



The Stone Age

A teaching resource for Key Stage 2

Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age)

Evolution

Neanderthals

hunter-gatherer

megafauna

ice age

ivory

hominid



Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age)

harpoon

microlith

shell midden

hunter-gatherer



Neolithic (New Stone Age)

sherd

settlement

pottery

portal dolmen

megalith

passage grave

ceramic

domestication

henge

monument



How long does it take to degrade? Match each object with the time it would take to disappear if it was buried in the back garden!

Banana peel	10-12 years
Paper bag	550 years
Newspaper	50 years
Apple core	6 months
Orange peel	25-40 years
Sock	3-4 weeks
Cigarette butt	1 month
Leather shoe	450 years
Tin can	2 months
Foam plastic cup	1-2 million years
Aluminium can	50 years
Plastic bottle	6 weeks
Disposable nappy	1-5 years
Plastic bag	20-1000 years
Glass bottle	200-500 years

To cook or not to cook?

Draw each of these foods:

BANANA

PINEAPPLE

PANCAKE

SAUSAGES

MILK

STRAWBERRIES

BROCCOLI

BACON

FISH FINGERS

OATS

YORKSHIRE PUDDING

EGGS

LENTILS

SESAME SEEDS

WALNUTS

OYSTERS

Which of them do you always have to cook?

Which of them can you eat raw?

Which of them can you eat either raw or cooked?

Which of them are already cooked when they come into your house?

Can you think of more foods that we always have to cook?

Can you think of more foods that we never cook?

Which ones are there more of - the always cooked or the always raw?

Happisburgh

Happisburgh is an archaeological site on the coast in Norfolk. Happisburgh is sometimes pronounced 'haze-boro'.

The site is very important because it has the *oldest* evidence of human presence in northern Europe. The evidence is around 850,000 years old.

So what evidence did the archaeologists find when they excavated? They found:

- Artefacts (hand axes and other tools made of flint)
- Animal bones
- Plant remains (for example pine cones)
- Fossilised footprints

The people who left this evidence were a species called *Homo antecessor*, which means 'pioneer human'. Their species existed from 1.2 million years ago to 800,000 years ago.

The footprints tells us how many of them there were and how big their feet were. There were footprints of at least five individuals, and some of the footprints were so small that they were probably made by children.

What did they do here at Happisburgh? The evidence suggests that they:

- Made some stone tools
- Hunted and butchered land animals
- Collected wild foods from the sea like shellfish and seaweed

The plant remains and other 'climatic' data tells us that the weather was probably quite cold during this period.



Boxgrove

Boxgrove is a sand and gravel quarry in West Sussex. Within this quarry, many important archaeological finds have been made. For example:

- Flint tools (like handaxes)
- Skeletal remains (a leg bone and two teeth)
- Animal bones (from for example lion, bear, rhino, horse, and birds)

The human leg bone comes from a species called *Homo heidelbergensis*, which existed in Africa and Europe from 700,000 years ago to 200,000 years ago.

The bone that was found is called the 'tibia', which is the scientific name for shin bone. The teeth were incisors, and they may have come from the same individual as the tibia.

Many of the animal bones had cut marks on them, which tells us that people hunted and ate them. They probably used handaxes to butcher the animals.

The archaeological evidence at Boxgrove is around 500,000 years old. At that time, the weather was warmer than it is today. That is why some animal species that prefer hot weather - like lions and rhinos - lived in Britain at that time!

Pontnewydd

Pontnewydd is a cave in Denbighshire in north Wales. When archaeologists excavated the cave, they found 19 teeth. Scientists have identified the teeth as coming from Neanderthals. The 19 teeth from Pontnewydd cave came from at least five individuals, including a child.

Neanderthals lived in Europe from around 250,000 years ago to 40,000 years ago. The Neanderthals in Pontnewydd have been dated to around 230,000 years ago.

They were well adapted to cold weather, and were shorter than we are today. They had broad hips and shoulders, and were very strong. They may have had better eyesight than we do, and perhaps they could see better in the dark.

We used to think that Neanderthals were just primitive savages, but now we know that in their own ways they were very resourceful and could survive in harsh climates. We know that they used animal skins to make warm clothes and shoes.

Archaeologists also found stone tools and animal bones in the Pontnewydd cave.

Neanderthals made handaxes, but they also made other types of tools from flint. For example, they made scrapers, flakes, and spear points. This diversity of tool types tells us that Neanderthals were smarter than their ancestors. They could adapt the flint to many different purposes - for example, for scraping the fur off an animal skin to make leather.

