

## The Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age 🗡️🔨

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### The Stone Age (Approx. 3.4 million years ago – 3300 BCE)

The Stone Age marks humanity's earliest era of toolmaking and cultural development. It is divided into three major periods:

- **Paleolithic (Old Stone Age):** Early humans (*Homo habilis*, *Homo erectus*) used basic stone tools for hunting and gathering. Famous example: *Cave paintings in Lascaux, France*.
- **Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age):** Transition period where humans developed microliths (small stone blades) and began fishing, domesticating dogs, and forming semi-permanent settlements.
- **Neolithic (New Stone Age):** The Agricultural Revolution began — humans domesticated plants and animals, built permanent villages, and crafted polished stone tools. Example: *Stonehenge in England*.

**Key Traits:** - Survival through hunting, gathering, and early farming. - Use of stone, bone, and wood tools. - Development of art, rituals, and early religion.

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### The Bronze Age (Approx. 3300 BCE – 1200 BCE)

This era saw the invention of **bronze** (copper + tin) tools and weapons, leading to advancements in warfare, trade, and architecture.

**Classic Examples:** - **Mesopotamia:** The Sumerians built the first cities (Ur, Uruk) and invented cuneiform writing. - **Ancient Egypt:** Construction of the pyramids and advanced metallurgy. - **Indus Valley Civilization:** Urban planning, drainage systems, and bronze crafts.

**Key Traits:** - Rise of city-states and empires. - Growth of long-distance trade networks. - Artistic and architectural achievements.

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### The Iron Age (Approx. 1200 BCE – 600 CE)

Iron replaced bronze as the dominant material for tools and weapons due to its abundance and strength. This period often overlapped with the late Bronze Age.

**Classic Examples:** - **Celtic Europe:** Iron swords, hill forts, and intricate metalwork. - **Ancient Greece:** Hoplite warfare and the expansion of city-states. - **Ancient China:** Iron plows revolutionized agriculture.

**Key Traits:** - Expansion of empires through superior weaponry. - More efficient agriculture and infrastructure. - Cultural growth in philosophy, literature, and governance.

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 **Final Note:** These ages are not rigid timelines but overlapping stages of technological and cultural progress across different regions.

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