



History

Stone Age to the Iron Age

Becoming a Copper Child

An illustration of a rocky, brown landscape. In the foreground, a metal railing runs across the frame. A set of stone steps leads down from the railing towards the center. The background consists of large, layered rock formations. The overall style is that of a children's educational book or poster.

Aim

- I can understand what copper mining meant to the people of the Bronze Age.

Success Criteria

- I can explain why Bronze Age people mined copper.
- I can tell you the names of some of the jobs that copper miners used to do.
- I can explain why children worked in copper mines.









Important Events in The Bronze Age




Look at your pack of cards and sort them into chronological (time) order.

Remember: The numbers seem to get smaller as we travel through history in 'BC'.

Bronze Age Timeline Cards

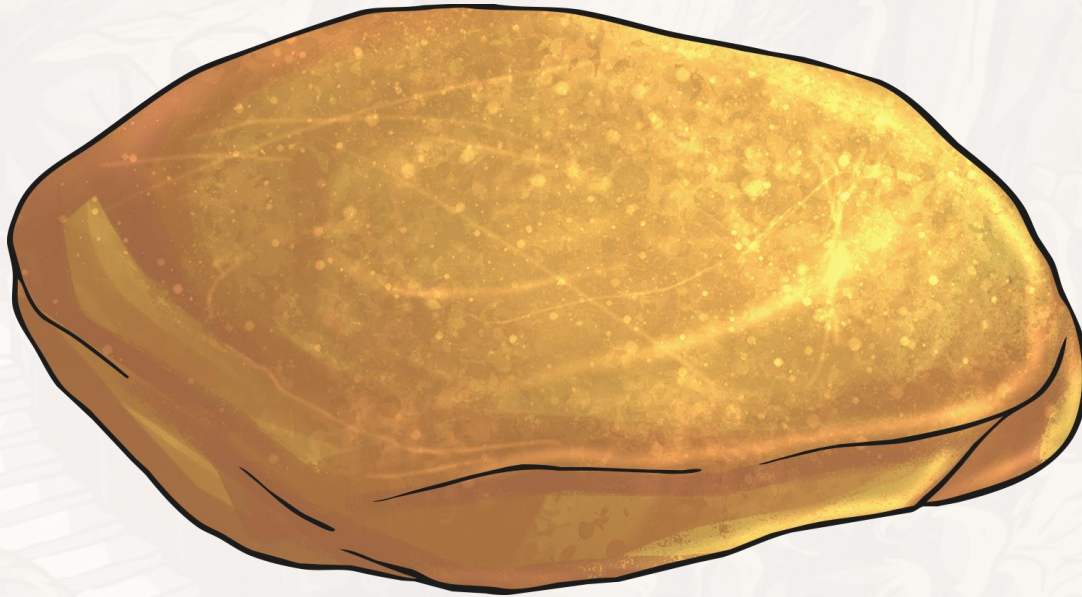
<p>800 BC</p>  <p>The Bronze Age ends and the Iron Age begins.</p>	<p>3000 BC</p>  <p>Construction begins on Stonehenge.</p>	<p>1200 - 800 BC</p>  <p>Tribal kingdoms and Celtic culture arrive in Britain.</p>	<p>1800 BC</p>  <p>The first big copper mines are dug.</p>
<p>1200 - 800 BC</p>  <p>Roundhouses are the main domestic structure.</p>	<p>2500 - 800 BC</p>  <p>Metalwork becomes increasingly sophisticated.</p>	<p>2500 - 1500 BC</p>  <p>'Bell Beaker' culture arrives in Britain.</p>	<p>2500 - 800 BC</p>  <p>Bronze weapons are developed.</p>

 **planit**

History | UKS2 | Stone Age to the Iron Age | Becoming a Copper Child | Lesson 3

What is Bronze?

Bronze is a type of metal (alloy), mainly made of copper.



Why is this period called the Bronze Age?

