

The Stone Age



THE STONE AGE

The stone age is divided into :

Paleolithic (“old stone”)



Neolithic (“new stone”).

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Principal Hominids

Australopithecus

Characteristics: brain not very developed; probably walked on two legs but still climbed trees.

Utensils and advances: no tools, used materials in their natural state.

Location: Africa.

Homo Habilis

Characteristics: small brain but bigger than australopithecus; legs better adapted to walking upright.

Utensils and advances: simple stone tools made by knocking one stone against the other to make a sharp instrument.

Location: Africa

Homo Erectus

Characteristics: initially thought to be the first hominid to walk upright; bigger brain than Homo Habilis.

Utensils and advances: bifaces; wore animal hides and knew about fire.

Location: Africa and Asia.

Homo Antecessor

Characteristics: mix of physical features, some similar to humans and others from an older time.

Utensils and advances: beat large stones in order to sharpen them and used them to cut meat, break bones, cut branches, etc... They also used chopping tools.

Location: Europe (Atapuerca, Burgos, Spain).

Homo Neanderthaensis

Characteristics: strong complexion, big face and prominent eyebrows, sunken forehead and no chin; brain similar to a human brain today.

Utensils and advances: various stone tools; knew about fire and buried their dead.

Location: Africa, Europe, Asia.

Homo Sapiens Sapiens

Characteristics: human beings of today; developed intelligence.

Utensils and advances: tools made of stone, bone and animal horns; art.

Location: Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Oceania.

Life in the Paleolithic Age

- What was the climate like?

In the Paleolithic Age, very cold periods alternated with milder ones.

- What did people eat?

They hunted, fished and gathered wild food.

- Where did they live?

They didn't live in a fixed place, but moved from one place to another. They sheltered in caves or lived in open-air settlements. They were nomads.

- What did they believe in?

Paleolithic people had religious beliefs. They worshipped the forces of nature and buried the dead.

- What was society like?

Paleolithic people grouped together in hordes or tribes.

Skills:

There are three types:

- *Working with stone*
- *Making and controlling fire*
- *Animal hides*

Working with stone

- The first hominids used sticks and stones.
- Later, they made tools: they hit one stone against another to shape it.
- They used stone axes called bifaces to cut meat, work wood, etc. The chips were used as knives to cut and clean animal hides.



Making and controlling fire

- Fire was essential for human survival. In the beginning, they were only able to keep it alight. Later they learnt to produce it by hitting one stone against another or by rubbing two sticks together. Fire was used for light and heat, for cooking, drying hides and for chasing away or trapping animals to hunt them.



Animal hides

- With animals hides, Paleolithic people made clothes, shoes, covers for their shelters, bags, belts, etc. The hides were also used to sleep on and as vessels to carry food, water, plants, etc.
- Looking after the hides was very important: they had to be greased often to keep them flexible and waterproof.



Art

The earliest expression of art are **cave painting**. In the Paleolithic Age, these were done on rocks and on the ceilings and walls of caves, and represented animals.

There are various theories explaining rock painting:

1. Humans painted animals because they believed that by painting them, they “caught” them magically and so would be able to hunt them more easily.
2. Our Paleolithic ancestor needed to express themselves through painting.
3. They simply wanted to express what they had seen.



Batons

They were small carved pieces of bone and horn in the shape of the head of a horse or deer. In the Paleolithic Age, they made little statues of women called **Venus statues**. These were made of ivory, stone or bone. Several have been found in different parts of Europe such as Lespugue (France) and Willendorf (Austria). Some researchers have related these figures to fertility symbols, as the feminine physical features they depict are very exaggerated.



The Neolithic Revolution

The Neolithic Age began around 7000 B.C. and lasted until approximately 3500 B.C., when the **written word** appeared and **history** began.

In Spain, this period began around 5500 B.C.

We call this era the **Neolithic Revolution** because of the important economic and social changes that occurred.

Economy and Society

- What was the natural landscape like?

In this period, the climate changed and new species of plants appeared

- What did people eat?

People in the Neolithic Age were the first to grow plants for agriculture and keep livestock.

- Where did they live?

People in the Neolithic Age were sedentary and lived in settlements or communities.

- What did they believe in?

Neolithic people believed in spirits and worshipped the dead.

- What was society like?

There was division of labour and everyone had a job to do.

Skills

There are three types:

- *Stonework*
- *Materials*
- *Pottery*

Stonework

- There were developments in agricultural tools: wooden handles were added to existing stone tools.
- There were ploughs for digging, scythes for cutting the crops, and axes. The tools were made of marble and granite.



Materials

- First they used vegetable fibres to make baskets; then they began to make cloth with linen, cotton, wool and esparto grass.
- First they spun the fibres and then they wove them on vertical or horizontal looms. They also made shoes.

Pottery

- They made pots by hand and baked them directly in the fire. Later they invented a type of oven (kiln). Sometimes they decorate the pots with incisions or relief using a sharp tool. They made **watertight containers**, in which they kept and transported food and liquids.

Art



- **Ceramic pots** were elaborately painted and decorated.
- **Rock painting** was another form of art; paintings were more schematic and included only the main features of the object.
- The paintings showed hunting scenes, food gathering and ritual dances; some of them probably had **religious significance** associated with fertility rites of the land.

The Stone Age in Spain

There are two types:

- *The Paleolithic Age*
- *The Neolithic Age*

The Paleolithic Age

Human beings on the Iberian Peninsula lived from **hunting, fishing and gathering**. They hunted animals of various sizes.

The first inhabitants were nomads and lived in **caves and outdoor shelters**.

There are some important **cave painting** in **Cantabria**.



The Neolithic Age

They grew **wheat** and **barley** and kept goats sheep, etc. The Neolithic Age began in the following areas of the Iberian Peninsula

- **North-east:** human lived in caves. The existence of graves or cists shows us that there was a strong burial cult at the end of the Neolithic Age.
- **East:** people lived in caves. They made ceramic pots, such as **Cardial** pots, which they imprinted with shells.
- **Andalucia:** They dyed their pots red and also made Cardial pots.

The most significant **cave painting** are in **Levante**.



The end

Done by Javier C.