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These cards highlight 15 objects from our Prehistory collection.

The Cards give:

- Additional information about key British prehistoric objects
- Questions to encourage discussion
- Ideas for challenges to try out in the classroom

The cards are designed to be used by teachers but could also be used independently by more able students.

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HORNS

BRONZE AGE (c800 BC)

These horns are on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



These horns were found in County Kerry in the west of Ireland. Horns like these tell us that Prehistoric people enjoyed music. Some of the horns were made in one piece. Others are in several which fit together.

More than 100 horns have been discovered in Ireland. In the late Bronze Age metal working technology improved and it became possible to make complicated and large Bronze objects like these.

- What modern instruments do these remind you of?
- How do you imagine they might have been used?
- What kind of sound do you think they would make?

WATCH our Prehistoric music film clip: www.ashmolean.org/learning-resources

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GOLD EARRINGS OR HAIR ORNAMENTS EARLY BRONZE AGE (c2400 - c2100 BC)

These earrings are on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



These gold ear or hair ornaments date from the earliest part of the British Bronze Age. They were found in 1944 near the head of the skeleton of a 25-35 year old man buried near Radley, Oxfordshire. The burial place also contained a decorated European beaker placed near the feet, and three flint arrowheads. New people were arriving in Britain from Europe at this time bringing this new style of pottery with them.

These gold objects could either be earrings or hair ornaments.

- Which do you think is most likely and why?
- Does the shape of the objects remind you of anything?

CHALLENGE How could we ever find out the correct answer?

MAKE your own jewellery using gold card or foil.

Take care with foil as this can be sharp!

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BEAKER EARLY BRONZE AGE (c2400 - c2100 BC)

The beaker is on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This beaker was found in the barrow burial of a young man at Radley near Oxford. The burial also contained three flint arrowheads and two gold basket shaped pieces of jewellery, which could either be earrings or hair ornaments.

Which do you think is most likely and why?

What sort of person do you think this young man was?

Do you think he was rich or poor?

MAKE a replica beaker, arrowheads and jewellery. Use plasticene or play dough to make moulds and use plaster to make arrowheads.

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HOARD OF BRONZE WEAPONS BRONZE AGE (1400 - 1250BC)

These weapons are on display in European Prehistory, Ground Floor. (17)



These weapons were found in Crediton, Devon. There are two rapiers and two socketed bronze plastave axeheads. Bronze is a mixture of copper and tin. The two metals would have to be melted in a furnace and mixed together. The molten metal would then be poured into a mould to make swords or axeheads. Rapiers were designed for stabbing and the axeheads for chopping. Neither the rapiers nor the axheads have handles.

- Why do you think the handles are missing?
- What do you think the handles were made of?
- What sort of person might have used these weapons?

CHALLENGE: Design handles for these weapons. Think about what materials would have been available and how you could decorate them.

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ARCHER GEAR STONE AGE - Late Neolithic(2400 - 2000BC)

This collection of archery equipment is on display in European Prehistory. (17)



This collection of archery equipment was found in a beaker burial of a young man at Stanton Harcourt near Oxford. The rectangular object is a bracer or wristguard and was an important piece of equipment for an archer.

- How do you think the wristguard would be attached to your wrist?
- What materials could have been used?
- How many arrowheads are there? What do you think they are made of?

CLUE: Unscramble the letters to find the answer

T I N F L _ _ _ _ _

CHALLENGE: Research the animals people would have hunted in the Stone Age. Imagine what it would be like to hunt for food. Write a poem about hunting.

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BRONZE SPOONS IRON AGE (50BC - AD100)

These spoons are on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This pair of cast bronze 'spoons' were found at Penbryn in Wales and were donated to the Ashmolean by Rev. H. Jenkins in 1836.

The spoons are wide and shallow with short decorated handles. One spoon has a small hole in it. The other is divided into four areas by a cross; three areas have an inlaid dot of different metals (gold, silver and copper). They may have been used for fortune telling or divining (telling the future), with liquid dripped from the spoon with the hole onto the divided spoon.

These spoons are extremely rare with only ten other pairs known from Britain.

CHALLENGE: Nobody is quite sure how these spoons were used. Write a set of instructions for how they could be used and then create a short story featuring the spoons.

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SWORD LATE IRON AGE (120BC - 43AD)

This sword is on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This sword and scabbard were found in the River Thames near Little Wittenham in Oxfordshire.

Only about one in ten warriors would have carried a sword at the time, making this quite a rare object.

The scabbard is made of bronze but the sword is made of iron. X-rays of the rusty sword show that it is about 5cm shorter than the scabbard. This difference in length may have been to protect the tip of the sword from damage. The handle was probably made from wood, leather or horn and has now rotted away.

The sword may have been lost in the river but it is more likely that it was placed there deliberately. Many pieces of high quality metalwork were placed in rivers or bogs in the Iron Age.

