Stone Age people were usually buried in communal graves. <u>Archaeologists</u> have found evidence of communal graves at Stonehenge.</p>

Artefacts (Stone Age)	Artefacts (Stone Age)	Artefacts (Stone Age)
<p>In 1940, four teenage boys made a remarkable discovery. While walking in woods in the Lascaux region of South West France, the boys came across some caves. Inside they found prehistoric cave paintings of animals, hands and symbols from 17,000 years ago! The discovery was significant because of how much it told <u>archaeologists</u> and historians about early Stone Age culture and society, such as the kinds of animals they hunted and the very fact that they made art. Skilled artists had painted these images with powdered minerals and charcoal, using fire to allow them to paint in the darkness of the caves. There are other prehistoric cave paintings in Western Europe, particularly in France and Spain.</p>  <p>Some of the animals painted in the Lascaux Caves</p>	<p>The village at Skara Brae, a well-preserved ancient <u>settlement</u>, was discovered in 1850 and has provided lots of artefacts which help us understand what life was like in the Stone Age. Historical sources from Skara Brae include jewellery, ornaments and dice games. Skara Brae dates back to about 3000 BCE and was made up of several one-room <u>dwellings</u> with a communal room for cooking and working. These small houses had stone furniture, a drainage system and even indoor toilets!</p>  <p>Location of Skara Brae</p>  <p>Skara Brae</p>	<p>The Oldowan toolkit is the name given to the oldest known stone tools used by early humans. It includes hammerstones, stone cores and sharp stone flakes.</p> 

Vocabulary

archaeology	The study of human history through excavation of sites and analysis of artefacts.	migrate	Move from one place to another.
c.	Comes before a date and stands for 'circa' which means 'around', 'about' or 'approximately'. It is used because it's hard to be exact with dates from a long time ago.	Neolithic	The last part of the Stone Age.
dwelling	Where somebody lives, for example a house.	nomadic	Moving from one place to another rather than living in one place all the time.
homo sapiens	The primate group that modern humans belong to.	Palaeolithic	The first, and longest, part of the Stone age.
hunter gatherer	A person who lived and survived primarily by hunting and fishing.	prehistory	The period of time before written records.
Mesolithic	The middle part of the Stone age.	settlement	A previously uninhabited place where people establish a community.