



# HEAP BRIDGE VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## What were the changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age?

Year 3 – Autumn Term



### Unit overview

Children will be introduced to the idea that people have been living in Britain for a very long time. They will learn about the changes that occurred between the middle Stone Age [Mesolithic Times] to the Iron Age – a period of over 10,000 years! Children will be able to recognise the continuities too. For example, there is very little change in houses, house building or settlement size, until well into the Iron Age.

### Links to prior/future learning

*They will develop their historical enquiry skills through the use of artefacts and sources.*

### Period overview, Prehistoric Britain

The story of prehistoric Britain began when the first humans arrived in Britain. It ended when the Romans conquered the ancient Britons and Britain became part of the Roman Empire.

The earliest humans were hunter-gatherers. 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 have survived for thousands of years. Prehistoric people left no written records, so how do we know about their lives?

Archaeologists work like detectives looking for evidence. They use this evidence to build up a picture of the past. The remains of homes and temples show how people lived and worshipped. Tools and weapons give clues about the way people worked and fought. Bumps and ridges in the landscape show the layout of ancient villages, fields and forts.



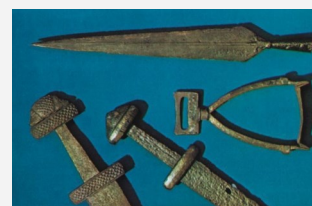
Some of the best evidence comes from human remains. Skeletons have been found buried with their possessions and a few bodies have been preserved in bogs. By examining human remains, experts can work out when a person lived. Sometimes they can even suggest what they looked like!

### Which was better, bronze or iron?



The Bronze Age is a time period when bronze replaced stone as the preferred material for making tools and weapons. This led to improvements in agriculture and brought with it changes in the way people live. Some groups of Bronze Age people developed early writing and other important advances included irrigation, the wheel and the potter's wheel. Different societies entered the Bronze Age at differing times. Some of the best known Bronze Age civilisations include those of the ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Mycenae, the Indus Valley and the Shang Dynasty in China.

'The Iron Age' is the name given to the time period (from approximately 500 BC to 43 AD in Britain) where iron became the preferred choice of metal for making tools. In Europe, The Iron Age marks the end of prehistory after the Stone Age and the Bronze Age. Iron was tougher than bronze and could be shaped into finer and sharper objects. It required smithing (heating and hammering) to make into tools and implements. The manufacture, casting and trading of bronze had required special skills and made those people who possessed these skills wealthy and powerful. Iron was more readily availa-

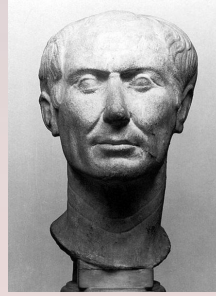


### Chronological Understanding:

700,00 BC	130,000 BC	25,000	12,000 BC	8,500 BC	6,000 BC	4,200 BC	2,800 BC
Date of earliest human tools found on Suffolk coast.	Neanderthal Britain	Ice Age	Beginning of the end of the Ice Age	Warmer climate led to growth of forests over Britain	Britain becomes an island	Farming people arrive from Europe	First phase of building Stonehenge

**If you were Julius Caesar, would you have invaded Britain in 55BC?**

Julius Caesar was a famous Roman leader. He won many battles for Rome and helped the Roman Empire grow. While Caesar had a glowing career in both politics and as a military commander, he was only leader of the Roman Empire for a year before he was assassinated by political enemies. Caesar invaded Britain twice during the Gallic Wars – once in 55 BC and once in 54 BC. On 26 August 55BC, Caesar’s army invaded Britain for the first time. After winning several battles against the Celtic tribes (Britons) in south-east England he returned to France.



**When do you think it was better to live – Stone Age, Bronze Age or Iron Age?**

**How did people live in the Stone Age?** During the Stone Age, people had a nomadic lifestyle and kept moving from one place to another in search of food. They stayed in caves where they cooked meat and drew art on the walls. In plain areas, they made temporary camps from wooden structures and animal skins. The life during the Stone Age was very simple. The humans had only two things to do: gather food and protect themselves from wild animals. They built stone tools for both these purposes. They always kept moving while looking for food and while on the move, they lived in caves and built temporary camps in plains to stay. The people in Stone Age had dangerous and active lives.

