

# Bronze Age Fact Cards

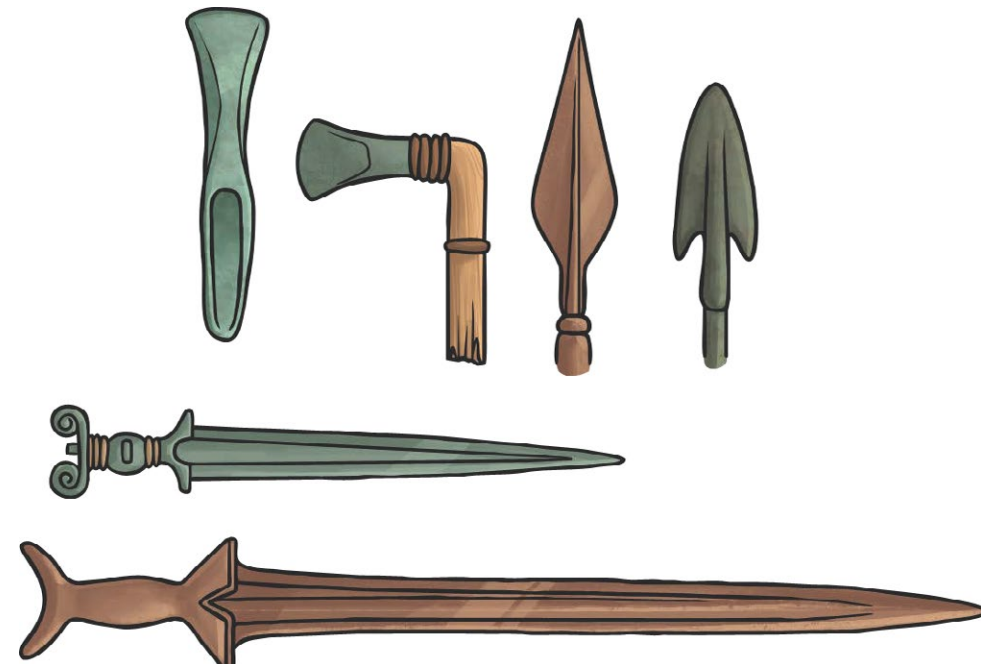
## Bronze Age Fact Cards

### Bronze

Copper is a soft metal. When it is melted and added to tin, it becomes bronze. Bronze is much harder and more durable compared with copper or stone. It is an alloy (a metal made by combining two or more metals to improve its properties). True bronze is a mixture of 90% copper and 10% tin.

There was an early form of bronze, known as arsenic bronze, which could be dug from the ground. The bronze alloy was developed later when copper and tin were mined separately.

Bronze was used for making a wide range of armour and weapons, such as daggers, blades, spearheads, chisels and axes.



## The Bronze Age

The Bronze Age started at different times around the world.

In Britain, it followed the Stone Age and lasted for around 1500 years. As people travelled to other countries, the knowledge of how to mix copper and tin to make bronze was shared. Not all parts of the world had copper and tin available.

Before it was used in Britain, bronze was being used in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, India and China.

From 1600 BC, things changed and Britain began to import metal from mainland Europe. The Iron Age followed.



## Homes

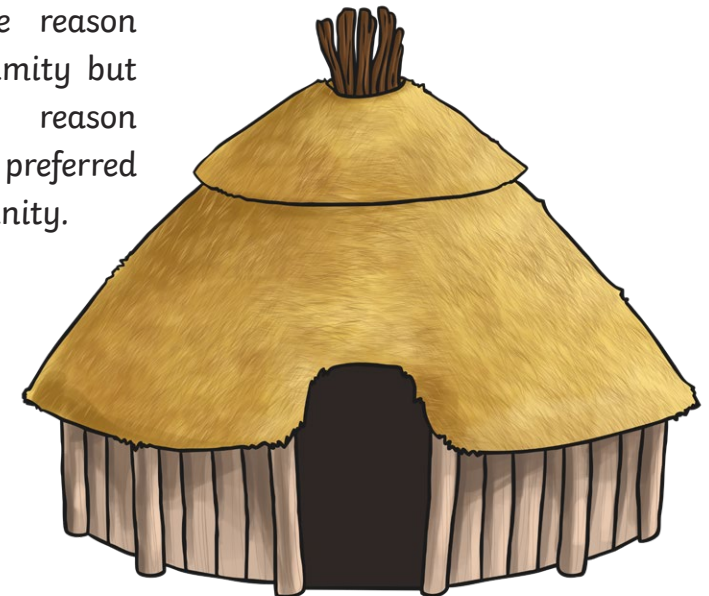
During the Bronze Age, people no longer used one dwelling for everything.

A farming household might have consisted of two dwellings – a main house for living in and an out-house for cooking and textile production.

Some of the larger homes were rectangular thatched buildings made from timber with walls of wattle and daub. Woven wooden sticks were used to make the frame (wattle) and daub was made from clay, straw and manure to smear over the wattle. It's believed that these buildings were communal. Most other homes would have housed six to ten people.