RESEARCH Iron Age clothing and draw a warrior.

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STONE BALLS

STONE AGE - neolithic (3500 - 2000BC)

Not currently on display. Two similar stone balls are on display in Gallery 6, Reading and writing.



These stone balls were found on a stone dresser in a Neolithic house at Skara Brae in North-West Scotland. Similar balls were found in other houses nearby. Nobody is sure what the balls were made for.

- Do they remind you of anything?
- What do you think they might have been used for?
- How many different designs can you see?
- How do you think they were made?
- Have a go at making your own balls.

TOP TIP! : Try making them in clay. Stone carving is really hard work. Try to find a local stone carver and ask them to demonstrate their skill.

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BALLYSHANNON SUN DISC

STONE AGE (2400 - 2100BC)

This sun disc is on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This gold disc was found in 1669. It is one of the first recorded prehistoric objects ever to be found!

- Does it remind you of anything?
- How do you think they might have been used? Notice the two holes in the middle. Do they give you any ideas?

The disc is made of a thin sheet of gold foil. Look carefully at the patterns on the disc.

CHALLENGE: Try making your own disc using gold foil. Take care as craft foil can be sharp!

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ANTLER PICK

LATE NEOLITHIC (c2400 - c2100 BC)

This antler pick is on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This antler pick was found at Grimes Graves in Norfolk. Grimes Graves is in fact not a grave, or burial place, but a flint mine. Some of the mine shafts are 30 feet deep. Neolithic miners would use antler picks like this one to dig down to the flint deposits. They would also have used animal shoulder-blades for shovels. Then they would dig tunnels along the layers of flint. Red Deer antlers like this one were used to lever out chunks of flint not to break or cut stone.

The tunnels were lit with small lamps made from hollowed pieces of chalk filled with animal fat.

Archaeologists at Grimes Graves even found a 4000 year old miner fingerprint on one of the picks!

IMAGINE what it might have been like to be a flint miner. Describe what you think it might be like to a partner.

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ANTLER PICK

LATE NEOLITHIC (c2600 - 2400BC)

This antler pick is on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This antler pick was found at Stonehenge. Stonehenge is one of the most famous Prehistoric monuments in Britain. Construction began in the Neolithic period and continued in the Bronze Age.

Red Deer antlers were commonly used to make picks and levers to dig soil or lift and move stone. They were not used to break or cut stone. This pick would have been used to dig ditches and holes for the large stones at Stonehenge.

DISCOVER if there any Prehistoric monuments near where you live.

CHALLENGE: Create your own prehistoric monument. You will need to research more about prehistoric buildings and choose what to build.

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STONE HAND AXE

STONE AGE - palaeolithic (c300,000years ago)

This axe is on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This handaxe was found in Axminster, Devon. Hand axes like these were made by early humans in Europe from around 300,000 years ago.

CREATE a timeline in your classroom to show how long the stone age lasted. Print off the small collectors cards from our website to illustrate the timeline.

CHALLENGE: Research which animals early humans would have hunted. Draw some of the animals to make a classroom display.

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FLINT HAND AXE

STONE AGE - palaeolithic (c300,000years ago)

This hand axe is on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This handaxe was found in Swanscombe, Kent. This axe is made of flint. Early humans used hard hammer stones or antler to break flakes off large flint blocks to create sharp tools. This process is called flint knapping and is highly skilful and time consuming. Flint and other stone tools continued to be used long after people learnt how to make bronze and later, iron tools. At first metal tools and weapons were very high status and mainly used by rich people. Over time stone was used less frequently as technology made it easier and cheaper to make metal objects.

WATCH our short film about flint tools: www.ashmolean.org/learning-resources

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CAULDRON

BRONZE AGE (1100 - 1000BC)

This cauldron is on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This cauldron was found by a group of people who were swimming in the River Thames at Shipton on Cherwell, near Oxford.

The cauldron has been mended many times. This suggests that it was highly valued by the owners. Today if something breaks or wears out we usually throw it away. Do you think this is a good idea?

- What food would Bronze Age people have had to eat?
- If you could travel back in time to the Bronze Age what food would you miss most?

IMAGINE you were one of the swimmers who found the cauldron. Describe the moment you found it. Write a news report about the discovery.

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SHIELD

BRONZE AGE (c1200 - 700BC)

This shield is on display in European Prehistory, Gallery 17, Ground Floor.



This shield was found in the River Thames to the north of Long Wittenham village. It dates from the Late Bronze Age. It shows signs of battle damage. If you look really closely you might spot a hole on the left side of the shield. In the Bronze Age metal objects were often deliberately put into rivers or boggy places. Why do you think people might do this?

IMAGINE you were a warrior in battle. Choose four words to describe how you might feel.

LOCATE Long Wittenham on a map. Try locating some of the other objects from our galleries to create a UK wide map of Prehistoric finds. Print off our Collectors Cards to pinpoint where these objects were found across the UK.