

STONE AGE TO IRON AGE

How has Britain changed from the Stone Age to the Iron Age?

Stone Age – When the first humans began to live in Europe. They used stones as tools. **Iron Age** - Humans now used iron to make tools, and farmed land instead of hunting. They lived in communities. **Bronze Age** - In this era, metals were used to make hunting tools. Humans also began to farm land.

Topic Overview

The story of prehistoric Britain began when the first humans arrived in Britain around 900,000 years ago. It ended when the Romans conquered the ancient Britons and Britain became part of the Roman Empire in 43AD. The earliest humans were hunter-gathers. They survived by hunting animals and finding food to eat. Then, very gradually people learned new skills. First they learned to herd animals and grow crops. Later they discovered the secrets of making bronze and iron. Prehistoric people couldn't read or write, but they were astonishing builders. Their tombs, forts and monuments such as Stonehenge, have survived for thousands of years. This, before the Romans invaded is often called prehistoric.

Invention and Technology

- The Stone Age is named after the stone tools that the earliest humans used to help them survive. They used them to kill animals, such as mammoths, for their meat, bone marrow and skins. The bones were also useful for making tools, such as needles to sew skins together.
- Some of the major advances in technology were achieved during this period, including the control of fire, agriculture, metalworking and the wheel.
- The invention of canoes meant that people were better able to hunt for fish as well as animals.
- 13,000 BC: The first cave paintings were drawn
- 3500 BC: The first pottery is made and used
- 2500 BC: Metal starts to be used to make weapons and tools
- 1800 BC: The first copper mines are dug
- 600 BC: Coins are made and used for the first time

Settlement and Societal Change

- People in the Stone Age moved around from place to place with the seasons, in order to keep safe and warm and to follow the animals they hunted.
- People in the Bronze Age and Iron Age lived in roundhouses. These could be very large and would have housed many people. One household might have had two houses, one for living and one for cooking and making things.
- In the Iron Age, these houses were sometimes rectangular and were often gathered in farming communities on hills. These were known as 'hillforts'. Between 500 and 100 BC, many parts of Britain were dominated by hillforts. These settlements provided a home for hundreds, and later thousands, of people.
- 3000 BC: The village of Skara Brae is built in Orkney. The people who live there are beginning to farm their own food and build homes instead of travelling from place to place.

Top Takeaways

Having studied this topic you should be able to:

1. Sequence the names used by historians to describe the different periods during this time
2. Say what was distinctive about the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age
3. Explain what the two biggest changes that developed in Britain during the New Stone Age were and describe the impact on daily life
4. Describe the ways in which life changed during the Iron Age
6. Explain how we can know so much about a time that happened thousands of year ago.

Key Vocabulary

Archaeologists - People who work out our history by looking at artefacts that have been found.
Artefact - An object made by human beings, Neolithic - Is the later part of the stone-age and follows the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic age.
Barrow- long mound where bodies were buried
B.C. - Before Christ. A date like 250BC means 250 years before Christ was born.
Bronze – a yellowish, brown metal made of copper and tin
Farmers - The Neolithic or new Stone Age saw the beginnings of agriculture. Animals such as the cow and sheep were domesticated and provided a ready supply of meat, milk, wool, leather and bone. Grain was the first food that could be stored for long periods of time.
Flint - a hard grey rock
Forge- where heating melts and allows metal to be made
Henge- upright stones ditches and mounds
Hunter-gatherers - People who mainly live by hunting, fishing and gathering wild fruit.
Iron – a strong, hard, magnetic grey metal
Mesolithic. Middle Stone Age
Neolithic New Stone Age
Paleolithic Earliest period of the Stone Age when chipped stone tools were used
Prehistoric- before the Romans and written records
Prey - An animal that is hunted for its food.
Tribe/Tribal group of people, often of related families, who live in the same area and share the same language, culture, and history
NB Lithic at end of word means stone

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