Read on to find out more...

Prehistoric Times

There is a large period of time for which we have no written records; we call this time period 'prehistory'.

Starting from evidence of the first early humans, it is split into three sections:

The Stone Age: 800 000 BC

The Bronze Age: 2100 BC

The Iron Age: 750 BC

The Bronze Age in Britain lasted around 1500 years.



Why the Bronze Age?

Just like the Stone Age was so called because early humans made tools from stone, the Bronze age was called the Bronze Age because humans started making tools from... bronze!

Bronze was an **alloy** made from copper and tin.



Alloy – a metal made by combining two or more metals to improve its properties.

Why Bronze?

Copper is a soft metal, but when it is melted and added to tin, the result (bronze) is a much harder and durable material than copper or stone.

It was used for tools, weapons and armour as well as building materials like decorative tiles.

There was an early form of bronze in the North Caucasus known as arsenic bronze, which was a natural alloy that could be dug from the ground.

The bronze alloy made from copper and tin was developed later.

The copper and tin had to be mined separately and then melted down and combined to make bronze.



When Was the Bronze Age?

The Bronze Age started at different times in different countries. As people travelled to other countries, the knowledge of how to mix the copper and tin to make bronze was brought with them.

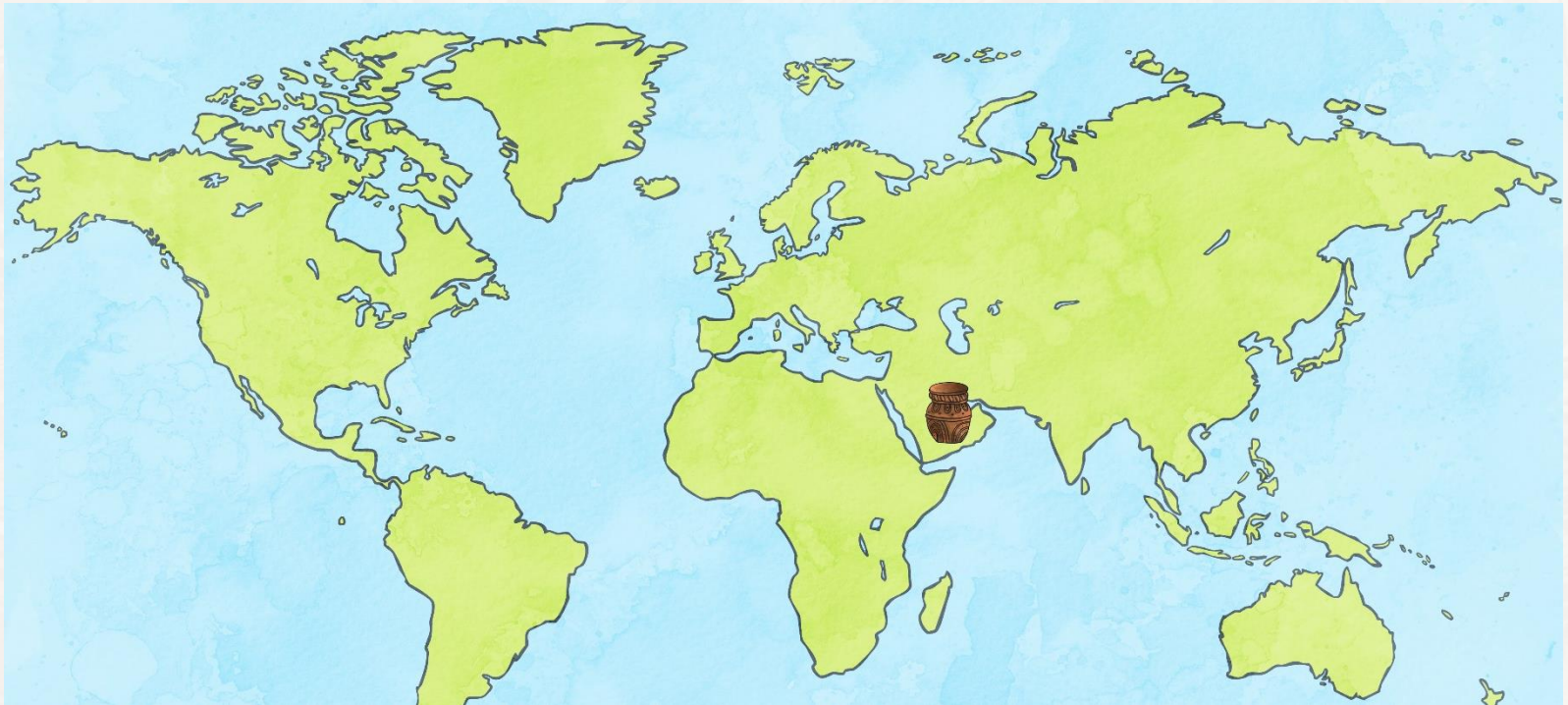
Not all parts of the world had copper and tin available.

