



History

The Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age

In this unit we will be looking at early life in Britain and how it transformed from groups of people travelling, hunting and gathering to tribes who established settlements and began farming and crafting materials from metal.

Key Questions

- How do we know about prehistory?
- What do AD and BC or BCE and CE stand for?
- How did the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age get their names?
- How did life in Britain change after the discovery of metal?



Timeline

All dates below are approximate:

Stone Age:	10000 BCE – 2300 BCE
Bronze Age:	2300 BCE – 800 BCE
Iron Age:	800 BCE – 43 CE

- 10000 BCE:** Cave Paintings created in the Lascaux Caves, France.
- 6000 BCE:** Britain becomes an island.
- 4500 BCE:** People begin to make pottery and farming begins to spread.
- 4000 BCE:** People start to domesticate horses.
- 3500 BCE:** Earliest dated evidence of the wheel.
- 3000 BCE:** Work begins on Stonehenge.
- 2500 BCE:** Bronze axes begin to be developed.
- 800 BCE:** The first hillforts are constructed.
- 700 BCE:** Iron working technology starts to become widespread through Britain.
- 100 BCE:** Coins are made for the first time.
- 43 CE:** Emperor Claudius sends the Roman Army to Britain.

Key Vocabulary

settlement	People living together in a community in a place previously uninhabited.
nomadic	People who travel around following food sources and shelter.
prehistory	The period of time before written records.
smithing	The process of heating up metal to make weapons or tools.
hillforts	Small towns built on a hill surrounded by walls to keep out enemies.
agriculture	The practice of farming, including the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food, wool, and other products.
archaeologist	A person who studies history through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artefacts and other physical remains.
hunter-gatherer	Nomadic people who live by hunting and fishing, and harvesting wild food.
chronology	Arranging events and dates in the order that they happened.

Key Content

The Stone Age

Early Stone Age people were nomadic, moving from place to place in search of food. They would set up camps where they went. Towards the end of this period, people stopped travelling and settled in tribes. They became farmers and began domesticating sheep, cattle and pigs. They learnt how to work with leather and wool to make clothes as well as how to make houses out of wattle and daub with thatched roofs.

The Bronze Age

Being able to work with metal transformed life around the world. Now that tools and weapons could be made from bronze, copper and gold, developments in farming could be made that would help to feed the ever-growing settlements. The creation of the wheel not only helped to develop transport but also the potter's wheel which allowed for better quality pottery to be designed.

The Iron Age

Iron became a more preferred material for tribes to use. It was more readily available and easier to work with. This led to further developments in farming and diet. Celtic tribes began to settle in Britain. Some people still speak Celtic languages today such as Welsh or Gaelic. The Iron Age came to an end with the arrival of the Roman army.

How do we know about prehistory?

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!



Home Learning Suggestions

1. Some of the earliest remains of life in Britain come from the Stone Age in places like Newgrange, Cheddar Gorge or sites like Stonehenge. What can you find out about these places?
2. Are there any Stone Age, Bronze Age or Iron Age remains in Warwickshire? What can you find out?
3. Create your own model of a round house or a hillfort. Bring it in for all to see. You could even build a model Stonehenge!