



Introduction

The Prehistoric Society is the foremost society for the promotion of study into our prehistoric past. These learning resources have been created by members of the Society and are free to use in your classroom.

Key Stage 2 National Curriculum for history (prehistory) aims

Aims pertinent to the study of Prehistoric Britain (topic 1):

- To know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative from the earliest times.
- To understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.
- To understand how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims.
- To construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information.
- To devise historically valid questions about change.

Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age

The following 11 Lesson Plans are all about: 'Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age'. They are arranged chronologically and structured as far as possible on the principles of archaeological enquiry: excavation → deduction → reconstruction.

How to use the Lesson Plans

Each Lesson Plan pack includes three documents:

- *Broad Lesson Plan* (e.g. 1a),
- *PowerPoint* (e.g. 1b), and
- *Background Information for Teachers* (e.g. 1c).

If an objective is set out at the start of a lesson, this is located on the left-hand column of the plan. In most cases, the PowerPoint simulates stages in the excavation of the site. Therefore, **DO NOT TELL PUPILS IN ADVANCE WHAT THE POWER POINT IS ABOUT** (e.g. an Iron Age roundhouse).

This way, pupils will be challenged to interpret the unfolding evidence. It is important that they are given time at each stage to suggest and discuss what they think is emerging, and ideally to make a drawing of their idea. In this way, they will be actively involved in making deductions from evidence.

In most cases, they will also be challenged to decide the age of the site. This will require the use of the **Archaeologist's Fact File** sheet, which is included with each relevant lesson plan.

To add excitement, the slide in each PowerPoint that shows artefacts found at the site can be printed and the individual drawings cut out. Stuck on card or laminated, they can be buried in a sand tray for the children to 'unearth'.

It is suggested that as each topic is completed, and the date of the structure concerned established, its position is marked on the timeline constructed in [**Lesson Plan 1: Lascaux**](#). Some dates on this are rounded off to make division of the line easier.

Each PowerPoint centres on a classic site that typifies its period, but in order to furnish the clearest possible picture for young pupils, evidence from other sites may also be incorporated. The site(s) involved are recorded at the end of the Lesson Plan unless already named.

Additional information

Additional information can be obtained from the sources listed at the end of each *Background Information for Teachers*. Cross curricula links to literacy, art, science and outdoor education are a feature of most lessons, with some suggestions added for more developed extension work.

If you're interested in taking your students to visit one of these types of site, visit the [**Signposts to Prehistory**](#) page of our website to download a variety of factsheets on a number of archaeological sites to visit.

Throughout the documents, links to other pages/documents on our website are denoted in **blue**.

The sites on the [Prehistory Teaching Resources**](#) webpage are arranged in chronological order (earliest first). They are:**

PALAEOLITHIC

Cave art & Lascaux

Cave art is restricted to the very end of the Palaeolithic period and is associated with populations of modern humans (*homo sapiens*). It is closely centred in areas of south-western France, particularly the valley of the Dordogne, and north-eastern Spain, along the coastal strip. The most famous cave in the first area is Lascaux; the most famous in the second area is Altamira.

MESOLITHIC

Star Carr

Star Carr is in eastern Yorkshire near the village of Seamer, 5 miles south of Scarborough. Its name derives from the Danish (Viking) for sedge fen. The lake that was left here after the glaciers retreated filled with decayed vegetation to form a peat fen that is now represented by flat, productive farmland. Waterlogging and low levels of oxygen in swamp fens has meant that organic material such as wood survives below this farmland.

NEOLITHIC

Skara Brae

House I at Skara Brae was partially revealed when a great storm broke down sand dunes in 1850. The beds and the dresser were so like contemporary wooden furniture in Orkney farmhouses – some of which also had a central hearth – that it was thought impossible that it could any older than Pictish times (300–800 AD).

Long Barrows

Long barrows are great mounds of earth or stone. Most are between 25 and 75 m long but only 15–20 m wide. They were the earliest monuments built in Britain by the first farming communities. They date from about 3800 BC. Some, like that at Uley in the Cotswolds, which is the subject of the PowerPoint presentation, have stone-built chambers within them.

Grimes Graves

Grimes Grave is the name given to 433 mines and pits in Thetford Forest. The Anglo-Saxons were so puzzled by this weird dimpled landscape that they concluded it had been constructed by the god Grim (or

Woden). It wasn't until 1870, when one of the pit hollows was excavated to its base, that they were shown to have been flint mines of Neolithic date.

Stonehenge

Stonehenge is unique. There are hundreds of stone circles in the British Isles, but none have lintels set across stones. Nor have the stones at other stone circles been smoothed to shape.

BRONZE AGE

Round Barrows

Round barrows are, almost without exception, Bronze Age burial mounds. They can be found right across Britain, although when they are constructed of stone rather than earth, they are called round cairns.

IRON AGE

Roundhouses

Evidence for distinctive roundhouses begins about 1500 BC, but they are most common during the Iron Age (800 BC–43 AD). This was because the introduction of iron working from the continent allowed stronger tools to be made from an ore that was more widespread and readily available than copper and tin. Stronger axes meant that woodland could be more rapidly cleared, and plough tips reinforced with iron meant heavier soils could be brought into cultivation. Farming settlements multiplied.

Brochs

'Broch' is the name given to large, round, dry stone towers that are to be found only in Scotland. Over 500 are known, but most today are just grass grown tumbled masses of stone that often look like natural hillocks.

Hillforts

Hillforts were constructed from at least the beginning of the Iron Age, roughly 800 BC. They can be found right across Britain but are particularly clustered in Wiltshire and Dorset, and along the border of England and Wales.

Chariots

Burials under square-ditched barrows occur in eastern Yorkshire from about 400 BC. They are an unusual feature of the Iron Age; elsewhere, there is virtually no evidence of burials until the appearance of kingdoms in south-eastern England in the century before the Roman invasion of 43 AD. The fact that some of the east Yorkshire burials included a two-wheeled vehicle (presumably for the use of the deceased in the afterlife) makes them even more unusual.



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