Bronze was already being used in other parts of the world before it was brought to Britain around 2100 BC.



3000 – 3500 BC Middle East

Bronze has started to be used. Either through naturally occurring bronze or as an alloy. No one knows how or who invented bronze, but by around 3500 BC, farm tools and weapons are being made of this new metal in these areas.



3500 – 3001 BC Eastern Europe

Bronze has started to be used in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean but it is still difficult and expensive to make.



2500 – 2300 BC India and China

Bronze has started to be used in India and China.



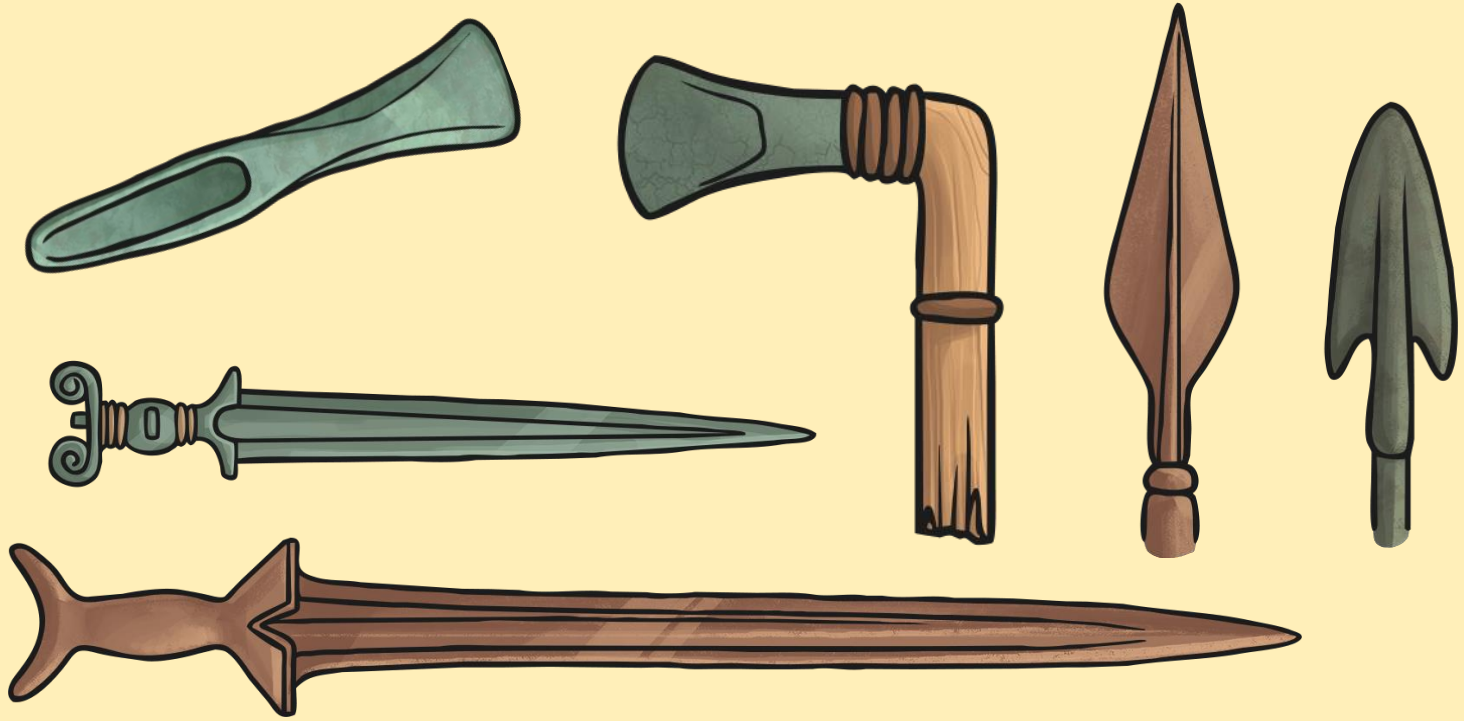
2100 BC Britain

Bronze has landed in Britain. It is used to make weapons, tools and even hairbrushes.



Artefacts

Daggers, blades, spearheads, chisels, axes and anything that used to be made from stone or flint was then made from stronger and more durable bronze. As a result, woodworking techniques improved with the better quality tools available.



Artefacts

This pot is thought to date from 1700 – 1500 BC.

It was found in 1837 in a burial site on Bodmin Moor, in Cornwall, along with a bronze dagger, ivory, pottery and glass beads.

It was given to King William VI, who used it as a pot in which to keep his cufflinks!



Photo courtesy of portableantiquities@flickr.com - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Weather

The weather in Britain had become warmer and dryer at the end of the Stone Age.

The Bronze Age saw another change in climate.

The wetter weather forced people to move from the hills, which were easier to defend, and into the valleys where it was easier to grow food and find shelter.

The spread of farming meant the end of large burial sites as the fields were needed for animals to graze, and large areas of woodland started to be cut down to make more land available for farming.



Stonehenge

A massive stone circle is built on the site of an earthwork and burial ground from the Stone Age in South West England. It was in the process of being built and adapted for over 1000 years and some of the original stones came all the way from South Wales. No one really knows why it was built.



The Beaker Culture

There was more immigration to Britain during the Bronze Age. Some of the new arrivals were called the 'Bell Beaker People'. They have been named after the distinctive bell-shaped pottery they made, mainly used for drinking from.

The pottery was decorated with bands that had impressions in them, made by a comb or cord pressed into the clay.

The pots were also used to smelt copper, store food or used as urns. An intricate item of pottery would be a display of wealth and status.