From 1500 BC, it was more common to have settlements consisting of roundhouses.

Defence was one reason for living in proximity but another possible reason was that people preferred living in a community.



## Clothing

By the Bronze Age, wool was being woven into sheets of fabric and used to make clothes. This textile production meant that better clothing could be made.

Women wore long woollen skirts and short tunics. Men wore knee-length wrap around skirts or kilt-like woollen tunics. They also wore cloaks, one-piece garments and round woollen hats.



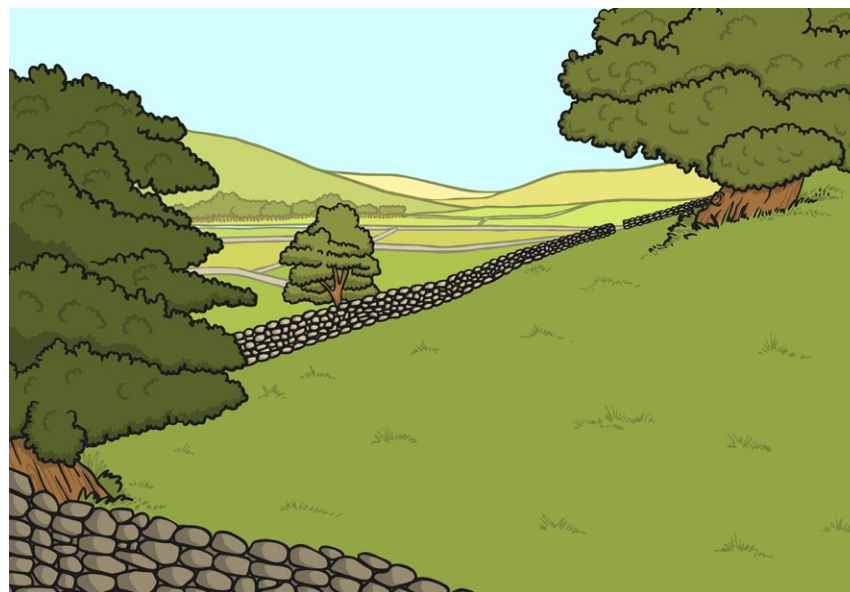
## Weather and Agriculture

It is believed that there was a change in the weather during the Bronze Age; it became wetter. This forced people to move from the hills, which were easier to defend, and into the valleys where it was easier to grow food and find shelter.

The spread of farming meant fields were needed for animals to graze and large areas of forest and woodland started to be cut down to make more land available for farming. Large farms were set up and walls were built to separate fields.

The development of metal tools, such as the plough, transformed agriculture and meant that (if the weather allowed) it was possible to farm all year.

The invention of the wheel meant that animal-drawn vehicles could drive along tracks and roads.



## The Beaker Culture

There was more immigration to Britain during the Bronze Age. Due to tooth examinations on bodies found in Bronze Age graves, it has been discovered that these people were from an area which we now know as Switzerland. Some of the new arrivals were called the 'Bell Beaker people'. They have been named after the distinctive bell-shaped pottery they made, mainly used as drinking vessels. The pots were also used to melt copper and store food and sometimes used as urns. A very intricate piece was a symbol of wealth and status.

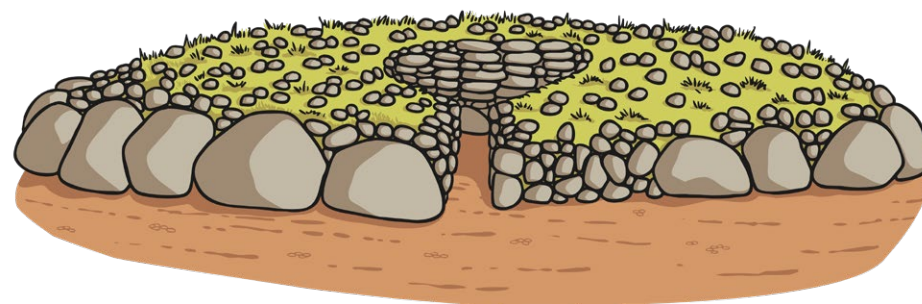
It is believed that bronze was first brought over to Britain by the 'Bell Beaker people'.



## Burials

A burial mound was a round mound that might enclose several burials. There is some evidence of individual burials at that time, but not many, so those buried on their own may have been important people.

During the middle of the Bronze Age, cremation was favoured. Ashes were placed in specially prepared pottery urns. This freed up the land which was needed for agriculture.



## Bronze Age Artefacts

Gold jewellery became very popular during the Bronze Age.

The Mold Cape – This was found in a Bronze Age burial ground in Mold, Wales. It had been placed on the body before it was buried, covering the shoulders, upper arms and chest. It was created from a single piece of gold, beaten into shape and decorated with a motif that looks like strings of beads.

The Golden Dagger – A dagger was discovered in 1808 inside a large Bronze Age burial mound. Its wooden handle was decorated with thousands of tiny pieces of gold.

