YEAR 1: PRE-HISTORIC BRITAIN (6 lessons)

Contents Include:

Pre-history
Ice Age
Stone Age
Bronze Age
Iron Age and the Celts

Suggested Teacher Resources:

- The **BBC** has an excellent section on prehistoric Britain.
- Many prehistoric British artefacts are held by the **British Museum**, and the website has some helpful classroom resources.
- **The Museum of London** has classroom resources on ‘London before London’.

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Lesson 1. Clues from the Past

Prehistory is the term given to human existence before written records. The prehistoric period ended in different parts of the world at different times: in Mesopotamia the prehistoric period ended in 3500 BC, whilst in North America it ended in 1492 AD. In Britain, the prehistoric period ended with the Roman Invasion in 54 BC. This lesson should give pupils an introductory overview of the 10,000 years from the end of the Ice Age to the arrival of the Romans, passing through the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages. With no written records, we depend almost entirely on the work of archaeology to know about this period.

See page 137-140 of What Your Year 1 Child Needs to Know.

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<td>To understand that we know about the past from things that were left behind.</td>
<td>We can find clues about the past from things people find in the ground. Scientists who learn about things from a long time ago are called archeologists. Prehistory means a time before people wrote things down.</td>
<td>Find out what children know about the past- ask them what they know about life a very long time ago. Use this information to pitch the following lessons correctly. Explain that people in prehistoric times did not write things down. We only know about life a long time ago because people have found things that have been left behind. Children can look at images of artefacts (or visit a museum to see artefacts first hand) and discuss what clues they might give us about people in the past. Give children pictures of prehistoric artefacts (resource 1) and discuss what they might have been used for.</td>
<td>prehistoric archaeology Ice Age Stone Age Bronze Age Iron Age Key Dates: 10,000 BC- The end of the Ice Age- people started to reinhabit Britain. 54 BC- The Roman Invasion- beginning of written records.</td>
<td>How do we know about life a long,&quot;long time ago? What are the scientists called who learn about things from a long time ago? Why don’t we have books or letters from prehistoric times?</td>
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1. Clues from the Past

1. Stones in a prehistoric stone circle at Avebury

2. Selection of Bronze Age socketed axes from the Burnham Hoard (Portable Antiques Scheme)

3. Flint Axe, (Wisbech Museum)
1. **Clues from the Past**

4. Stonehenge

5. Bronze Age Sword found in Cornwall (Portable Antiques Scheme)

6. Replicas of the Roseberry Topping hoard, in the Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough
Lesson 2. The Ice Age

Between 100,000 BC and 10,000 BC, the world passed through its last Ice Age. During this period, northern Europe was covered in glaciers, and humans were unable to live there. As the ice began to melt, humans crossed from mainland Europe into Britain. The English Channel was not full of water because so much seawater was trapped in glaciers: instead, it was a low lying marshy area that stone age tribes could cross. As the glaciers melted further, the Channel filled and Britain became an island around 5000 BC. For a brief period of time, humans and woolly mammoths may have lived together in Great Britain.

See page 137-138 of *What Your Year 1 Child Needs to Know.*

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<td>To know that Woolly Mammoths lived in the Ice Age.</td>
<td>During the Ice Age, almost all of Great Britain was covered by thick sheets of ice called glaciers. No people lived in Great Britain. An animal called a Woolly Mammoth lived in Britain, it is now extinct. When the ice began to melt, people crossed the English Channel by foot as the channel was shallow.</td>
<td>Show images, here, here or here, of what Britain would have looked like during the Ice Age. This is a quick journey through prehistoric Britain from Horrible Histories, and there are some good clips from a BBC documentary here. Show children the map of Ice Age Europe. (resource 2) Study the woolly mammoth (resource 3). You could do a longer investigation into the discovery of Lubya, a frozen Mammoth calf in Siberia. See more information here, and a video here. Write a description of a Woolly Mammoth using vocabulary from the word bank (resource 4).</td>
<td>woolly mammoth glacier</td>
<td>What was Britain like during the Ice Age? How did the Woolly Mammoth survive? What happened at the end of the Ice Age? How did Britain become an island?</td>
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2. Europe in the Ice Age
3. The Shropshire Mammoths

In 1986, in a quarry in Shropshire, the remains of an adult and three baby mammoths were discovered. They are amongst the most complete mammoth skeletons ever found in Britain.

