

7 Life in the prehistoric age

1 The origins of humanity

- Listen and read about the origins of humanity.

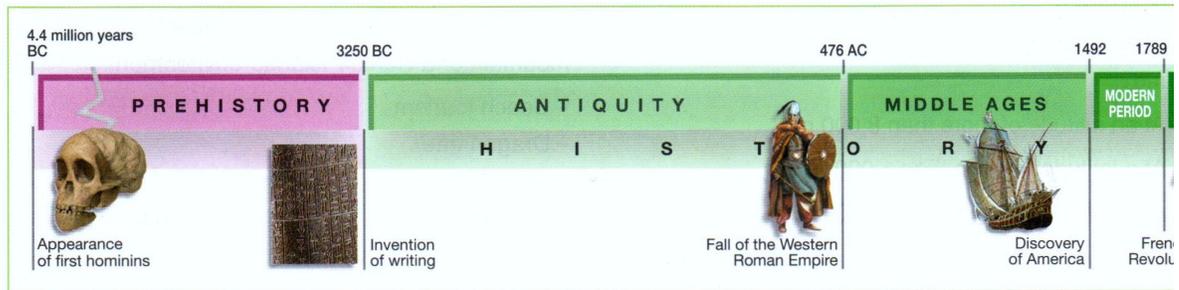
1.1 Prehistory

History studies the past of humanity. It is divided into two large areas separated by the invention of **writing**, they are referred to as **prehistory** and (specifically) 'History'.

Prehistory is the period between the appearance of humans, some 4.4 million years ago to the invention of writing around 3250 B.C.

This very long period of time is normally divided up into three parts: the **Palaeolithic**, the **Neolithic** and the **Metal Age**. In each one of these stages, humans used new materials (stone or metal) to make their tools.

► Universal history.



1.2 The process of Hominisation

The human being is a result of a long process of evolution that began in Africa between five and eight million years ago.

This process differentiated **hominins** (present day humans and their ancestors) from apes (gorillas and chimpanzees). Hominins differ from apes in the following:

- **Bipedalism** and the **upright** position allowing them to use their hands to make tools.
- A thumb (**opposable thumb**) separated from the rest of the fingers making it easier to hold objects.
- An increase in the size of the **brain**. Its intelligence increased, allowing it to think and speak.

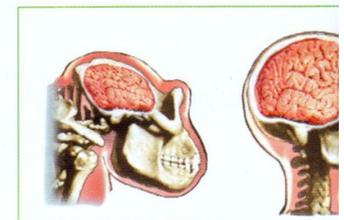
The first hominins, who could have belonged to the *Ardipithecus* or *Australopithecus* genus, lived in Africa and looked like apes.

Later hominins, of the **Homo** genus were already **considered** humans because of their appearance and their ability to make tools.

► Human hands working with stones



► Cranium and brain of a present-day human and of a gorilla.



Using your knowledge

▼ Use the vocabulary

- 1 Learn and make a sentence with each of the following words.

Key vocabulary:

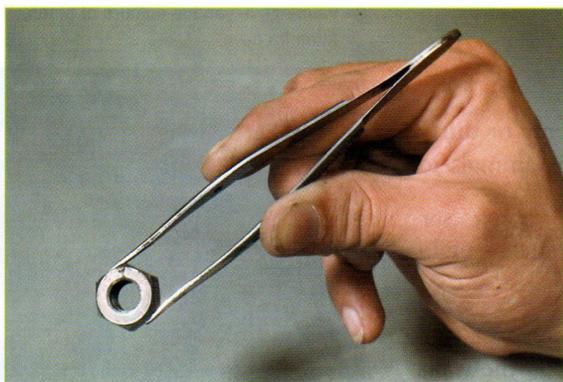
Writing (n.)
 Prehistory (n.)
 Palaeolithic (n.)
 Neolithic (n.)
 Hominin (n.)
 Upright (adj.)
 Brain (n.)
 Consider (v.)

