

The Dawn of Metal: A Bronze Age Journey

Learning objective: To understand the significance of the Bronze Age and the technological shift from stone to metal tools.

Read the passage below carefully. Use your historical knowledge and the information provided to answer the questions. Ensure you write in full sentences.

As Ellie the elephant wanders through the ancient landscape, she recalls the transition from the Neolithic period to the Bronze Age. Around 2,500 BCE, life in Britain began to transform as people discovered the secret of metallurgy. By heating copper and tin together, early metalworkers created bronze, a far more durable material than stone for crafting axe heads, swords, and jewellery. This discovery fundamentally altered society. Settlements became more permanent, and a complex hierarchy emerged as people traded these valuable metal goods across vast distances. Farmers could now clear forests more efficiently with bronze sickles, leading to a surplus of grain. Meanwhile, skilled artisans moved from village to village, sharing their craft. These early innovators were the 'tinkerers' of their time, experimenting with fire and ores to reshape their world. While stone tools were once the peak of technology, the arrival of bronze allowed for finer detail in art and greater strength in battle. This era marked a shift towards a more connected, organised, and technically advanced society, laying the foundations for the Iron Age that would eventually follow.

Word bank: metallurgy · alloy · smelting · tinkerer · settlement · artefact · civilisation

1. Identify the two specific metals that, when combined, create the alloy known as bronze. (2 marks)

2. Name two ways in which bronze tools improved daily life compared to stone tools. (2 marks)

3. Explain why the discovery of bronze might have led to an increase in trade between different settlements. (3 marks)

4. What does the text imply about the status of 'skilled artisans' during the Bronze Age? (3 marks)

5. Justify your answer: Was the invention of bronze more significant for farming or for warfare? Use evidence from the passage. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene showing a Bronze Age settlement. Include a central fire where a metalworker is smelting ore, and show how bronze tools are being used by farmers and craftspeople in the surrounding area.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are an archaeologist who has just discovered a bronze brooch in a field. Write a short diary entry explaining how you think this object was used, who might have owned it, and what it tells us about the person's social status in the Bronze Age.