The Shropshire Mammoths roamed Britain 12,700 years ago. During the Ice Age, much of Northern Europe was covered in grass. This suited the mammoths, as they were able to graze. When the earth’s climate started to become warmer, trees and forests began to grow. This pushed out the Mammoths, who could not survive without large open grasslands.

The dating of the Shropshire Mammoths suggests that humans and mammoths inhabited Britain at the same time for a short period towards the end of the Ice Age. Some believe that the woolly mammoth became extinct due to human hunting, but there is no evidence these mammoths were hunted by humans. The remains suggest that mammoths died out due to the earth’s changing climate ruining their ecosystem and leaving them without enough grass to survive. Today, their fragile condition means the bones must be kept in climate controlled cases when on display at the Ludlow Museum Resource Centre.

Outside Britain, some amazing woolly mammoth remains have been found. In Siberia, a female mammoth calf which died aged 30 days was found frozen in the ice by a reindeer hunter called Yuri. Named Lubya, the calf is thought to be 42,000 years old. She was so perfectly frozen, that scientists were able to look inside her stomach and find out what she ate for her last meal.

Yuri chose to inform a museum of his find, but his cousin went behind his back and sold the calf to a local shop. There, a dog chewed off its right ear and part of its tail! However, Lubya is now safe and living in a museum.

Woolly Mammoths were around 11 feet tall, and weighed up to 6 tonnes—75 times the weight of a normal sized man!
LO: To know that Woolly Mammoths lived in the Ice Age

What do we call the time when the Woolly Mammoth was alive?

______________________________

Can you describe the Woolly Mammoth? _________________________________

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Word Bank

Woolly Mammoth

Ice Age

enormous

cold

tusks

frozen

prehistoric

trunk
Lesson 3. The Stone Age

After the Ice Age, Britain was inhabited by Stone Age tribes. This was a period of human civilisation before metalwork was discovered to create tools. Instead, humans used tools made out of stone, wood, and animal bone. Before the technology of farming was developed, all food was found through either hunting wild animals or gathering wild plants, so people were known as ‘hunter-gatherers’. There were some great achievements of Stone Age people during this period, in particular the building of Stonehenge, and the creation of some impressive artwork, in particular the French caves paintings of Lascaux.

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<td>To explore life in Stone Age Britain.</td>
<td>Stone Age people made tools out of stone, wood or bone. They had to survive on hunting wild animals, or gathering wild food and would move around to find these. When people began to farm, they started to settle in one place.</td>
<td>Read about the most famous Stone Age finds in Britain (<a href="#">resource 5</a>) to piece together some idea of what Stone Age life was like. Ask questions such as: What did Stone Age people eat? What tools did Stone Age people have? How did people in the Stone Age create art? <a href="#">This</a> is a good video about Stonehenge, and <a href="#">this</a> is a panoramic view. <a href="#">This</a> website has lots of ideas for teaching the Stone Age. Children could write some information about the Stone Age describing how people lived. Children could also compare life then and now. (<a href="#">resource 6</a>)</td>
<td>hunter-gatherer Nomadic Stonehenge archeology discover clues</td>
<td>What can you tell me about life in the Stone Age? How do we know about people from the stone Age? What materials did Stone Age people use for tools? What did Stone Age people eat? What does 'hunter-gatherer' mean?</td>
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5. Life in Stone Age Britain

What do you think these things might be? Write your ideas below each picture.
5. Life in Stone Age Britain - Teacher Copy

**Stonehenge**: Britain’s most famous prehistoric monument, in Wiltshire. It remains a mystery how it was built, and what it was for.