▼ Understanding the text

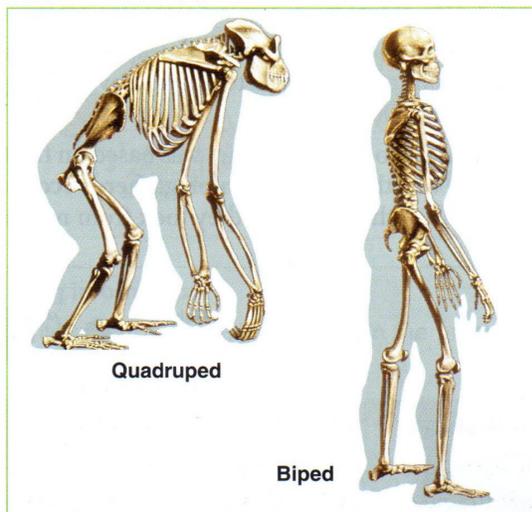
- 2 What does history study?
 3 Give an approximate calculation of how long prehistory lasted.
 4 Write the names of the three stages of prehistory.
 5 Think about it. In what stages of prehistory did they make stone tools?

▼ Working with images

- 6 Look at the timeline. What fact separates 'History' from prehistory?
 7 The image below shows a difference between hominins and apes.
 – What is it?
 – What were its consequences?



- 8 Explain more differences between hominins and apes, use the image to help you.



▼ Identifying differences and similarities

- 9 Match the following terms with a hominin genus:
 a) Tool-making; b) Ape appearance; c) Human appearance; d) *Australopithecus*.

▼ Organising information

- 10 Copy and complete the following chart with the missing periods.

Prehistory

History	
'History'	

- 11 Copy and complete:

- a) Present-day humans are the result of a long process of, which began in between and million years ago.
 b) Hominins differ from apes in the following characteristics: the, the, and the size of the

2 The Palaeolithic age

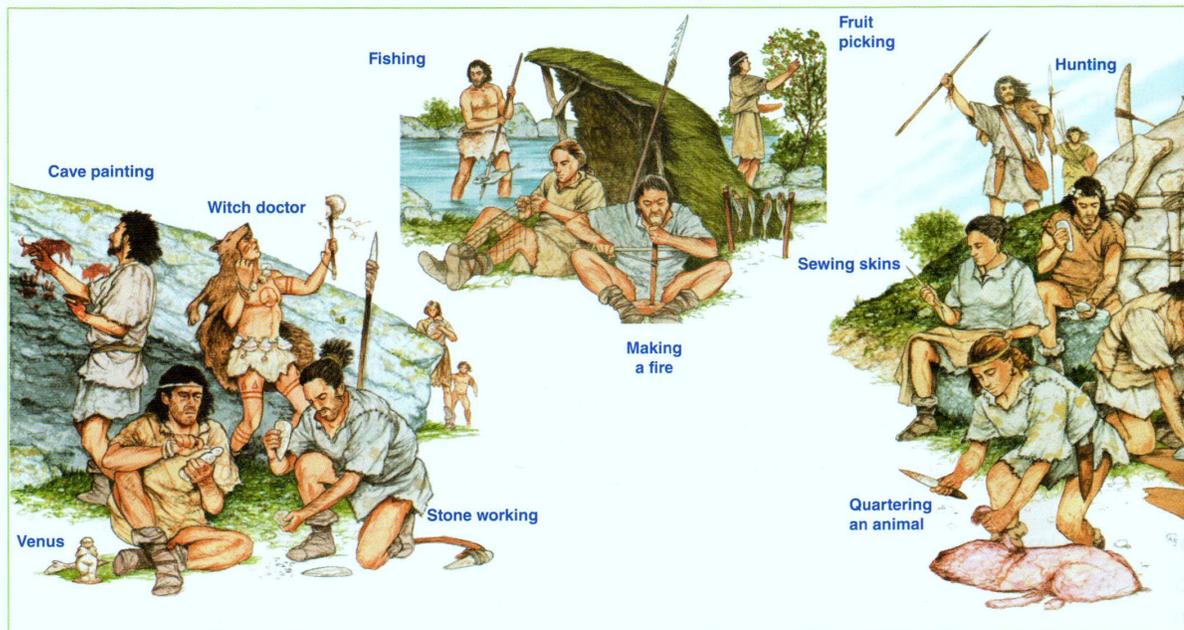
• Listen and read about the Palaeolithic age.

2.1 Life in the Palaeolithic age

The Palaeolithic age lasts from the appearance of the *Homo* genus, about 2.4 million years ago to the discovery of agriculture and stock farming in 10,000 BC.

