

YEAR 3 UNIT 1 – THE STONE AGE:

What was new about the New Stone Age?

Related units:

Year 3 Unit 2: The Bronze Age and the Iron Age

Unit overview

In this unit, the children will explore how life changed for people during different periods of the Stone Age, including the Early, Middle and New Stone Ages. They will cover why the period was called the Stone Age, and what archaeological evidence there is from the period, particularly in the form of artefacts and monuments. The main focus will be on the New Stone Age and how that contrasts with the earlier periods. The children will look in detail at the Neolithic settlement at Skara Brae and the conclusions we can reach from the evidence found at the site. Links will be made to the types of evidence introduced at Key Stage 1, and knowledge and skills will be further developed. The unit will also feed forward to *Year 3 Unit 2: The Bronze Age and the Iron Age*. Where possible, links should be made to the period in your locality. You should find support in identifying local sites through your local museum or local history groups. These opportunities will also support you in delivering the local history element of the Key Stage 2 history curriculum.

The Big Finish, in which the children act/mime an area of Stone Age progress, provides opportunities for links to drama and role play. The learning can be shared with a wider audience within school.

Cross-curricular links

- **Art:** study and create your own cave painting, create prehistoric pottery, using different tools to create line-focused paintings
- **DT:** examining how monuments were constructed
- **Outdoor learning:** making a Stone Age dwelling, gathering fruits and berries from the local environment (making sure they are not poisonous!)
- **Science:** diet, creating mixtures of natural materials to create different colours to use in art, classification of plants based into categories of being edible or having other uses, decomposition focusing on the rate at which different materials decompose and what is left, then relating this to how archaeologists learn about the past and why we have certain gaps in our understanding of this period of history

Knowledge, skills and concepts

In this unit, the children will:

- use common words and phrases relating to the passing of time
- develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British history
- develop the appropriate use of historical terms, and note connections and contrasts over time
- construct informed responses that involve the selection of relevant historical information
- regularly address historically valid questions about similarity and difference
- understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources
- establish clear narratives within and across the periods they study.

Key vocabulary

Stone Age, prehistory, prehistoric, Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, archaeology, flint, artefacts, Ice Age, quarry, forage, hunter-gatherer, domesticated, reconstruction drawing, decay, evidence, settlement, community, slave, crop, revolution, settlement, role, significance, inference, saddle quern, midden, dresser, tomb, dolmens, barrows, mounds, henge, solstice, grave goods, aerial photograph, sacred, monument, megalith, significant, technology, social, agriculture, revolution.

Related books for wider reading

- *Stone Age Boy* by Satoshi Kitamura
- *Stone Age to Iron Age* by Clare Hibbert (*The History Detective Investigates*)
- *Stone Age* by Anita Ganeri (*Writing History*)

Places to visit

- Cresswell Crag, Worksop, Nottinghamshire
- British Museum, London
- Stonehenge, Salisbury and other English Heritage sites
- Most regional museums will have some Stone Age exhibits, and many offer workshops

Assessment

Opportunities for assessment for learning are built in throughout the unit through questioning and activities. The children can both self and peer assess as appropriate using approaches familiar to them. The quiz is intended to be used during week 6, and will review knowledge, skills and concepts acquired during the unit. The Rising Stars Progression Framework assessment focuses on: *change and development; address and devise historically valid questions about change, similarity and difference; note connections, contrasts and trends over time.* **Detailed information on the task can be found on the key assessment opportunity sheet.**

Subject knowledge and teaching guidance

The Stone Age is a long period of time, representing over 99% of human existence. The period lasted roughly 3.4 million years, and ended around 2000 BC with the advent of metal working. The Stone Age itself is divided into three periods: Palaeolithic (Early Stone Age), Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) and Neolithic (New Stone Age). Most Stone Age people in the UK seem to have been indigenous, with around 20% arriving from the continent. Homo sapiens emerged as the dominant form, especially after the disappearance of the Neanderthals in the Mesolithic period. The earlier periods are characterised by nomadic hunting, gradually moving in the Neolithic period to farming in more permanent settlements – a period often known as the “Neolithic Revolution”. There is no written record, therefore reliance is placed on archaeology, although there are plentiful remains of houses, tools, ornaments and other monuments. There are many remains in places such as the Orkneys (e.g. Skara Brae) and Wiltshire (e.g. Stonehenge). Many are sophisticated, even though they are much earlier than the Ancient Egyptian pyramids. The landscape and climate also changed as Britain moved apart from the continent and Ireland.

Discoveries from this period are regularly made and reported in the press. These frequently add to our knowledge and perceptions of the period, and should be discussed with the children. This can also lead to discussion about metal detecting and the responsible actions to take if finds are located.

Many of the activities within the unit use images of artefacts from the period. Dependent on the resources available to you, it may be possible to replace these by using replicas or even genuine articles. This will support the children in developing a broader range of skills in object learning.

To enrich the children’s experience, it may be possible to introduce a visit to a local prehistoric site or to a local museum to view their collection. You may also find your local museum offers prehistoric workshops.

In your children’s research about the period, they may find differing dates relating to the period. It is important to explain that these are not mistakes because when we talk about a period so far in the past, the dates are always approximate.