**Flint Cutting Tools**: Flint, a stone which can be chipped into a sharp edge, was used as a simple knife.

**Star Carr**: Spear tips made of deer antler, at Star Carr in Yorkshire. This Stone Age site in a peat bog revealed head-dresses made of deer skulls, spear tips and a boat paddle. It also had remains of food they ate: wild pig, red deer, elk, fox, crane and duck. There were also remains of a domed wolf.

**Cave Horse**: The oldest piece of artwork in Britain, from over 12,000 years ago. Can you see the horse’s head carved into this bone?

**The Folkton Drums**: These chalk stones carved with detailed patterns were found buried next to a young child. They can be seen in the British Museum in London.

**Skara Brae**: The most advanced Stone Age houses discovered in Britain, on the Orkney Isles north of Scotland. The houses had ovens, cupboards, storage boxes and even an indoor toilet. There were also needles, knives, beads, shovels, small bowls and pins, made of bone, ivory and clay.
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<th>How we live</th>
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Lesson 4. Bronze Age

Bronze Age Britain lasted from 2200 BC to 750 BC. Bronze is a durable metal made from mixing copper and tin, and metal refining was brought to Britain from mainland Europe by the ‘Beaker Culture’, a prehistoric people named after their distinctive pottery drinking cups. Bronze replaced stone as the main metal for making tools and weapons, such as axes, swords, arrowheads and spear points. The southwest of England in Cornwall and Devon had some of Europe’s largest tin mines, so the area experienced an economic boom during the Bronze Age. In Ancient Greece, Britain was known as the ‘Tin Islands’.

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<td>To understand why the discovery of bronze was important.</td>
<td>Bronze is a strong metal. It was used to make tools. The Bronze Age is a time long ago when people discovered how to make bronze. Before the Bronze Age, people made their tools from stone.</td>
<td>Read children The Bronze Age (resource 7) Look at an image of the Burton Hoard, found in Wrexham in 2002. Explain that a hoard is a store of valuable objects. (resource 8 and 9) For more information on the discovery, see here. Pupils can write about the Bronze Age, giving a simple description of the time. (resource 10) This video has some good clips of bronze being made. Give children a piece of stone and ask them how they could make it into a tool. Discuss how hot metal can be shaped much more easily.</td>
<td>hoard Bronze discovery farming artefacts</td>
<td>What is meant by the Bronze Age? What is Bronze? Why was the discovery of Bronze important? Can you tell me something you know about life in the Bronze Age?</td>
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The Bronze Age in Britain

It is hard to know exactly when the Bronze Age began, but archaeologists believe that it was around 2,000 BC.

**What is an archaeologist?**

People came to Britain from other places in Europe bringing new ideas with them. One of the ideas people brought to Britain was how to make a hard metal. The visitors from Europe showed people in Britain that if you make iron and copper very hot, then mix it together, a hard metal is made. This metal is called bronze.

*Why might a hard metal, like bronze, be useful to people long ago?*

Before people learned how to make bronze, they could only make simple tools out of stone or bones. Discovering how to make bronze allowed people to make all sorts of new things like bowls, shields and swords. When bronze is made, it is very hot. People can use tools to change the shape of the metal, whilst it is hot. The shape of stone is much harder to change.

We call the time when people were making things from bronze the **Bronze Age**.
In 2002, three friends went metal detecting in fields just north of Wrexham. They discovered the most beautiful hoard of Bronze Age treasures in Britain, and the National Museum in Wales paid £85,000 for the discovery. The money was split between the detectors and the landowner. The items were made of clay, bronze and gold. What do you think each of these items are? Why do you think they were buried?
8. The Burton Hoard (complete)

In 2002, three friends went metal detecting in fields just north of Wrexham. They discovered the most beautiful hoard of Bronze Age treasures in Britain, and the National Museum in Wales paid £85,000 for the discovery. The money was split between the detectors and the landowner. The items were ceramic, bronze and gold. What do you think each of these items are? Why do you think they were buried?

