

Summer Sun Discs

Many of these gold artefacts from the Bronze Age were worn by important people in society, such as kings, queens, or chieftains. Some artefacts, such as the lunulae or gorgets may have been worn around the neck; while others, such as the sun discs, may have been sewn onto clothing.

Often, these artefacts are found by archaeologists in bogs or near water, and sometimes they are damaged. This suggests that people in the Bronze Age may have placed them in these places as offerings to their gods.

DID YOU KNOW?

Archaeologists have found a lot of artefacts made from gold, dating to the Bronze Age. The Bronze Age began about 2500 BC and lasted for around 2000 years.



There are Bronze Age artefacts made from gold on display in the Museum's 'Ór - Ireland's Gold' Exhibition

museum

National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Sun Discs

Sun Discs are circular discs that are made from gold and they date to the Early Bronze Age. There have been many examples found in Ireland. Sun Discs are often found in pairs, which are almost identical to each other. At the centre of each of the discs there are two holes, just like the centre of a button, and it is thought that these were used to stitch the Sun Discs to clothing.



Pair of Sun Discs. Tedavnet,
Co. Monaghan, 2200-1800 BC

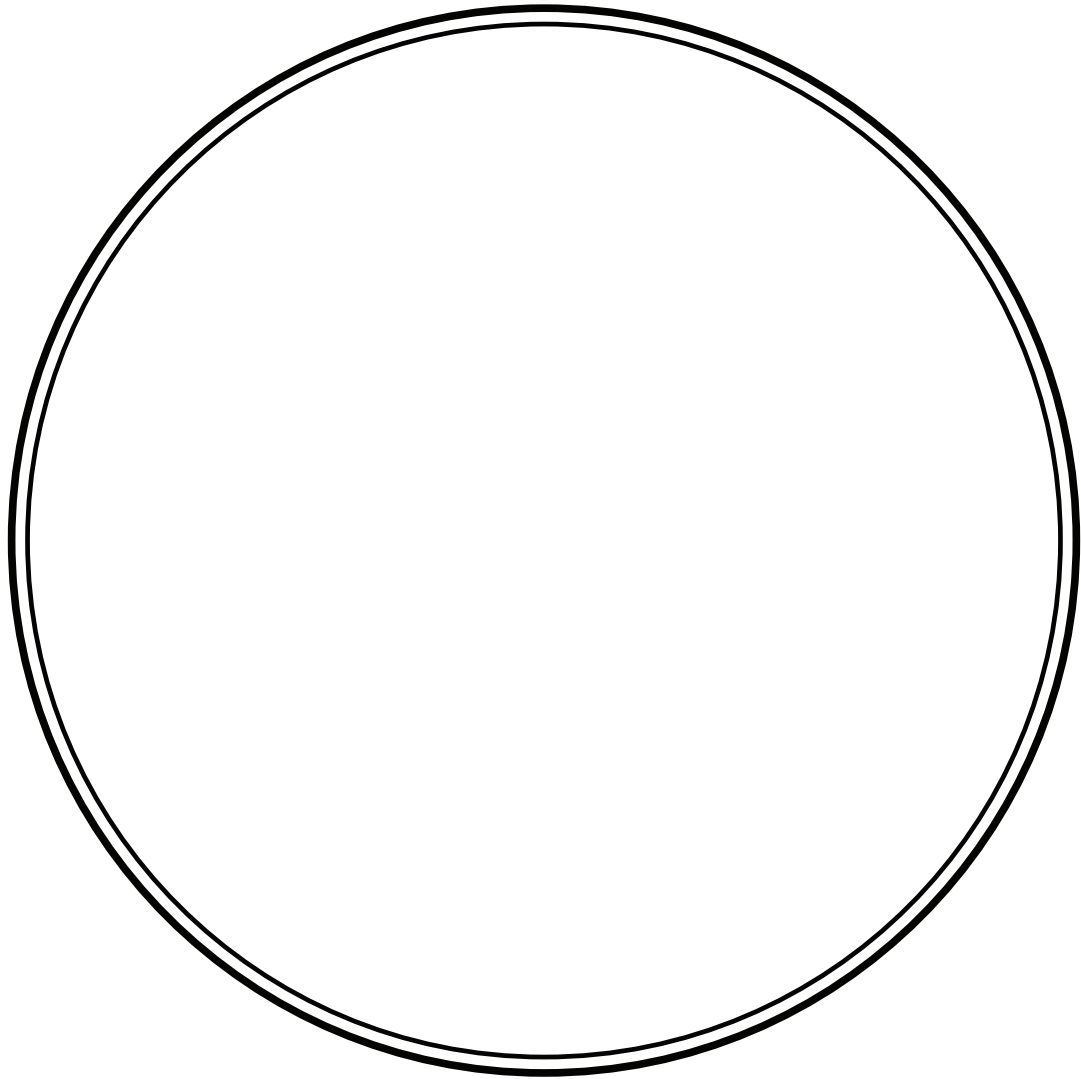


Pair of Sun Discs.
Co. Roscommon, 2200-1800 BC

They are called Sun Discs because it is thought that they were made to look like the sun. Their circular shape shows how the sun is seen in the sky, and the use of gold represents the colour of the sun. A lot of Sun Discs are decorated with crosses, circles, or lines, coming from the centre. It is thought that this decoration may represent the rays of light as they come out of the sun.

Decorate a Sun Disc

Use the circle below to decorate your own Sun Disc. Look at the examples of the Sun Discs, and the different shapes and motifs on this page to give you some ideas.



Make your own Sundial

Did you know that you can use the sun to help tell what time it is? This can be done by creating a sundial. A sundial uses the sun's shadow as it moves across the sky throughout the day, to help tell the time.

DID YOU KNOW?

The stick at the centre of a sundial is called a gnomon

What do you need?

- **Paper plate**
- **A straw or a stick**
- **Pencil**
- **Watch**
- **Scissors**
- **Plasticine**

Method:

1. Cut a hole at the centre of the plate
2. Place the straw or stick through the hole, and secure it using some plasticine
3. Each hour, use the pencil to mark on the paper plate where the sun is casting a shadow
4. Decorate your sundial!

Top Tip: You may need an adult to help you cut out the hole at the centre of the clock

