

Stone Age Investigators: Greater Depth Challenge

Learning objective: To analyse and evaluate the lifestyle, technological advancements, and societal changes during the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic periods.

Read each flashcard carefully. For the 'Greater Depth' questions, provide detailed explanations and justifications based on your historical knowledge of the Stone Age transition from hunter-gatherers to settled farmers.

Define the term 'Hunter-gatherer'

A human living in the Palaeolithic or Mesolithic periods who relied entirely on wild food sources, hunting animals and foraging for seasonal plants rather than farming.

Explain the significance of the transition to agriculture in the Neolithic period

The shift to farming allowed humans to produce a stable food supply, leading to permanent settlements and the development of more complex societies.

Compare and contrast Palaeolithic and Neolithic tools

Palaeolithic tools were primarily chipped, unpolished stone (flint) for basic survival; Neolithic tools were more advanced, often ground and polished to create sharper, more efficient items like axes for clearing forests.

Justify why early humans chose to settle at Skara Brae

The location provided access to coastal food resources, protection from harsh winds, and a proximity to building materials like stone, facilitating a long-term, sedentary community.

What might happen if humans had not domesticated animals?

Without animal domestication, early societies would have lacked consistent sources of milk, wool, and power for labour, significantly slowing the development of trade and population growth.

Describe the function of a 'monolith' in the late Stone Age

A large, single upright stone, often placed as part of a ceremonial or burial monument, reflecting the increasing importance of ritual and social organisation.

Evaluate the impact of the discovery of fire on early human development

Fire provided warmth, protection from predators, the ability to cook food (which improved digestion and nutrient absorption), and a central point for social interaction.

Explain why the Mesolithic period is often called the 'Middle Stone Age'

It acts as the transitional bridge between the nomadic Palaeolithic era and the settled, farming-based Neolithic era, marked by smaller, more refined 'microlith' tools.

How did climate change affect Stone Age migration patterns?

As the Ice Age ended and temperatures rose, forests expanded and sea levels changed, forcing humans to adapt their hunting techniques and move into new, previously frozen territories.

What does the existence of burial sites suggest about Neolithic belief systems?

It indicates that Neolithic people had developed abstract thought regarding the afterlife, as well as a social structure that valued honouring ancestors and community leaders.