

# Through the Ages

Prehistory in Britain started c750,000 BC, when several species of humans arrived from Europe. Prehistory is divided into three main periods, the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. Each period is named after the main material used to make tools at that time.

Stone Age			Bronze Age	Iron Age
 <p><b>Palaeolithic</b> c750,000–c10,000 BC Duration: 740,000 years</p>	<p><b>Mesolithic</b> c10,000–c4000 BC Duration: 6000 years</p>	<p><b>Neolithic</b> c4000–c2500 BC Duration: 1500 years</p>	<p>c2500–c800 BC Duration: 1700 years</p>	<p>c800 BC–AD 43 Duration: 843 years</p>

Vocabulary	
<b>archaeologist</b>	Someone who studies artefacts from the past.
<b>bronze</b>	A metal alloy made by mixing copper and tin.
<b>Bronze Age collapse</b>	A period at the end of the Bronze Age, when society collapsed in Britain and Europe.
<b>celts</b>	A chemical in the body that speeds up group of people who travelled from Europe and brought their ironworking skills to Britain.
<b>hillforts</b>	A settlement built on a hill that is protected by ditches and fences.
<b>stone circle</b>	A circular arrangement of standing stones

## Stone Age

**Tools and weapons** - Tools were made from stone, wood and bone. They were used for digging, hunting and chopping.

**Everyday life** - Stone Age people were hunter-gatherers. They followed and killed animals and gathered seasonal food. They made clothes from animal skins and created cave art.

**Beliefs** - People built monuments, including stone circles, henges and earthworks. Historians believe that they used these monuments for gatherings and worship.

**End of the Stone Age** - The Beaker folk arrived from Europe and brought their knowledge of metalworking to Britain.



**Settlements** - People lived in temporary shelters or caves in the Palaeolithic. People lived in more permanent settlements in the Neolithic.

**Skara Brae** is a Neolithic settlement in the Orkney Islands, Scotland. It has well preserved, interconnected houses made of stone.



## Iron Age

**Tools and weapons** - Iron tools and weapons were sharp and strong. Everyone could own iron tools and weapons, not just the wealthy.

**Everyday life** - Iron tools made farming more efficient and iron weapons were available to everyone. Tribes attacked each other to steal their land, food and possessions. People created art, music and poetry.

**Beliefs** - Priests called druids led worship. Humans were sacrificed as offerings to the gods. People threw votive offerings into rivers and lakes.



**Settlements** - People lived in hillforts surrounded by ditches and fences to stop attacks from enemy tribes. People lived in roundhouses inside the hillfort and farmed the land outside.

**End of the Bronze Age** - The Romans invaded and conquered Britain in AD 43. They created written records, so this event ended prehistory in Britain.

## Bronze Age

**Tools and weapons** - Bronze tools were sharper, stronger and more efficient than stone tools. Bronze tools were owned by the wealthy.

**Everyday life** - The Beaker folk brought their knowledge of metalworking and pottery making to Britain. Bronze tools made farming more efficient, so there was more food and the population grew.

**Beliefs** - People were buried with objects, including Bell Beaker pottery, to use in the afterlife. They threw weapons and objects into rivers as offerings to the gods, gatherings and worship.



**Settlements** - People lived in permanent settlements, in roundhouses. They used walls and fences to protect their homes. Neolithic.

**End of the Bronze Age** - People stopped using metal during a time called the Bronze Age collapse, gatherings and worship.