They hunted many wild animals, for example horse, deer, and mammoth.



	Happisburgh	Boxgrove	Pontnewydd
How old is the site?			
What species of early human lived there?			
What artefacts were found there?			
What other evidence was found?*			
What did the people who lived there eat?			
What was the weather like?			

*for example ecofacts, human skeletons...

What was the most important type of artefact in the British Palaeolithic?

Can you draw a scene from one of these sites - for example a picture of people walking along the shore at Happisburgh, looking for shellfish? (don't forget their footprints!)

How to make Palaeolithic paint

Palaeolithic people did not have modern paint like oils and watercolour. Instead, they had to use natural materials that they could find.

Here is how to make two types of natural paint:

1. Use your pestle and mortar to grind your pigments (but don't mix the pigments with each other!)
2. Use a cup to mix one of your pigments with a little bit of fat
3. Use another cup to break your egg and whisk it with a stick
4. Use a third cup to mix a little bit of the whisked egg with one of your pigments

Now you should have two different paints - one with egg and one with fat. Which one do you think works best?

Make a few different paints, and then make some cave paintings!



Wild foods

If you travel back to the Mesolithic in a time machine and join a group of hunter-gatherers, which of these foods, plants, and animals may you encounter?

roe deer
wild horse
mussels hazelnuts
mushrooms
cornflakes yoghurt
bacon wild boar
deer seal fox spaghetti
rice salmon
fish fingers potatoes apples
blackberries trout
oysters
cheesecake
crisps



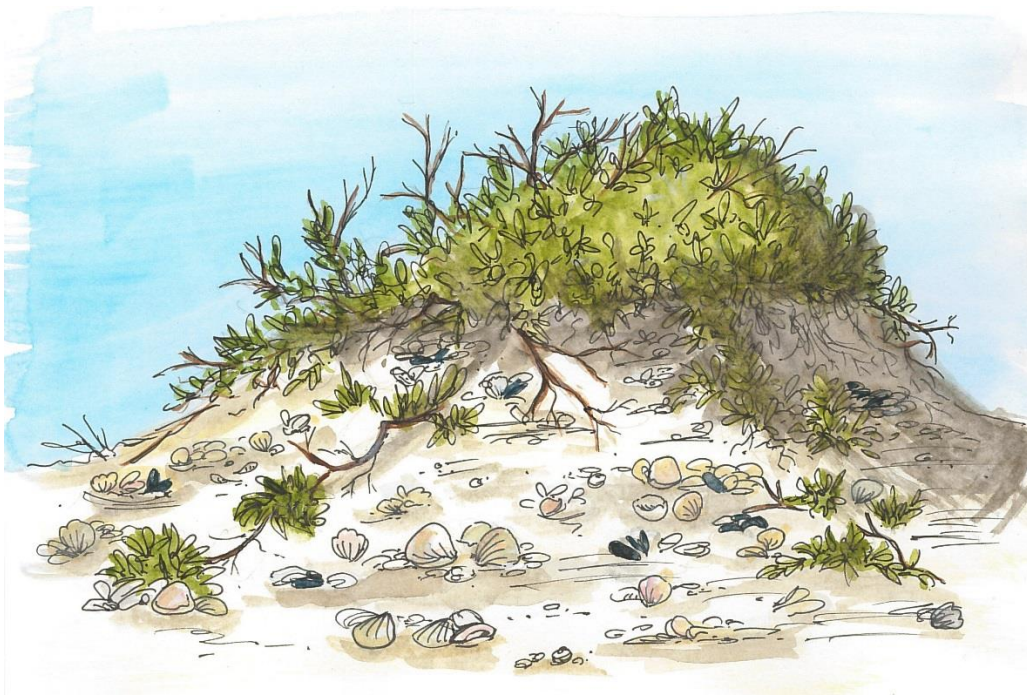
Shellmiddens

Mesolithic people liked to eat a lot of fish and seafood. Many tribes had camps near the beach, so they could collect shellfish, go fishing, and hunt marine mammals like seals.

Because they ate so much shellfish, large mounds of shells were gradually created near the coastal camps. These large mounds are called shellmiddens.

Shellmiddens can be huge - sometimes they are several metres high. That's because they accumulated over a very long time. For archaeologists, the shellmiddens are important sources of information about Mesolithic life.

What shellfish species do you know?



