From Stone to Iron in Britain

Teacher		**Class**	Year 3
Subject	History	**Topic**	Stone Age to Iron Age Britain
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Pupils learn how tools, food and homes changed from the Stone Age to the Iron Age. They make a 3-part tool timeline to show the order of changes.

Curriculum links

- Pupils should be taught about: changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will order the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age in time.
- Students will describe how tools, food and homes changed over time.
- Students will explain why bronze then iron replaced stone tools.

Success criteria

- I can order the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages oldest to newest.
- I can name one change in tools, food or homes.
- I can say why a new metal replaced the old material.

What students already know

Show a stone, then ask: what tools do we use now to cut food and wood, and what were tools made from long ago?

Key words

chronological	in time order, oldest first [3]
prehistory	the time before people could write things down [1]
nomadic	moving from place to place to find food [3]
smelting	getting metal out of rocks by heating and melting [3]
bronze	shiny mixed metal that replaced stone for tools around 2,300 BC [3]
iron	strong dark metal that later replaced bronze for tools [3]

Materials

- Slides 1-3, 5-7, 9 and 12
- Video clip 1 Stone Age to Iron Age overview on slide 6 (0:00-5:00)
- long paper strips, grey pebbles, gold-brown card, dark-grey card, glue
- pre-cut stone, bronze and iron tool shapes and pre-written labels

Before the lesson

- Test Slides 1-3, 5-7, 9 and 12 and Video clip 1 (0:00-5:00) on slide 6
- Check grey pebbles for sharp edges, count out strips, card, glue
- Pre-cut three tool shapes and pre-write Stone, Bronze and Iron labels for support

- mini whiteboards and pens

Lesson outline

0–5 min **Starter** 5 min · Whole class

To hook pupils and set the goal of ordering stone, bronze and iron oldest to newest.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 title and Slide 2 objectives, read the I can lines with the class.
2. Use the hook: If you could only take one tool to chop wood, would you pick rock, shiny metal or strong metal?
3. Take a quick vote with hands for rock, shiny metal or strong metal and ask two pupils why.
4. Link votes to today: we will order which came first and why people changed.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen to the hook and vote by raising a hand.
2. Say why they chose rock, shiny metal or strong metal.

Say: Today we will put the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages in order. You will spot how tools, food and homes changed. Listen and decide which tool you think is oldest and which is newest.

Ask: Which tool do you think people used first, rock, shiny metal or strong metal? (Rock or stone first, because the Stone Age is named because people used stones as tools [1].) · What do we need to find out to check our ideas? (The order of stone, bronze and iron and how life changed.)

Check understanding: Thumbs up if you can name the three ages; if mixed, repeat the three names together and point to Slide 2.

Support: Show the three real items together: pebble, gold-brown card and dark-grey card, and name each.
Stretch: Ask which material looks strongest and why a hunter might want to swap stone for metal.

Use: Slides 1-2

5–15 min **Teaching** 10 min · Whole class

To explain how hunting, farming and island life changed before metal tools.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 steps and talk through Stone Age moving hunters, then Bronze Age bronze tools, then Iron Age iron tools and hillforts.
2. Show Slide 5 vote: explain around 12,000 BC people were nomadic hunters who roamed from place to place [3].
3. Explain that by about 4,000 BC nomads began to settle into farming villages, looking after animals and growing crops [3].
4. Add that sea levels rose and Britain became an island at about 6,000 BC, before that joined to mainland Europe [3].

STUDENTS DO

1. Join in with the vote: stand for move and hunt or sit for stay and farm.
2. Repeat the three dates in order and say what changed at each.

Say: Long ago people moved around to find food. Later they stayed in one place to farm. We call this in chronological time order. The bigger the number BC, the longer ago it was [3].

Worked example: Model ordering three dates: 12,000 BC nomadic hunters roamed for food [3], then 6,000 BC Britain became an island [3], then 4,000 BC farming villages began [3]. Point left to right and say oldest means biggest BC number.

Ask: What changed between 12,000 BC and 4,000 BC? (People changed from nomadic hunters roaming for food [3] to settling in farming villages with crops and animals [3].) · Why is 12,000 BC older than 4,000 BC? (Because the bigger the number BC, the longer ago it was [3].)

Check understanding: Mini whiteboards: write 12,000 BC, 6,000 BC, 4,000 BC in order; reteach BC order if mixed.

Support: Give date cards with pictures: meat and tent, sea, sheep and wheat, to hold in order. **Stretch:** Ask what island life would change for getting food and meeting other groups.

Use: Slides 3 and 5

15–25 min **Video and mindmap** 10 min · Whole class

To show how tools, homes and safety changed across the three ages.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 6 and play Video clip 1 (0:00-5:00); ask pupils to listen for stone, bronze, iron and watch homes change.
2. Pause once halfway to name the tool seen: stone, then bronze, then iron.
3. Show Slide 7 mindmap and build it together: food hunting to farming, homes move to villages to hillforts, tools stone to bronze to iron.
4. Explain prehistory means the time before people started writing and being able to record events [1], so archaeologists learn by digging up artefacts and studying them [3].

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch Video clip 1 and call out stone, bronze or iron when they hear it.
2. Copy the mindmap hand actions: hunt, farm, stone tap, metal shine.

Say: Watch how tools change and how homes change. Listen for stone, bronze and iron. Without writing, we use objects left behind to work out what happened.

Worked example: Worked link: bronze replaced stone as the best material for tools and weapons from about 2,300 BC [3], because smelting, a process to separate metal from rocks by heating and melting [3], let people make sharper, stronger shapes than stone.

Ask: How did tools change? (From stone tools [1] to bronze replacing stone around 2,300 BC [3] to iron replacing bronze as the main material [3].) · How did homes and safety change? (From moving tents to farming villages [3] to hillforts to protect tribes who often fought [3].) · How do we know about this time with no writing? (An archaeologist learns about the past by digging up artefacts and studying them [3].)

Check understanding: Cold-call to name tools and homes in order; replay 30 seconds of the clip if order is shaky.

Support: Give a word mat with stone, bronze, iron and tent, village, hillfort to point to during the video.
Stretch: Ask why iron tools and weapons being made [1] might help farmers and also make fighting more common.

Use: Slides 6-7, Video clip 1 (0:00–5:00)

25–50 min **Main activity** 25 min · Pairs

To make a 3-part tool timeline that orders stone, bronze and iron and shows food and homes.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 9 task and give out long paper strips, pebbles, gold-brown and dark-grey card, glue.
2. Model the strip in three boxes: stick pebble for Stone Age, shiny card for Bronze Age from about 2,300 BC [3], dark card for Iron Age begun from around 800 BC [1].
3. Model adding labels and one extra: wheat or sheep for farming villages [3], hillfort circle for tribes often at war [3].
4. Send pairs to make, label in chronological time order [3], then hold up strips and name the three ages in order.

STUDENTS DO

1. In pairs make the 3-box strip, stick or draw the three tools and add food or home.
2. Hold up the strip in chronological order and practise naming Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age.

Say: Make three boxes: Stone, Bronze, Iron. Draw or stick tools in each box: stone, bronze, iron. Add food or a home in each box. Put them in time order, oldest first.

Worked example: Teacher model: Box 1 Stone - stick pebble, write Stone Age used stones as tools [1], draw tent for nomadic hunters [3]. Box 2 Bronze - stick gold-brown axe, write bronze replaced stone around 2,300 BC [3], draw wheat. Box 3 Iron - stick dark-grey spear, write iron replaced bronze [3], draw hillfort for tribes often at war [3].

Ask: Which box comes first and how do you know? (Stone first, because the Stone Age used stones as tools [1] and bronze only replaced stone around 2,300 BC [3].) · What shows farming and safety on your strip? (Crops and animals for farming villages [3] and a hillfort for tribes often at war [3].)

Check understanding: Walk the room, ask each pair to point and read boxes in order; fix order on the spot by swapping boxes.

Support: Give pre-cut tool shapes and pre-written labels to match and stick, with colour borders to narrow choice. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to add a caption explaining why a farmer or hunter might prefer the new material.

Use: Slide 9

50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

To check pupils can order the ages and name changes and reasons.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 12 quiz and ask pupils to put Iron Age, Stone Age, Bronze Age in order.
2. Ask what prehistory means and how we know about tool changes.
3. Invite three pairs to hold up strips and say one change and one reason for the change.
4. Close by repeating the order and the I can lines from Slide 2.

STUDENTS DO

1. Answer the quiz in pairs, then in order: Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age.
2. Say what prehistory means: time before people could write things down.

Say: Put in order: Iron Age, Stone Age, Bronze Age. Tell your partner the right order. Then tell me what prehistory means and one tool change.

Ask: What is the right order and why? (Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, because bronze replaced stone around 2,300 BC [3] and iron replaced bronze [3].) · What does prehistory mean? (The time before people started writing and being able to record events [1].)

Check understanding: Exit vote with fingers 1-2-3 for Stone-Bronze-Iron; reteach any flipped pair with timeline strips.

Support: Let pupils point to their strip boxes while answering so they read rather than recall. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to argue which change mattered most: farming, bronze or iron, with one reason.

Use: Slide 12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Thinking a smaller BC number means longer ago	Puts 800 BC before 2,300 BC on the strip	Practise that the bigger the number BC, the longer ago it was [3], using 12,000 BC, 2,300 BC and 800 BC [1][3].
Mixing up bronze and iron order	Says iron came before bronze	Repeat that bronze replaced stone around 2,300 BC [3], then iron replaced bronze as the main material [3], with Iron Age from around 800 BC [1].
Thinking people farmed from the start	Draws villages in the Stone Age hunting box	Retell that around 12,000 BC people were nomadic hunters [3], then by about 4,000 BC they settled into farming villages with crops and animals [3].

Support

- Use picture cards with colour borders, pre-cut tools and pre-written labels to narrow choice.
- Keep word mats with stone, bronze, iron, tent, village and hillfort for pointing.

Stretch

- Add a caption explaining why a farmer or hunter might prefer the new material.
- Compare two ideas about change and argue which change mattered most and why.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Stay with the main activity pairs using pre-cut shapes; prompt pointing to each box and naming in order, and check pebble handling.

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Safety

- Check pebbles for sharp edges before handling and remind students not to throw them.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Put these in order oldest first: Iron Age, Stone Age, Bronze Age.	Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age.
Name one way food or homes changed from Stone Age to Iron Age.	From moving hunters to farming villages with crops and animals, then to hillfort homes.
Why did people stop using only stone for tools?	Because bronze then iron made stronger, sharper tools and weapons.

Sources

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