During this period, humans' diet was based on fruit picking, fishing and hunting. It was therefore a **hunter-gatherer economy** because humans did not **replace** the resources they took from nature.

► Recreation of different daily activities in the prehistoric age.



The **tools** were usually made from **stone**. The stone was worked by hitting it with another stone to make hatchets, axes, arrowheads and knives.

Fire was one of the main discoveries of the period, it gave light and **heat**, it was a **defence** against wild animals and it **cooked** food.

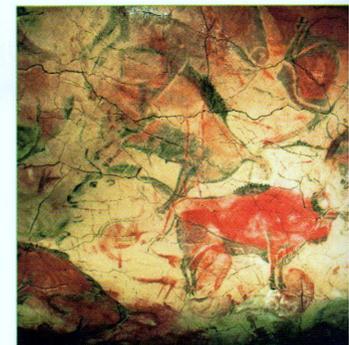
► Paintings in various colours of bisons in the Altamira cave.

2.2 Society and art

The Palaeolithic society was formed of tribes of about twenty or thirty people. These groups moved around in search of fruit or animals to hunt, this is why we say they were nomads.

They camped in **caves**, in huts made from trunks and branches or in tents made from animal skins.

Human artistic expression began during this period. The most well known examples are the cave paintings: simple paintings on the walls and roofs of caves; and the feminine **statues**, called Venuses.



Using your knowledge

▼ Use the vocabulary

- 12** Learn and make a sentence with each of the following words.

Key vocabulary:

- Gather (v.)
- Replace (v.)
- Tool (n.)
- Heat (n.)
- Defence (n.)
- Cook (v.)
- Cave (n.)
- Statue (n.)

▼ True or false

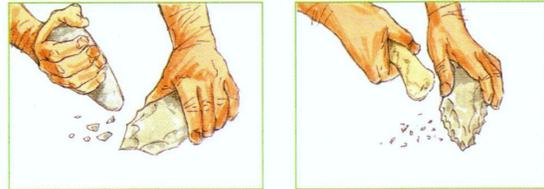
- 13** Indicate which of the following statements are true (T) and which are false (F). Correct the false statements in your notebooks.
- a) In the Palaeolithic age, agriculture and stock farming was invented.
 - b) In the Palaeolithic age, there was a hunter-gatherer society.
 - c) The discovery of fire made axe and hatchet making possible.
 - d) Palaeolithic tribes lived in caves.
 - e) The most well known cave paintings are called Venuses.

▼ Understanding the text

- 14** Calculate how long the Palaeolithic age lasted.
- 15** Answer these questions:
- a) What was the humans' diet during this period?
 - b) What was fire used for?
 - c) What did the tribes live in?
 - d) What are the cave paintings?

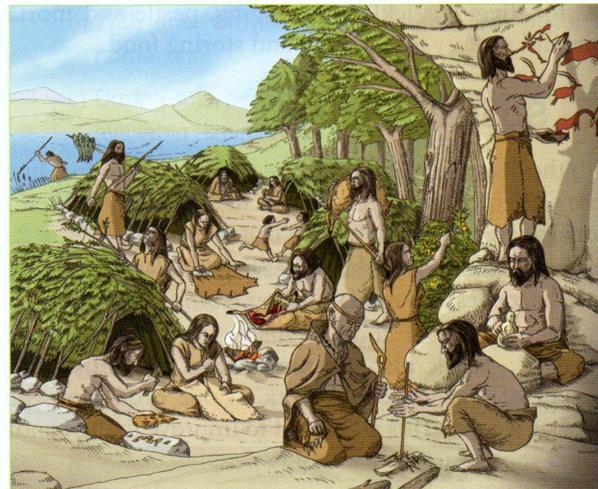
▼ Working with images

- 16** Based on these two pictures, explain how a hatchet was made.



▼ Giving information

- 17** Write a list of the daily activities in the prehistoric age.



▼ Organising information

- 18** Copy and complete the table.

DIET	WHAT THEY LIVED IN
TOOLS	ART

3 The Neolithic age

• Listen and read about the Neolithic age.

3.1 Life in the Neolithic age

The Neolithic age began around 10,000 BC with the start of **agriculture** and **stock** farming and ended around 4500 BC with the start of **metalworking**. Metalworking appeared in the so-called **Fertile Crescent**, a region that ranges from the Tigris and Euphrates River to the Nile.