Shellmiddens contain shell (of course!) from shellfish that was eaten and used as bait for fishing.

Sometimes, the shellmiddens also contain bone from land-living animals (for example deer), artefacts, hearths, and even human skeletal remains.

Let's imagine a tribe of _____ people, eating _____ shellfish each day. How many shellfish are in the midden after:

- One week?

- The month of June?

- One year?



- One year - but the tribe only lived at the coastal camp for half the year?

- Ten weeks?

- Ten weeks - but _____ members of the tribe were away on a hunting trip during five of those weeks?

Farmed foods

In the Neolithic, people started to grow their own food instead of gathering wild plants. For example, they developed four important types of cereal:

- Wheat
- Barley
- Rye
- Oat

A domestic animal is like a tame cousin of a wild animal. The wild cousin of cattle is called aurochs. Aurochs are now extinct, but when they existed they were much larger than modern cows.

It would be difficult to keep large, wild animals on a farm! Because of this, domestic animals are smaller and less aggressive than their wild cousins.

Can you think of the domestic cousins of these wild animals?

Wild animal	Domestic cousin
Wild boar	
Aurochs	
Wolf	
Tiger	
Junglefowl	

Can you place these plants, animals, and foods in the right box in the table?

mushrooms

barley

sugar

eggs

honey

nuts

beer

insects

nettles

ketchup

bread

jam

butter

potatoes

deer

chicken

wheat

dried meat

boar

fish

lamb

apples

biscuits

oatmeal



Mesolithic food	
Neolithic food	
Modern food	

What differences are there between Neolithic food and modern food? Why do you think that is?

Can you make a Venn diagram of Mesolithic, Neolithic, and modern food to show if there is any overlap between them?

Can you draw these Neolithic species: wheat, oat, cattle, pig, and sheep?

What foods can you make from the Neolithic species? For example: cheese...

Where should I build my house? Which of these places should I avoid? Which of them should I build my house close to?

A river

A bear's cave

My field of wheat

On top of a hill

A bog

An old grave where dangerous spirits live

A place in the woods where deer gather to eat

A grassy area where my cows like to eat

A stony beach with lots of shellfish



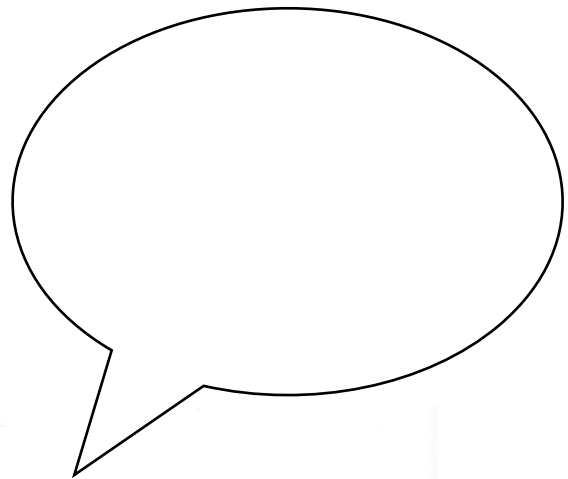
Fire

Our human ancestors learned how to control fire in the Palaeolithic. We don't know exactly *when* early humans learned to control and use fire, but it may have been as long ago as 2 million years.

The use of fire gave early humans a big advantage over other animals. Without fire, life was often cold, dark at night, food could not be cooked, and scary animals and insects could not be kept away.

List four things that a fire can provide. And what do you think the Stone Age girl is saying about their fire?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



Everyday objects

People in the Stone Age made many different objects, such as musical instruments, jewellery, weapons, fishing gear, and cooking equipment.

They used materials like stone, antler, bone, wood, shell, and clay.

pottery
quern arrow
scraper
harpoon bead
flute spear
axe awl
needle
knife



Which of these objects do I need for:

- 1. Hunting*
- 2. Hideworking*
- 3. Sewing*
- 4. Fishing*
- 5. Cooking*
- 6. Making music*
- 7. Collecting firewood*
- 8. Butchering an animal*
- 9. Grinding grain*

Clothing

Because the Stone Age lasted for so long, the climate changed several times - from warm periods between ice ages to very cold periods during and after an ice age. People had to adjust, especially to the cold periods. Without good clothing, they would not have survived!

We have very little evidence of Stone Age clothing. It was made of organic materials, which very rarely survives. But we know that they were very good at making clothes out of skins and plants.