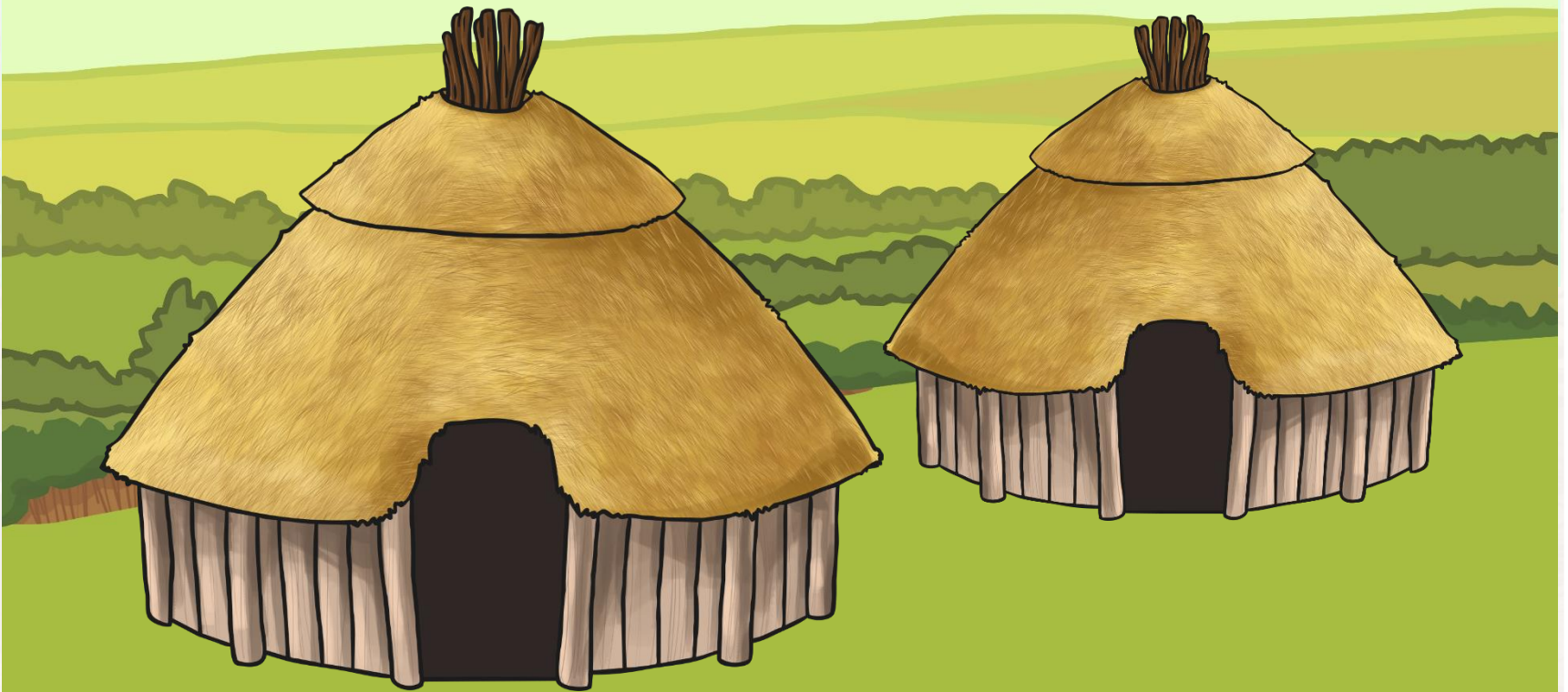
It is possible that bronze was first brought over to Britain by the Bell Beaker folk. The Beaker Culture also includes types of weapon, jewellery and other ornaments that were new to Britain.

They integrated well with the people already living in Britain, and even made improvements to Stonehenge.



Bronze Age Houses

In the Bronze Age, people no longer used one dwelling for everything. A farming household might have consisted of two houses; a main house would be used to live in and an out-house would be used for cooking and textile production.



What Clothes Did They Wear?

By the Bronze Age, wool was being woven into sheets of fabric and used to make clothes.

Women:

- long woollen skirts
- short tunics

Men:

- knee-length wrap-around skirts, or kilt-like woollens
- tunics
- cloaks
- one-piece garments
- round woollen hats



Great Orme Mine: WANTED!



Children needed for mining opportunity.

The earth under our feet is hiding a rich treasure trove of copper.

We need copper to make tools, pots and weapons.

Children wanted for:

- Squeezing into small cracks at the ends of tunnels
- Scraping the earth
- Pounding tougher rock with hammer stones
- Fire setting (you will need to be good at lighting fires to do this!)

Tools are provided (volcanic stones and animal bones, for reaching the fiddly spaces).

If you are interested in working at the Great Orme Copper Mine, please complete an application form and send it to us.

Think of a Question



1. If the answer to a question is **copper**,
what could the question be?
2. If the answer to a question is the **Bronze Age**,
what could the question be?



[Watch this film to find out more about this period.](#)

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