In this period, the search for new food resources led to the beginning of agriculture and stock farming. These changes created a **productive** economy.

The new activities provided cereals, like wheat and rice; and linen and wool for clothes.

Tools and instruments continued to be made in general from stone, but now they were also polished. They also invented **new implements** like hoes for digging, sickles for **reaping**, pestle and mortars to grind the grain and **pottery** for cooking and storing food.

3.2 Society and art

With the discovery of agriculture and stock farming, human life became more settled because people had to stay close to their crops and their animals.

Due to this **hamlets** and **villages** began to appear, with huts made from reeds, branches and mud and later from stone or **adobe**.

As the amount of food available increased, the **population also increased**. **Work also became more specialised**, meaning that a member of a group could work in one profession, such as a farmer, potter or weaver. This all helped to improve living conditions but it also created **social inequality** among people.

The main artistic expression was pottery, decorated with a great variety of forms.



▶ Polished stone axe.



▶ Stone pestle and mortar.

▶ Recreation of Neolithic life in village, Bulgaria.



Using your knowledge

▼ Use the vocabulary

19 Learn and make a sentence with each of the following words.

Key vocabulary:

Metalwork (n.)

Fertile (adj.)

Productive (adj.)

Reap (v.)

Pottery (n.)

Village (n.)

Adobe (n.)

Inequality (n.)



▼ Understanding the history

20 Calculate how long the Neolithic age lasted.

21 Answer the questions:

- Where did Neolithic life appear?
- What new produce and products did agriculture and stock farming provide?

▼ Working with images

22 What were these implements used for?



23 Indicate which of the following statements are true (T) and which are false (F). Correct the false statements in your notebooks.

- With the arrival of the Neolithic age, agriculture became productive.
- With the arrival of agriculture, life became nomadic.
- During this period the amount of different food available diminished.

▼ Producing texts

24 From the illustration on the previous page, explain what a Neolithic village was like and what activities its inhabitants did.

▼ Organising information

25 Copy and complete the table about the Neolithic age:

CHRONOLOGY	ECONOMY	NEW IMPLEMENTS

26 Copy and complete these sentences:

In the Neolithic humans' lives became Due to this and began to appear.

As the amount of food available increased, the also increased, living conditions improved and work became more but it also created

4 The Metal Age

• Listen and read about the Metal age.

4.1 Way of life

The Metal Age began around 4500 BC with the discovery of **metallurgy** (science and technology of metals) and lasted until 1000 BC.

Copper metallurgy was the first known. They generally made decorative pieces with this metal due to its lack of **durability**. The search for more **resistant** metals led, firstly, to the discovery of **bronze** (an alloy of copper and tin) and finally to the use of **iron**.

These last two metals, bronze and iron, made it possible to make many other instruments, like farming tools (hoes, axes and sickles), weapons of war (swords, daggers, lances and shields) and domestic tools (cups, jugs and bowls).

Other inventions of the period were the **plough**, which helped to turn the soil better, the **wheel** that led to the invention of the cart, the potter's wheel and the sail, which helped in **navigation**.

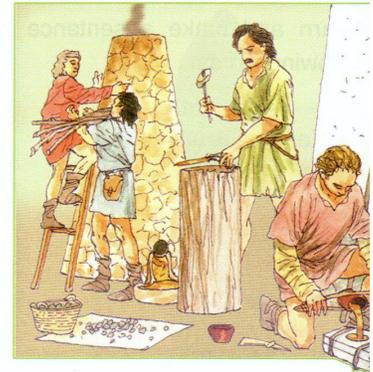
4.2 Megalithic Architecture

The first expressions of architectural art occurred during this period. They are known as 'megalithic' monuments, 'mega' meaning big and 'lithos' meaning stone in Greek.

Megaliths had various forms:

- The Menhir: A big stone standing vertically in the ground, its function is not known. Menhirs are sometimes found in lines forming alignments.
- The cromlech: various menhirs placed in a circle. It could have been used as a **sanctuary**.
- The dolmen: large standing stones supporting a larger horizontal stone, originally covered in earth or stone; it was used as a collective burial site.

Some dolmens were grouped together to make long passageways that led to a chamber, this is why they are known as **passage graves**.



