Discovering the Bronze Age with Ellie the Elephant

Learning objective: To understand the key characteristics and technological advancements of the Bronze Age in Britain.

Read the passage below carefully. Use your best handwriting and full sentences to answer the questions that follow.

Ellie the elephant loves uncovering the secrets of our ancestors. The Bronze Age began in Britain around 2300 BC, marking a massive shift in how people lived. Before this, tools were mostly made of stone. The arrival of the Bronze Age brought the clever discovery of metallurgy. Early metalworkers realized that by melting copper and tin together, they could create a much stronger material: bronze. This new alloy was used to craft durable axes, swords, and jewellery. Life in the Bronze Age was organized into small, farming-based settlements. People traded goods across long distances, exchanging metal items, salt, and wool. Archaeologists have discovered beautiful gold objects and fine pottery from this era, suggesting that some people held higher status than others. These ancient people also built impressive circular burial mounds called round barrows. By studying these sites, we can see that Bronze Age society was becoming more complex and connected than the eras that came before it. It was a time of innovation, where the mastery of fire and metal changed the landscape of Britain forever.

Word bank: metallurgy · alloy · settlement · trade · excavation · bronze · copper · tin

1. According to the text, what two metals are combined to make bronze? (1 mark) (1 mark)

2. What type of structures did Bronze Age people build to bury their dead? (1 mark) (1 mark)

3. Why was the discovery of bronze an improvement over the materials used previously? (2 marks) (2 marks)

4. What evidence suggests that there might have been a hierarchy or social class system in Bronze Age Britain? (2 marks) (2 marks)

5. Do you think the development of bronze changed daily life for the average person? Justify your answer. (3 marks) (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene from a Bronze Age settlement showing a blacksmith working at a furnace and a farmer trading goods in the foreground.

Extension challenge: Research what 'The Beaker Culture' was and write a short paragraph explaining why they are associated with the start of the Bronze Age in Britain.