**Ceramic Pot:** This hand-made container was used to hold this collection of items. Only a fragment of it has survived.

**Gold Torc:** This would have been worn around the neck, and is made from twisted gold.

**Gold Bracelet:** This bracelet is made of finely twisted gold: there is only one other surviving example of this style in France. It shows a very advanced form of metalworking for a Bronze Age culture.

**Bronze Axe heads:** These axes have sockets, where a piece of wood could have been slotted. They could have been used as a tool, or a weapon.

**Gold rings:** Would have been worn on people's fingers, just as they are today.

**Gold beads:** Would have been threaded with string to make a necklace.

**Pendent:** Would have once hung on the end of a necklace.
The Isleham Hoard

Discovered in 1959 outside Cambridge, this is the largest Bronze Age hoard found in England. Collected in a large ceramic urn, the hoard contained swords, spear heads, arrows, axes, knives, daggers, armour, and decorative equipment. Together, it weighs around 90 kg. It is thought that these items had been gathered together and broken up ready to be melted down and reused. What do you think each of the pieces are?
The Isleham Hoard (complete)

Discovered in 1959 outside Cambridge, this is the largest Bronze Age hoard found in England. Collected in a large ceramic urn, the hoard contained swords, spear heads, arrows, axes, knives, daggers, armour, and decorative equipment. Together, it weighs around 90 kg. It is thought that these items had been gathered together and broken up ready to be melted down and reused. What do you think each of the pieces are?

- **Spearheads**: Would have had a wooden shaft inserted in its socket.
- **Spearhead fragments**: These have been broken up ready to melt and reuse.
- **Bridle cheek pieces**: Used to hold together the reins for riding a horse.
- **Knives**: Used for cutting in a similar way to how we would use knives today.
- **Tool**: Unclear what the use was, perhaps cutting leather.
- **Strap ends**: To attach to the end of a leather belt.
- **Mushroom shaped terminals**: Placed on the end of a wooden spear shaft.
- **Pins**: Just like the ones you may use today!
- **Terret Rings**: Used to hold reins onto a horse.
- **Studs**: Decorative objects used to attach pieces of leather or wood together.
LO: To understand why the discovery of bronze was important.

What is bronze?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Why was the discovery of bronze important?

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Draw a picture of things people could make with bronze.
Lesson 5. The Iron Age: The Celts

Around 750 bc the Bronze Age turned into the Iron Age. Iron was a stronger metal, which allowed for greater technological improvements, in particular the iron tipped farming plough. During this period, Britain developed the ‘Celtic’ culture under the influence of tribes from mainland Europe. This involved intricate patterned artwork, a religion based around mysterious ‘druids’, and a warlike culture. However, the Celts were not strong enough to withstand the Romans when they invaded in 54 bc. The Celts kept no written records, so all our knowledge of them comes from archaeology, and Roman accounts.

See page 140 of What Your Year 1 Child Needs to Know.

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<td>To understand how we know about the Iron Age.</td>
<td>The Iron Age is a time when people began to make things from a metal called iron. During the Iron Age, Celts lived in Britain. We know about Celts because of the things they left behind.</td>
<td>Read an account of Celtic life (<a href="#">resource 11</a>). Ask questions such as where did the Celts live? What were Celts’ houses like? What did the Celts farm? Discuss the advantages of the roundhouse design, and placing a fort on top of a hill. <a href="#">This</a> is an animation showing how to build a roundhouse. Investigate three of the greatest artefacts of Celtic Britain, the Battersea Shield, the Waterloo Helmet and the Snettisham Torc (<a href="#">resource 12</a>). Discuss what these objects tell us about the Celts. <a href="#">This</a> is a good website for exploring life in the Iron Age. <a href="#">Here, here, here</a> and <a href="#">here</a> you can find videos about Celtic customs from Horrible Histories.</td>
<td>Celt Iron roundhouse shield helmet torc</td>
<td>Who were the Celts? How do we know about the Celts? What did the Celts make from metal such as Iron?</td>
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During the Iron Age, Britain was inhabited by the Celts. They farmed the land, lived in small forts or villages. They were also fierce warriors.

