

Stone Age Wordsearch

The Stone Age began in Ireland around 8000 BC. This is the first time that we know for certain that there were people living in Ireland. The Stone Age lasted for about 5500 years! It was followed by the Bronze Age.



Polished Stone Axes. Various locations in Ireland, Neolithic.

At the Museum's Prehistoric Ireland Exhibition, there are many artefacts on display from the Stone Age, including flint tools such as arrowheads, axes, and spears.



Selection of flint objects. Knockaulin, Co. Kildare, Neolithic.

Flint is a hard stone, and is blue, grey, and white in colour. It is naturally found in Ireland, particularly along the east coast.

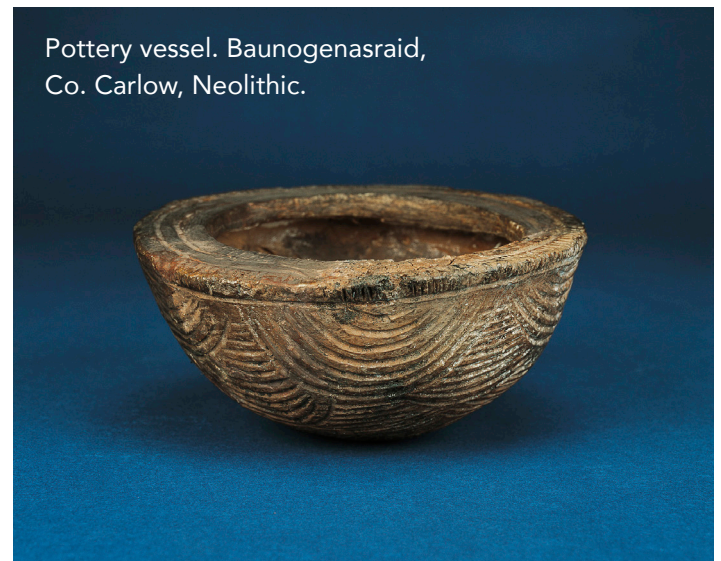
Stone Age Ireland

The **Stone Age** lasted for a very long time and it is broken up into three stages. The first is called the **Palaeolithic**, which means the 'Early Stone Age'. The 'Middle Stone Age' is called the **Mesolithic**, and the last stage is called the **Neolithic**, which means the 'New Stone Age'.

During the Mesolithic, from around 8000 BC, over 10,000 years ago, we know for certain that people were living in Ireland. People were **hunter-gatherers**. They hunted wild animals, such as wild **boar**, and gathered up food such as **nuts**, **fruits**, and **berries**. They made stone tools, such as **arrowheads** and spears, which they used for hunting, and they also made axes for chopping down trees. The name of the stone that they used is called **flint**.



Selection of polished stone axes.
Co. Leitrim, Neolithic.



Pottery vessel. Baunogenasraid,
Co. Carlow, Neolithic.

At around 4000 BC, over 6000 years ago, the people in Ireland began to **farm**. This marked the beginning of the Neolithic. People kept and raised animals, such as cattle and pigs, which they used for milk and meat. They also grew crops, including wheat and barley. Before eating the **grains**, they had to grind them to make them smaller. They used a **quern** stone to do this.

At this time, people started building big stone tombs, called **Megalithic** Tombs, to bury their dead. One type of megalithic tomb found in Ireland is called a **passage tomb**. Many passage tombs are decorated with megalithic **art**. People carved and incised decoration onto the stones, such as circles, spirals, zig-zags, and waves. The most famous passage tomb in Ireland is at **Newgrange**, in Co. Meath. Newgrange is special because when the sun rises on the **Winter Solstice**, the shortest day of the year, the sun lights up the **chamber**.

Can you find the words about the Stone Age in the wordsearch? Each underlined word on the previous page is hidden somewhere in the wordsearch – across, down or diagonally. **GOOD LUCK!**

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The Knowth Macehead

Museum at Home

Archaeology

This macehead was found at the passage tomb of Knowth, Co. Meath and is the most famous Stone Age artefact on display at the Museum. It is made from a piece of flint that may have come from the Scottish Islands of Orkney. It is carved and decorated with spirals, diamond shapes, and circles, which make it look like a human face. Maceheads would have usually been used as a weapon, but as this one is so beautifully decorated, it is unlikely that it was used this way.



Can you draw the decoration that you see on the macehead?



museum

National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann