



The Stone Age

Essential Knowledge (End Points):

By the end of the unit of work the children will:

- know the three main periods of time throughout the Stone Age.
- know people in the Stone Age originally gathered and hunted food, until they became farmers.
- know people in the Stone Age lived in different types of houses according to their surroundings.
- know primary and secondary sources of evidence provide evidence about the past.

Summary

The Stone Age lasted a very, very long time. The oldest period of the Stone Age, the Palaeolithic period, began approximately 2.5 million years ago. The Middle Stone Age is called the Mesolithic period. The Neolithic period, often called the New Stone Age, dates back approximately 8–10,000 years. During the Stone Age, our ancestors started to use tools and weapons made out of stone to help them hunt and eat food. As a consequence of changes in global climate, crops became more readily available, and Stone Age humans began to farm the land. The Stone Age ended when humans began to use metal to make tools and weapons.

The Stone Age saw the beginning of the use of tools and weapons, made out of stone, by our human ancestors. These tools and weapons gave early humans a competitive advantage in hunting over animals such as woolly mammoths and bison. The earliest evidence of humans using simple tools is from about 2.5 million years ago. As technology developed, Stone Age humans began using tools like hand axes, spears, scrapers and nets. Archaeologists have found lots of similarities between early Stone Age tools. However, over time, different groups of humans in different places had different ways of making tools. This gave these groups their own separate cultural identities.

The Stone Age period saw our human ancestors using more advanced stone tools to help them survive. The period also saw a significant change in how humans found food. Some of our earliest human ancestors survived at first by using simple tools and scavenging for meat and other food. Changes in technology meant that they were soon hunting for food and eating much more meat, as well as fruit and grains. As the climate changed, in the late Mesolithic period, these hunter-gatherers were able to migrate in search of more food and safer places to build permanent settlements.

Almost all of human history has gone unrecorded, and there are no written records of what life was like tens of thousands of years ago. Our ancestors didn't write things down or use systems of writing. However, significant discoveries have helped historians and archaeologists understand more about early human behaviour and how human behaviour has changed over time. Stone Age tools give us clues about how early humans became more sophisticated in their hunting and farming. Other clues, in cave paintings and ancient sites, provide evidence of developments in culture and daily life.

Main Events:

c.15000 BCE Lascaux cave paintings created
c.3000 BCE: Stonehenge first built
c.1930 CE: Oldowan toolkit identified
1940 CE: Lascaux caves discovered

Vocabulary:

ancestors: relatives from long ago
consequence: result or effect
climate: weather conditions of a place
nomadic: travelling from place to place
communal: shared by a group of people
historical sources: things that give information about the past
ancestors: people who someone is descended from, older than a grandparent

			<p>archaeologists: people who study the past by examining remains and objects</p> <p>identities: who people are</p> <p>nomadic: travelling from place to place</p> <p>density: how much an area is filled or covered with people or things</p> <p>scavenging: searching for something</p> <p>technology: the use of scientific discoveries for practical purposes</p> <p>migrate: move from one place to another</p> <p>permanent: lasting forever</p> <p>predators: animals that kill and eat other animals</p> <p>archaeologists: people who study the past by examining remains and objects</p> <p>sophisticated: advanced</p> <p>preoccupied: thinking a lot about something</p> <p>processions: groups of people walking in line at a public event.</p> <p>c.: around</p>
Culture & Pastimes:	N/A	Society:	N/A
Food & Farming:	<p>In early Stone Age times, humans lived in small groups, using stone tools as they hunted for large mammals and gathered plants, fruit and berries. These hunter-gatherers were almost always moving (nomadic) to find food. About 10,000 years ago, as the climate warmed, certain crops like wheat and barley became more plentiful. 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>Early Stone Age humans moved in nomadic groups as they hunted sabre-toothed cats, woolly mammoths, bison and deer. They developed different tools to help them kill these large, dangerous animals. Some weapons and tools were made from bone, ivory or antler. Others were made by sharpening sticks. Nets made out of tree branches were used to catch fish and smaller animals. Also, in the late Palaeolithic period, humans started using bows and arrows to help them catch prey.</p>	Beliefs:	<p>Although preoccupied with the constant search for food, early Stone Age people were also 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.</p>

	<p>Early Stone Age humans moved in nomadic groups as they tried to find food and shelter to survive. They used controlled fire to cook and ward off predators. 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. As tools and weapons became more developed, Stone Age humans started to hunt and kill animals to eat, rather than hoping to find dead animals as they searched for food.</p>		
<p>Settlements:</p>	<p>Skara Brae is a well-preserved Stone Age village in the Orkney Islands, Scotland. This ancient settlement dates back to about 3000 BCE and was made up of several one-room dwellings with a communal room for cooking and working. These small houses were notable for their stone furniture, a drainage system and even indoor toilets!</p> <p>Our ancestors were always searching for good sources of food, avoiding predators and trying to cope with the weather conditions of different seasons. As a consequence, they were constantly on the move. In the early Stone Age, humans would have slept in basic temporary shelters, often in the open air, or in caves. There is evidence that by c.50,000 BCE more permanent huts were being built from wood and rock. By the Neolithic period, stable settlements like those at Skara Brae were being made.</p>	<p>Travel & Exploration:</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Conflict:</p>	<p>Stone Age humans became much better at hunting using spears, bows and arrows and other weapons. However, it is unlikely these new types of tools and weapons were used in regular conflict with other groups. The population density was so low that different groups would rarely bump into each other – with plenty of space to go around, fighting was rare. However, 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>Location:</p>	<p>See Map</p>

Artefacts:	<p>The village at Skara Brae 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.</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. Its name comes from the area in Northern Tanzania where the archaeologist Louis Leakey identified stone tools that were almost 2 million years old.</p> <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 archaeologists and historians about early Stone Age culture and society. Skilled artists had painted these drawings 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>	Innovations which influenced the modern world:	N/A
Key Local Links:	Castlerigg Stone Circle, Nr Keswick Keswick museum, Keswick	Common Misconceptions:	



Component Statements

Extending Knowledge

Food & Farming
To know people in the Stone Age originally gathered and hunted food, until they became farmers.

Children will know that:

- People foraged and hunted animals during the Stone Age for food.
- The name of people who had to move around to find food were called Nomads.
- the climate became warmer around the start of the Neolithic Period (New Period)
- Stone Age humans used bows and arrows to hunt for food.
- List the foods Stone Age humans ate.

- Explain the changes that took place in how people found food during this period.
- Organise information about agriculture in the Stone Age.
- Explain the difference between scavenging and hunting.

- Investigate the Oldowan toolkit.
- Compare and contrast this with the tools and weapons used in the Neolithic period.
- Thinking about food and farming, investigate the social, ethnic and cultural diversity of our early human ancestors.
- What have historians discovered about our early ancestors by examining their teeth?

Settlements
To know people in the Stone Age lived in different types of houses according to their surroundings.

Children will know:

- Skara Brae is a Stone Age settlement on Orkney in Scotland.
- settlements became more permanent during the Neolithic Period of the Stone Age
- hunter-gatherers changed to permanent settlers in the Neolithic Period, as the first farmers.

- Compare and contrast the settlement at Skara Brae with early Mesolithic settlements.

- Suggest some reasons why the settlement at Skara Brae had communal areas. Justify your suggestions.
- Investigate Stonehenge.
- What evidence is there that climate change brought about the end of the Stone Age?

Artefacts
To Know primary and secondary sources of evidence provide evidence about the past.

Children will know:

- Secondary sources of evidence are available to tell us about the Stone Age.
- Lots of history has gone unrecorded due to people in the Stone Age not being able to read or write.
- A primary resource is a source which provides first hand or direct evidence.
- Secondary sources are documents or media that use, discuss or reference primary resources

- Describe the Oldowan toolkit.
- Who was the archaeologist who identified the Oldowan toolkit.
- What artefacts were found at Skara Brae?
- What makes the Lascaux cave paintings a significant discovery?

- Investigate Stone Age cave paintings.
- Investigate Homo erectus and Homo sapiens.

Main Events

Children will know:

- Organise information about the Stone Age.

- Why do we use the word 'probably' when trying to explain what life was like during the Stone Age period?

To know the three main periods of time throughout the Stone Age.

- The three different periods of the Stone Age are Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic.
- The different periods of the Stone Age on a timeline, using chronology.

- True or false? Conflict was rare in the Early Stone Age. Justify your answer.