Many Celts chose to live in forts on top of hills. They liked living on top of hills because they could see approaching enemy tribes and get ready for an attack. There are thought to have been around 3000 hillforts in Britain. You can still see many of them today. Look for the rings of earth around the fort, the rings helped the Celts to defend their homes.

Inside their forts, Celts lived in roundhouses. The walls were made of wooden posts, woven with straw, and joined together with soil, clay and animal dung. This was a technique called ‘wattle-and-daub’. The roof was made of straw and shaped like a cone. Inside the house there would be a fire to keep the house warm. The smoke would slowly seep out through the straw roof. The Celts farmed wheat, barley and beans, and keep cows, horses, goats, pigs and sheep. They made clothes out of flax, and brewed beer.

The Celts were fierce warriors, who terrified their enemies in war. They made their hair stand on end by using something called lime, stripped to the waist, and coloured their bodies with blue paint called ‘woad’. They blew through trumpets, and screamed at the top of their voices as they rushed into battle. The Celts also rode chariots, which were pulled by two horses.
12. Celtic Artefacts

Below are three of the most famous Iron Age artefacts ever found in Britain. What can they tell us about the Celtic people?

1. Battersea Shield: Found in 1857 at the bottom of the river Thames, during the construction of a bridge. This large bronze shield was found amongst a large quantity of weapons and skeletons. At first it was thought to be a grave from the Roman Invasion of Britain. However, it is now thought to be a sacrifice for the gods. The shield is too thin to be used, and has no marks of battle. It would have been used in parades and ceremonies.

2. Waterloo Helmet: Made of bronze, and found at the bottom of the River Thames by Waterloo Bridge in 1868. It is the only Iron Age horned helmet ever to have been discovered in Europe. Like the Battersea Shield, it shows no sign of being used in battle and was probably thrown into the Thames as an offering to the Gods.

3. Snettisham Torc: Britain's most famous Iron Age object. It was made with amazing precision out of 64 tin threads of gold, and would have been worn around the neck. It proves that Celts were amongst the best gold workers in the Ancient world.
Lesson 6. Prehistoric Britain- Assessment

This lesson gives you an opportunity to assess the progress of your class this term.

Children have studied:
- The Ice Age and Woolly Mammoths
- The Stone Age & how people found food
- The discovery of bronze and why it was important
- The Celts and making tools from Iron

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<td>To explain what I understand about Britain a long time ago.</td>
<td>During the Ice Age, Britain was covered in Ice. During the Stone Age, people used stones for tools. A long time ago, people made tools from metal such as iron and bronze.</td>
<td>Use a template to help your class show what they know about prehistoric Britain. Adapt this as required. (resource 13) Give children a blank booklet and ask them to create a book based on Britain long ago. You may want to give them access to their work from previous lessons. How much scaffolding you provide is for you to decide. Children could prepare a presentation about Britain long ago. They could present to another class or to their parents.</td>
<td>All previous vocabulary as appropriate.</td>
<td>What can you tell me about the Ice Age? How do we know things about the Stone Age? What does prehistoric mean? Why was the discovery of Bronze important for people in prehistoric times? Who were the Celts?</td>
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Prehistoric Britain Word Bank

Stone Age

Bronze Age

Celts

archaeologist

Ice Age

Iron Age

Woolly Mammoth

round house

Prehistoric Britain Word Bank

Stone Age

Bronze Age

Celts

archaeologist

Ice Age

Iron Age

Woolly Mammoth

round house