

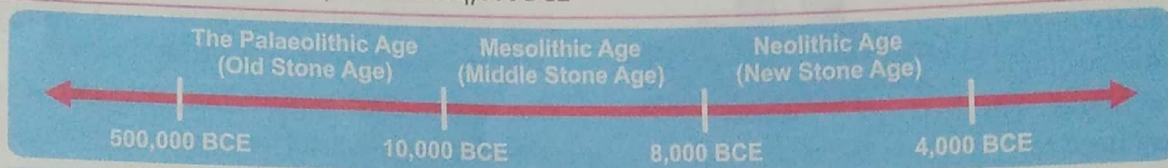


# The Stone Age And Earliest Societies



## Key Terms

chopping	: an act of cutting something into pieces with a sharp tool	Palaeolithic Period	: the period in human history from 500,000 BCE to 10,000 BCE
depict	: to show an image of something	pressure flaking	: a method of trimming the edge of a stone tool
Mesolithic Period	: the period from 10,000 BCE to 4,000 BCE	Stone Age	: the period when humans depended on stone for their survival
microlith	: a very small stone tool		
Neolithic Period	: the period from 8,000 BCE to 4,000 BCE		



Use **Cordova Smart Class Software** on the **smart board** in class to make learning enjoyable.

Historians believe that human beings first appeared on Earth about 1.5 million years ago. The development of human beings on this Earth is a very interesting process. **Earliest humans were food gatherers, hunters and nomads.** Always in search of food and shelter, they travelled from one place to another, hunted animals and gathered fruits, roots, seeds and nuts.

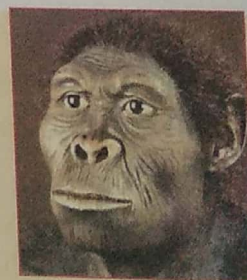
When there was shortage of animals or plants in one area, they moved to another area in search of food. They considered it safer to move in groups rather than wander about all alone. A group generally consisted of a few men and women and children who stayed together with the elders. Early humans led a primitive life. They remained without clothes during summers but in the winter season, they wore animal skins, leaves and the bark of trees to keep themselves safe from severe cold. They used to spend their nights on trees or in rock shelters and caves, that protected them from wild animals when asleep.

**tools and weapons.** During the prehistoric period, human beings defended themselves against all types of wild animals using stones by attaching them to handles of bones or wood and by making weapons in the form of spears or arrows. They also hunted animals with these weapons. The stones helped early humans in different ways. For example:

- The stones were used to **hunt animals.**
- They were used to **remove the skin of animals, cut meat and bones.**
- Stones were also used to **cut trees and clear forests.**

## Wonderful To Know

**Hominids:** According to scientists, hominids were not human beings but they were similar to human beings. Most of the scientists think that human beings developed or evolved from them.



A Hominid

## THE STONE AGE

The main object used by early humans was **stone.** They depended on stones for their survival; that is why this period is called the **Stone Age.**

## HOW DO WE KNOW ABOUT THESE PEOPLE

we come to know a lot about the earliest human beings from their **evidences** in the form of **stone**

On the basis of development of different stone tools, anthropologists have divided the Stone Age into different stages.

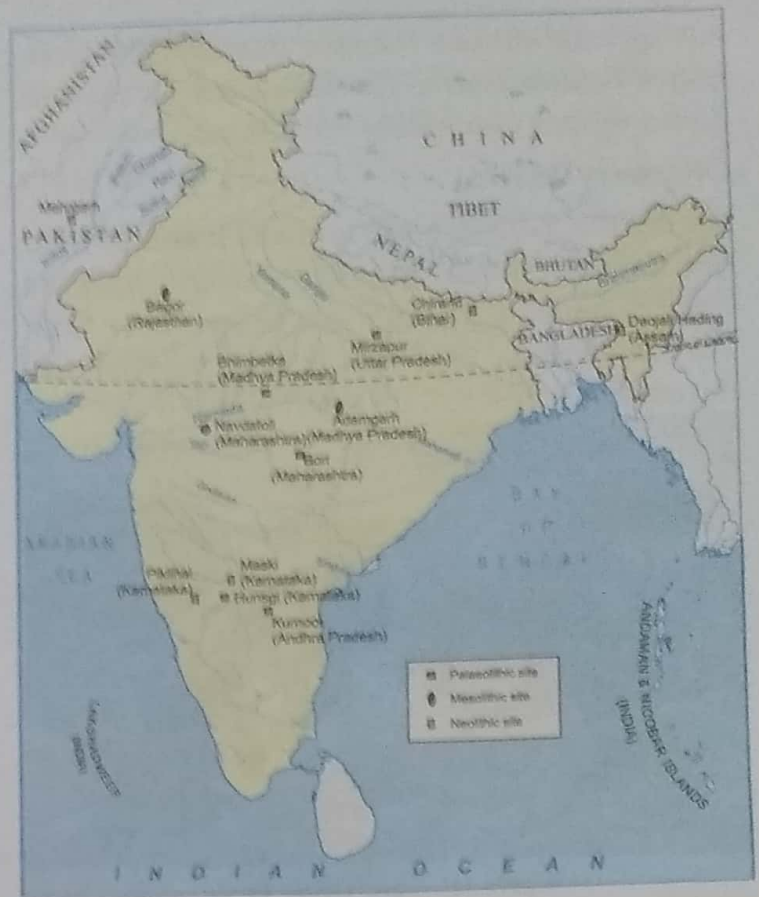
Stone Age is classified into three sub-periods on the basis of the type and quality of stone tools used by early humans.

