

Ellie's Expedition: Uncovering the Stone Age

Learning objective: To understand the chronological periods of the Stone Age (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic) and how human lifestyles evolved.

Read the text carefully, reflecting on how Ellie the elephant uses her memory to piece together the history of our ancestors. Answer the questions in full, detailed sentences.

Ellie the elephant is fascinated by the Stone Age, a vast period of human history divided into three distinct eras. During the Palaeolithic era, our ancestors were nomadic hunter-gatherers, crafting simple stone tools to survive in a harsh landscape. As the climate shifted during the Mesolithic period, people became more skilled at fishing and using microliths—tiny, sharp stone blades. However, the most monumental transformation occurred during the Neolithic era. This was the dawn of farming. Instead of constantly roaming, humans began to cultivate crops like wheat and barley and domesticated animals. They constructed permanent settlements, living in sturdy timber houses. This shift from wandering to farming allowed populations to grow and communities to flourish. Ellie often reminds her friends that this was not merely a time of stone tools, but a period of profound ingenuity. By studying archaeological finds, we gain a clearer picture of how these early humans adapted to their environment. Every shard of pottery and weathered stone monument tells a story of survival, innovation, and the very beginnings of modern human society.

Word bank: Palaeolithic · Mesolithic · Neolithic · nomadic · settlement · ancestors · archaeology · monumental

1. Identify the three distinct eras of the Stone Age mentioned in the text. (2 marks)

2. What specific agricultural changes occurred during the Neolithic era? (2 marks)

3. Why might the shift to permanent settlements be considered a turning point for early human society? (3 marks)

4. Explain why the term 'nomadic' is used to describe Palaeolithic people. (2 marks)

5. Do you agree that the Stone Age was a time of 'profound ingenuity'? Justify your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a split-screen illustration showing a nomadic hunter-gatherer camp on one side and a settled Neolithic farming village on the other, highlighting the differences in housing and activity.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the lifestyle of a Mesolithic fisher-gatherer with a Neolithic farmer. What might happen if early humans had never transitioned to farming? Explain your reasoning in a short, well-structured paragraph.