

# THE STONE AGE

The Stone Age is a period in prehistory where people began to use stone tools. This period of time is divided into three separate periods:

The old Stone Age is called the **PALEOLITHIC AGE**. The Paleolithic Age was from about 2.5 million years ago to 10,000 B.C. During this time, early humans lived in caves or simple shelters made from branches. Paleolithic people were hunter-gatherers (people who hunt animals and gather food and supplies from nature for food and shelter.) They used very basic stone tools and cooked their food over fire. They also created cave paintings and sculptures. These early people moved around quite a bit to follow herds of animals or to find better areas to forage for food. The end of the Paleolithic Age marks the end of the last Ice Age.



The middle Stone Age is called the **MESOLITHIC AGE**. The Mesolithic Age was from about 10,000 B.C. to 8,000 B.C. (although these time periods vary from region to region.) During this time, stone tools became more sophisticated. The stones were sometimes polished and attached to bone or wood to make spears and axes. During most of the Mesolithic Period, people were still hunters and gatherers but toward the end of this period, as temperatures got warmer, people began to farm. This meant they would not have to move from place to place to find food. Because people were staying more in one place, the homes they built became sturdier and more permanent. They were usually round or cone shaped and were made of stone, wood and straw.



Finally, the new Stone Age is called the **NEOLITHIC AGE**. The Neolithic Age was from about 8,000 B.C. to 3,000 B.C. During this time, people began to farm animals and grow crops. Stone tools began to develop even further and were now being used for farming. In addition, people began to make pottery. Clay was made into pots for cooking and storing food. People lived in settlements and this period marked the beginning of larger, permanent homes. At the beginning of this period, homes were usually one room, but towards the end they started to expand to multiple rooms. They were usually rectangular and constructed from wood.