1. Palaeolithic Age or Old Stone Age
2. Mesolithic Age or Middle Stone Age
3. Neolithic Age or New Stone Age

### Multiple Choice Questions (Quick Revision)

Tick (✓) the correct options.

1. The period during which human beings depended on stone for their survival is the
  - (a) Stone Age
  - (b) Tool Age
  - (c) Teen Age
2. The Stone Age is classified into ..... sub-periods.
  - (a) four
  - (b) three
  - (c) two



Major Sites Of Early Humans In India

### The Palaeolithic Age

It is considered that evolution of mankind started in this period. It roughly began around 500,000 BCE and ended around 10,000 BCE. This period is further subdivided into three phases on the basis of changes in climate and stone tools used.

The division is as follows:

- (i) Lower Palaeolithic Age or Early Old Stone Age
- (ii) Middle Palaeolithic Age or Middle Old Stone Age
- (iii) Upper Palaeolithic Age or Upper Old Stone Age

### Lower Palaeolithic Age

This age is considered as the formative age. During this age, many parts of the Earth were covered heavily with ice and the climate was extremely cold. Geologists define this 'cold period' as **Ice Age** or **Pleistocene Period**.

The most common tool of this age was the **hand axe**, which was mainly used for **chopping trees**

and **hunting animals**. Therefore, these tools are also known as **choppers**. In India, these tools were mainly found in Punjab and on the banks of River Narmada in Madhya Pradesh.

### Middle Palaeolithic Age

The main tools of this period were the **different types of borers and scrapers made of stone**. These tools have been found from different places in India that include the banks of River Narmada in Madhya Pradesh and the Soan Valley in Punjab.

### Upper Palaeolithic Age

Upper Palaeolithic Age is the final phase of the Ice Age. **This age ends just at the onset of agriculture**. During

### Wonderful To Know

'Palaeo' means 'old', 'meso' means 'middle' and 'neo' means 'new'. 'Lithic' comes from the Greek word 'lithos' meaning 'stone'.

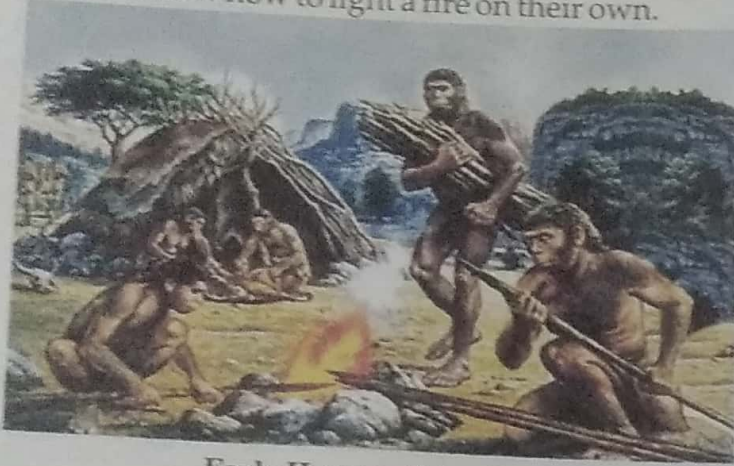


Stone Tools

this age, the climate changed dramatically. From cold it became warm. The tools used by humans during this age were blades and burins.

### Discovery Of Fire

During this period, early humans learnt to light fire. It was one of the greatest discoveries made by early humans. Early humans knew about fires. They saw natural fires such as forest fires but they did not know how to light a fire on their own.



