

THE IRON AGE KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

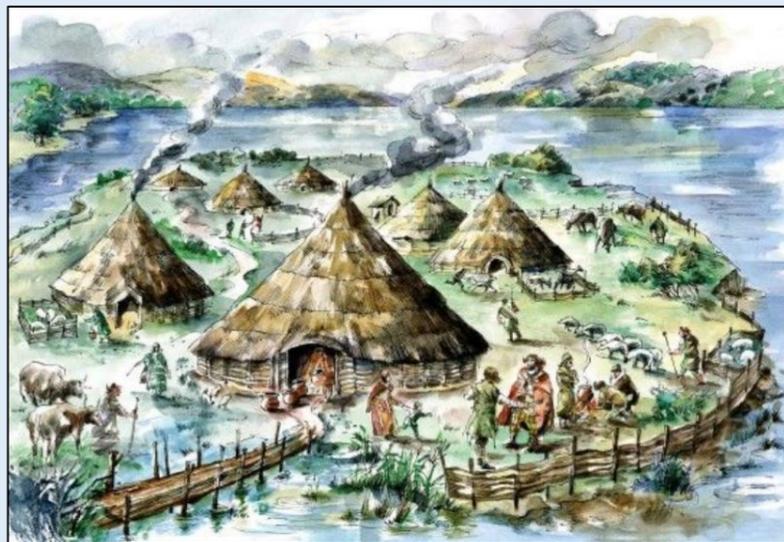
Overview

The Iron Age

The Iron Age is the name given to the time period in which iron became the preferred choice of metal for making tools. It followed the Bronze Age, which had followed the Stone Age.

The Iron Age began in the Ancient Near East (today the countries of the Middle East) around 1200BCE, spreading quickly to the Mediterranean basin and to South Asia. However, it did not reach Northern Europe until around 500 BCE.

The Iron Age in Britain is defined as being between 800BCE and 43CE.



Hillforts

The first hillforts were constructed from around 800 BC. These were defended settlements that made use of natural rises in the landscape for defensive advantage. Between 500 and 100 BC, many parts of Britain were dominated by hillforts with settlements providing homes to hundreds of people.

One of the biggest hillforts in Europe was discovered in Maiden Castle in Dorset.



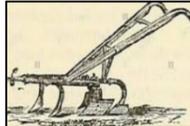
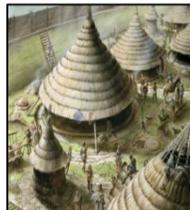
Farming

Britain mostly consisted of settled farming communities during the Iron Age, meaning nearly everyone lived on a farm! Land was used for growing crops such as barley, rye and wheat.

Animals were farmed for their meat and to also provide milk. Cows, sheep and pigs were most commonly kept. Wool was used to make blankets and clothing.



Life in the Bronze Age

Iron		From 1200BCE, ironworking by blacksmiths became increasingly popular in order to make tools and weapons. Iron was found in rocks called iron ore. Making iron from the iron ore required extremely high temperatures in charcoal-fired furnaces.	Fact Techniques for making iron were first developed in the Middle East around 1500BCE.
Agriculture		Iron ploughs called ards were much tougher and more efficient than the earlier bronze or wooden ploughs. They were able to turn heavier soil, meaning that more difficult areas of land could be used for agriculture.	Fact Iron Age farmers grew crops and vegetables. They kept geese, goats and pigs and had large herds of cows and flocks of sheep
Rotatory Quern		The rotatory quern was one of the most important time-saving inventions of the Iron Age. It was used for grinding grain in order to make flour. It was made of two circular stones – the top of which was turned using a handle, which ground the grain in between.	Fact Because of rotatory querns, bread became more widely available and popular.
Trade		Trade in the Iron Age became more popular than during the Bronze Age. For example, rich people could afford wine, which they would trade in return for large quantities of grain. Pottery from France was also popular.	Fact The first evidence of widespread ship-building is dated from around this time.
Iron Age Britain Housing		Britain was a violent place throughout the Iron Age. People lived in clans and tribes, which would attack one another. Many people lived in hill forts to keep themselves safe. Forts were surrounded by walls and ditches, and warriors were trained to defend villages from attack. Houses were usually one-roomed, with pointed thatched roofs and walls made from wattle and daub (a mixture of wood and twigs).	Fact Many houses had a fire in the centre – smoke from this would leave through the top of the roof. Beds were made from straw, which was covered by animal skins.

Important Vocabulary

archaeologist	chronological	tribes
settlement	wattle and daub	hillforts
flint	druids	sacrifice