**How did people live in the Bronze Age?** At the beginning of the Bronze Age in Europe, most people lived in small villages or on farms. They built houses from materials that could be found nearby, such as wood or stone. Most people in Western Europe lived in small round houses. Farmers grew cereal grains such as wheat and barley and kept cattle and other animals. Communities began to compete with each other for land and fighting broke out. This led to people building large fences surrounding their villages to keep their enemies out. These were some of the first defensive settlements.

**How did people live in the Iron Age?** By the end of the Iron Age many people lived in hill forts. The forts were surrounded by walls and ditches and warriors defended their people from enemy attacks. Inside the hill forts, families lived in round houses. These were simple one-roomed homes with a pointed thatched roof and walls made from wattle and daub (a mixture of mud and twigs). In the centre of a round house was a fire where meals were cooked in a cauldron. Around the walls were jars for storing food and beds made from straw covered with animal skins. Iron Age farmers grew crops and vegetables. They kept geese, goats and pigs and had large herds of cows and flocks of sheep. Some people worked as potters, carpenters and metalworkers. Men and boys trained as warriors. They had to be prepared to fight at any time.

**Historical vocabulary:**

**Subject specific vocab (T3)**

**Vocabulary –**

*fossil - the remains or impression of a prehistoric plant or animal embedded in rock and preserved in petrified form.*

*archaeologist - a person who studies human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artefacts and other physical remains.*

*anthropologist - an expert in or student of the study of human societies and cultures and their development.*

*palaeontologist - a scientist who studies fossils*

*Neanderthal - an extinct species of human that was widely distributed in ice-age Europe between c. 120,000 and 35,000 years ago, with a receding forehead and prominent brow ridges.*

*Palaeolithic - relating to the early phase of the Stone Age, lasting about 2.5 million years, when primitive stone implements were used.*

*Mesolithic - relating to the middle part of the Stone Age*

*Neolithic - relating to the later part of the Stone Age*

*Nomad - a person that travels from place to place and who doesn't have a permanent home*

2,700 BC	2,100 BC	2,000 BC	1,650 BC	1,200 BC	750 BC
Tools and weapons made from copper	Bronze Age begins First metal workers: People learn to make bronze weapons and tools	Stonehenge completed	Trade routes began to form	Small villages first formed	Iron Age began: Iron replaces bronze as most useful metal. Population about 150,000.

## Agriculture, food & trade

By 3500BC people in many parts of Britain had set up farms. They made clearings in the forest and built groups of houses, surrounded by fields.

The early farmers grew wheat and barley, which they ground into flour. Some farmers grew beans and peas. Others grew a plant called flax, which they made into linen for clothes.

Neolithic farmers kept lots of animals. They had herds of wild cows that had been domesticated (tamed). The cattle provided beef, as well as milk and cheese. Sheep and goats provided wool, milk and meat. Wild pigs were domesticated and kept in the woods nearby.



## Religion



Early humans developed religious beliefs to explain the world around them. Hunters and gathers tried to make contact with the spirits of the animals that they hunted. As people began to settle and farm, they began to make tombs for their ancestors. To keep their gods happy they offered gifts and performed ceremonies. Tombs, made of large boulders called megaliths, were a link between the living and the dead.

## Homes, shelters and settlements

In the Palaeolithic period, they lived in caves and moved from cave to cave. They lived in the entrance of the cave where it was warm and light. The caves were decorated with paintings of animals. They were deep in the back of the caves not at the front where people lived. The paintings were for good luck with hunting.



The Mesolithic period was 10,000 BCE to 7,000 BCE. The people were moving around not so much and they built wigwam shaped shelters in groups. The camps were moved in different seasons. The wigwams were built of wooden poles and covered with animal skins and bark.

The Neolithic period was after the Mesolithic period until about 2000 BCE. The people had learned to farm which means they didn't have to gather things and hunt. They planted wheat and had domesticated cows, pigs, sheep and goats which they killed to eat. This means they didn't have to move around any more and they made settlements or villages. These houses are more like our houses than any others in the Stone Age. They had foundations and they were built of wood and wattle and daub (a mixture of manure, clay, mud and hay stuck to sticks). They were sometimes made of stones. The roofs were made of straw. They had beds and shelves and a fireplace to keep warm and to roast food.