Early Humans Using Fire

How did humans learn to light a fire? Perhaps, two stones were rubbed together producing sparks and the sparks fell on some dry leaves lying nearby. Or perhaps, lightning struck a tree, and it went up in flames. Early humans soon discovered that they could use fire to keep themselves warm in cold and to scare away wild animals.

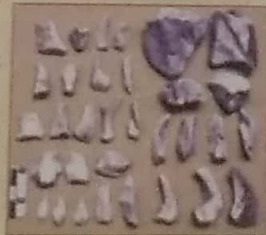
They discovered that the flesh of animals tasted better when heated on fire and learnt cooking.

### The Mesolithic Age

The Mesolithic Age started around 10,000 BCE and ended around 8,000 BCE. The climate changed, and became dry and warm. Humans of this age developed small, sharp, pointed stone tools called microliths.

### Wonderful To Know

Microliths are found in many parts of India like Chhota Nagpur in Jharkhand and also on the banks of the River Ganga between Ghazipur and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.



Microlith Tools

### The Neolithic Age

This period lasted from about 8,000 BCE till about 4,000 BCE. The tools of this New Stone Age were more advanced than earlier age tools, much sharper than the tools of Mesolithic Period. They sparkled due to polishing technique used over them. Tools of this period were axes, sickles, spears and arrow heads.

### Making Of Stone Tools

Tools belonging to the three Stone Age periods were found at many places. Stone was easily available at that time, therefore, most of the tools were made of stone. Early tools were made from crude stone and were used for particular needs. Later, they discovered flint, a type of stone and used it for making tools and weapons. Flint has special qualities, it can chip easily and can be moulded into different shapes.

Small and big stones were used to make tools and weapons. Axe head, hammers and choppers were made from big stones. The axe head was tied to a stick which made it a more efficient tool. Knives and scrapers were made from small pieces of stones. Arrows and spears made from smaller stones were used to hunt animals.

### Techniques Of Tool Making

The stone tools were produced by two distinct techniques.

**Stone On Stone:** In this method, one hand of the toolmaker firmly held the stone or core from which the tool was to be made. With the other hand, another stone was used as a hammer. This hammer stone was used to strike off flakes from the core stone till the required shape and size were obtained.

**Pressure Flaking:** In this method, the core stone was placed on a firm ground or surface. The hammer stone was placed on a piece of bone or stone that was placed on the core to remove flakes that could be shaped into tools.



Pressure Flaking Method

## Uses Of Stone

The stone tools were used to dig the ground, hunt animals and skin them, cut trees, scrape the barks of trees, chop meat, fruits and wood and to stitch animal skins for making clothes.

### Multiple Choice Questions (Quick Revision)

Tick (✓) the correct options.

1. Microliths were used in.....Age.  
(a) Mesolithic  (b) Palaeolithic   
(c) Neolithic
2. Stone on stone is a technique of  
(a) tool making  (b) cart making   
(c) none of these

## ROCK PAINTINGS

Early humans lived in caves and they decorated them with paintings on the walls. These drawings were of running wild horses, bison, bears, stags and herds of other animals. Some of these are found in Madhya Pradesh and southern Uttar Pradesh. Red, green, white and ochre colours are used in the paintings.



Early Rock Painting

These paintings also show men hunting (either in groups or alone), riding, women grinding and preparing food and dancing.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

As discussed earlier, the climate of the world changed around 12,000 years ago. It became warm from cold. Due to this change, grasslands developed. This development increased the number of animals that survived on grass.

Hunters of these animals also followed them. They learned about their breeding seasons and food habits. Slowly, people started thinking about rearing these animals themselves.

During this time, several grain-bearing grasses including rice, barley and wheat grew naturally in different parts of the sub-continent. Early humans collected these grains and used them as food. They learnt their cycle when they ripened and where they grew. This might have been the beginning of growing plants by humans.

## CASE STUDY

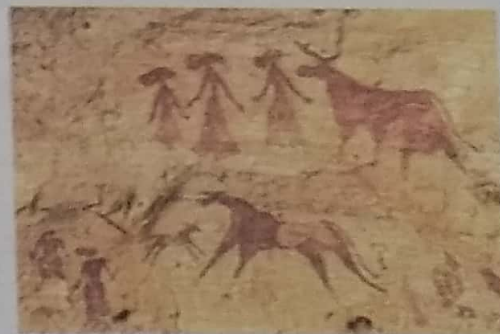
Hunsgi and Baichbal Valley in the Deccan have several Stone Age sites. Most of them are early Palaeolithic sites. A large number of finished and unfinished tools have been found here. This shows that early humans lived here for a very long time and the sites were probably habitation as well as factory sites. Most tools were made from limestone, which was locally available.