'Oetzi the Iceman' is an archaeological find from the Alps. He was a man who lived in the Early Bronze Age, and because he became frozen in ice after he died, his clothing survived very well.





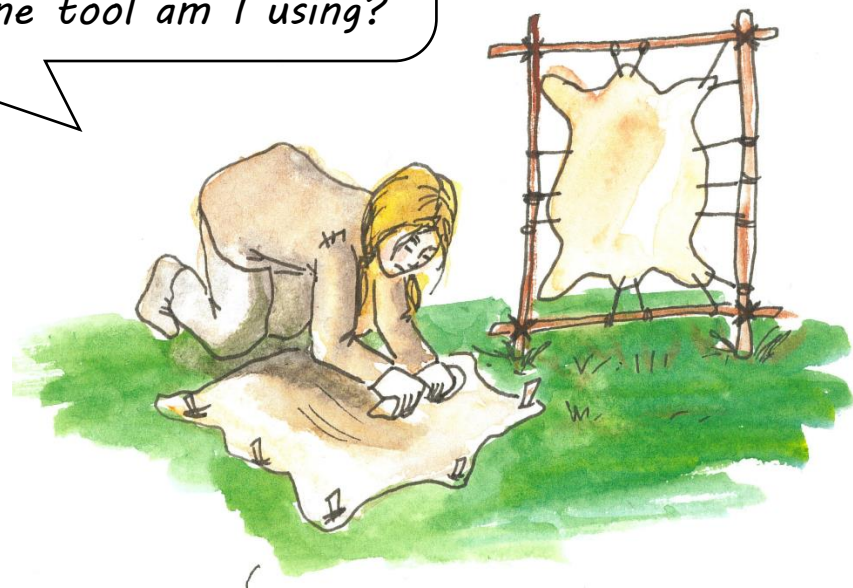
What am I wearing?

What objects were used to make my clothes and what were those objects made of?

What animals did my tribe hunt to make my clothes?

What am I doing?

What stone tool am I using?



What are your clothes made of? How were they made? Who made them?

Pottery



A pot is a bowl made of fired clay. Fired clay is called 'ceramic'. In Britain, pottery was first used when people became farmers.

Pottery was an important technological invention because it makes it easier to cook food over a fire, and to keep stored food dry.

In what Stone Age period was pottery first used in Britain?

What can I use my pottery bowl for?

What else can you make out of ceramic?

What materials could you use to make bowls, if you didn't have clay to make pots?



Dots and circles



1

Carved into the rock at Ormaig, Scotland



2

The 'Folkton Drums' made of chalk

'Eyes'



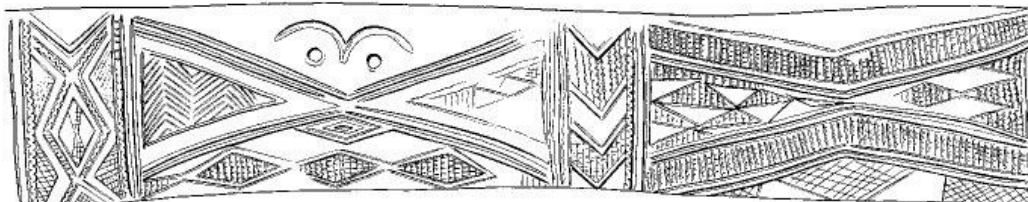
3

Eyes with eyebrows at a stone tomb in Orkney



4

Eyes with eyebrows on the Folkton Drums



5

Spirals



6

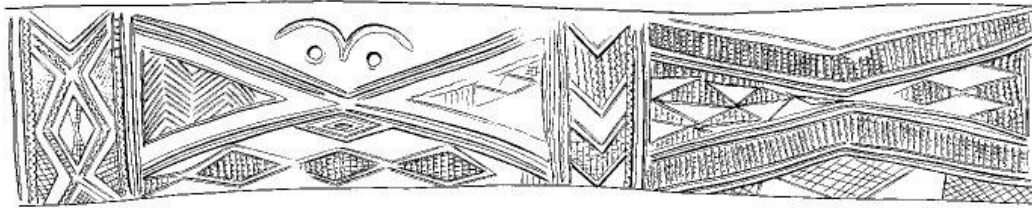
The Garboldisham macehead made of antler



7

The decorated kerbstone at Newgrange passage tomb in Ireland

Zigzags, lines, and diamond-shapes



The Folkton Drums again!



8

A pottery vessel



9

The Newgrange decorated kerbstone again. Can you see the diamond-shapes?