Tools From Hunsgi

## In Other Parts Of The World During That Time

Rock paintings were also discovered elsewhere in the world, for example, in France. Historians believe that such paintings were made between 20,000 and 10,000 years ago. The ingredients of the colours were mainly minerals like ochre or iron-ore, and charcoal. The subject of these paintings were animals like bison, woolly rhinoceros, reindeer and so on. It is believed that these rock paintings were, perhaps, created on ceremonies for special rituals or perhaps, by hunters before they went for hunting.



## Points To Remember

- Historians believe that human beings first appeared on Earth about 1.5 million years ago.
- Early humans depended on stones for their survival; that is why this period is called the Stone Age.
- Stone Age is classified into three sub-periods: 1. Palaeolithic Period or Old Stone Age
- 2. Mesolithic Period or Middle Stone Age 3. Neolithic Period or New Stone Age
- Evolution of mankind is believed to have started in Palaeolithic Age. It roughly began around 500,000 BCE and ended around 10,000 BCE.
- The period of Mesolithic Age started from 10,000 BCE and ended around 8,000 BCE.
- The Neolithic Age lasted from about 8,000 BCE till about 4,000 BCE.
- The stone tools were produced by two distinct techniques: (i) stone on stone (ii) pressure flaking.
- Early people lived in caves and they decorated them with paintings on the walls.

## Exercise

### Quick Revision

[Use Cordova Smart Class Software on the smart board in class to do these exercises.]

#### Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) Tick (✓) the correct options.

- In the beginning, the early humans were  
(a) food producers  (b) food gatherers and hunters  (c) hunters
- The evolution of mankind started in the  
(a) Palaeolithic Age  (b) Mesolithic Age  (c) Neolithic Age

#### Fill in the blanks.

- The Mesolithic Age started around .....
- ..... is the final phase of the Ice Age.
- ..... are the tools which developed during the Mesolithic Age.
- Pressure flaking is a method of .....

#### Write (T) for True and (F) for False statements.

- Early humans led a lonely life.
- The Stone Age is also known as Modern Age.
- Evolution of mankind started in the Mesolithic Age.
- Stone on stone is a method of tool making.

### Answer The Following

#### Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) Tick (✓) the correct options.

- Early humans wore  
(a) wool  (b) silk  (c) animal skin
- Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods are classifications of the  
(a) Modern Age  (b) Stone Age  (c) Medieval Age

## B. Short Answer Questions

1. What is the Upper Palaeolithic Age?
2. Name the animals that are found in the early rock paintings.
3. Write a short note on the Palaeolithic Age.
4. Write about any one technique of tool making.

## C. Long Answer Questions

1. How did early humans make use of stones during the prehistoric period?
2. How did changes in the environment influence the development of the early humans?
3. Why was the discovery of fire considered an important achievement?
4. Why did the early humans lead a nomadic life?

## D. HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) Questions

1. How do you think your life differs from that of a child of the Stone Age?
2. What do rock paintings on cave walls reveal about the lifestyle of early humans?

## E. Value Corner

Environmental changes have been occurring on this Earth from a long period of time. What are the changes that you notice in the environment around you? If the changes are negative, what can you do to minimise them?

## Activity

### TRAVEL THROUGH PREHISTORIC SITES

◆ **Imagine yourself as the owner of a travel agency. You have to prepare a travel brochure that is designed to attract tourists to visit some prehistoric sites. Remember, the brochure should:**

- be colourful, attractive and comprehensive,
- contain relevant information and pictures, and
- contain clear descriptions and locations of each site.

### ◆ Picture Reading

Given below is a painting of the Stone Age Settlement. Describe the scene in your own words in about 10 to 15 sentences, keeping in mind the location of the settlement, the kinds of houses, the clothing and the other activities in which the people are involved. What are the tools being used? How are they being used? Can you notice anything which signifies that these people knew about fire?



### Map Work

On a map of India, mark the important Stone Age sites.

You can also take help from these sites:

- ◆ <http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/india/bhimbetka.html>
- ◆ <http://www.mnh.si.edu/anthro/humanorigins/aop/hunsgi.html>

## Life Skill

Suppose you are a farmer of the Neolithic Age living on the banks of the River Yamuna. Due to monsoon floods, your farm has been partially destroyed. Write a diary entry expressing your feelings when you see all your crops being submerged in flood. Also, write what you will do thereafter.