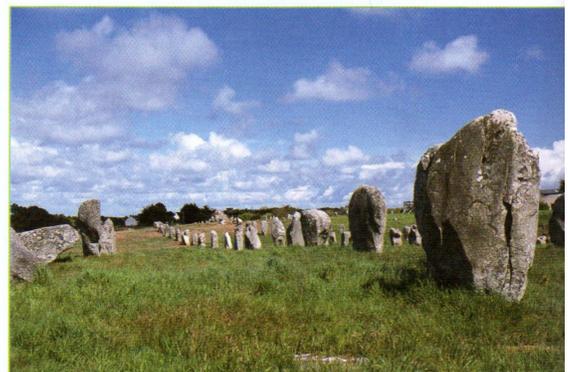
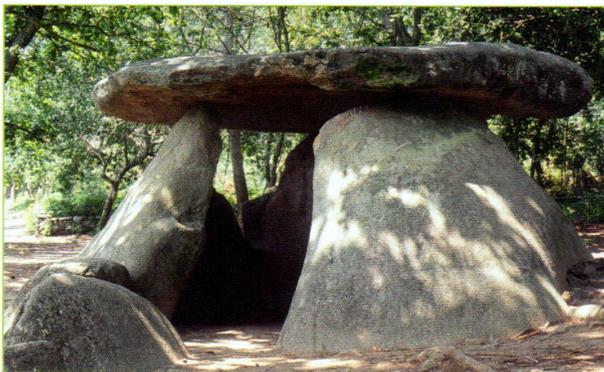
► Metalwork.



► Old bronze axe.

► Below left: dolmen in Axeitos, A Coruña

► Below right: menhirs from the alignment of Carnac, France.



Using your knowledge

▼ Use the vocabulary

27 Learn and make a sentence with each of the following words.

Key vocabulary:

Metallurgy (n.)

Durability (n.)

Resistant (adj.)

Plough (n.)

Navigation (n.)

Megalith (n.)

Sanctuary (n.)

Grave (n.)

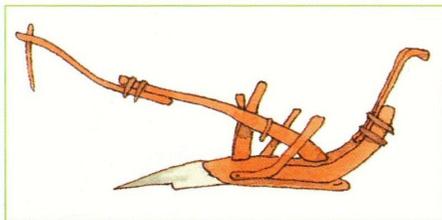
▼ Working with chronology

28 Calculate how long the Metal Age lasted.

29 Write down, in the order they appeared, the names of the three metallurgical techniques.

▼ Think about it

30 Why were these two inventions important in the Metal Age?



31 Copy and fill in the blanks.

The is a large stone placed vertically in the ground. Sometimes the were placed in a line, forming an

▼ Defining concepts

32 Say what term each description refers to:

- Decorative pieces.
- It is an alloy.
- It helped to navigate.
- Its function is not known.
- Collective burials.
- Large stones.

▼ Working with images

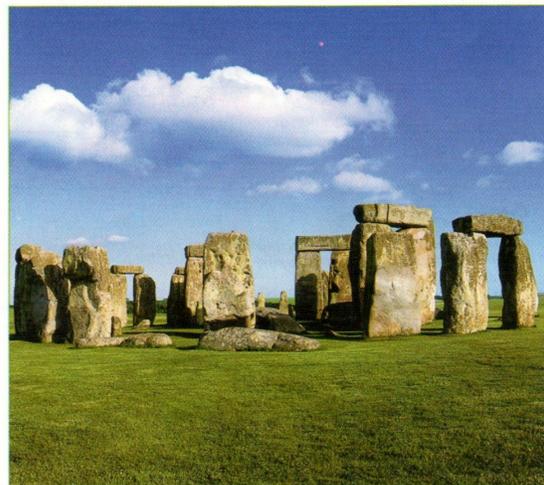
33 From the illustration on the previous page, how many stages are involved in making a piece of metalwork? Can you name any tool in the picture?

▼ Giving information

34 Copy and complete the table:

METAL AGE	
TOOLS	INVENTIONS

35 Write the name of this megalithic monument and explain its use:



Party in the Stone Age



The people who built Stonehenge in southern England thousands of years ago had wild parties, eating barbecued pigs and smashing up pottery. This is according to recent work by archaeologists—history experts who investigate how human beings lived in the past.

Archaeologists digging near Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain last year discovered the remains of a large prehistoric village where they think the builders of the mysterious stone circle used to live.

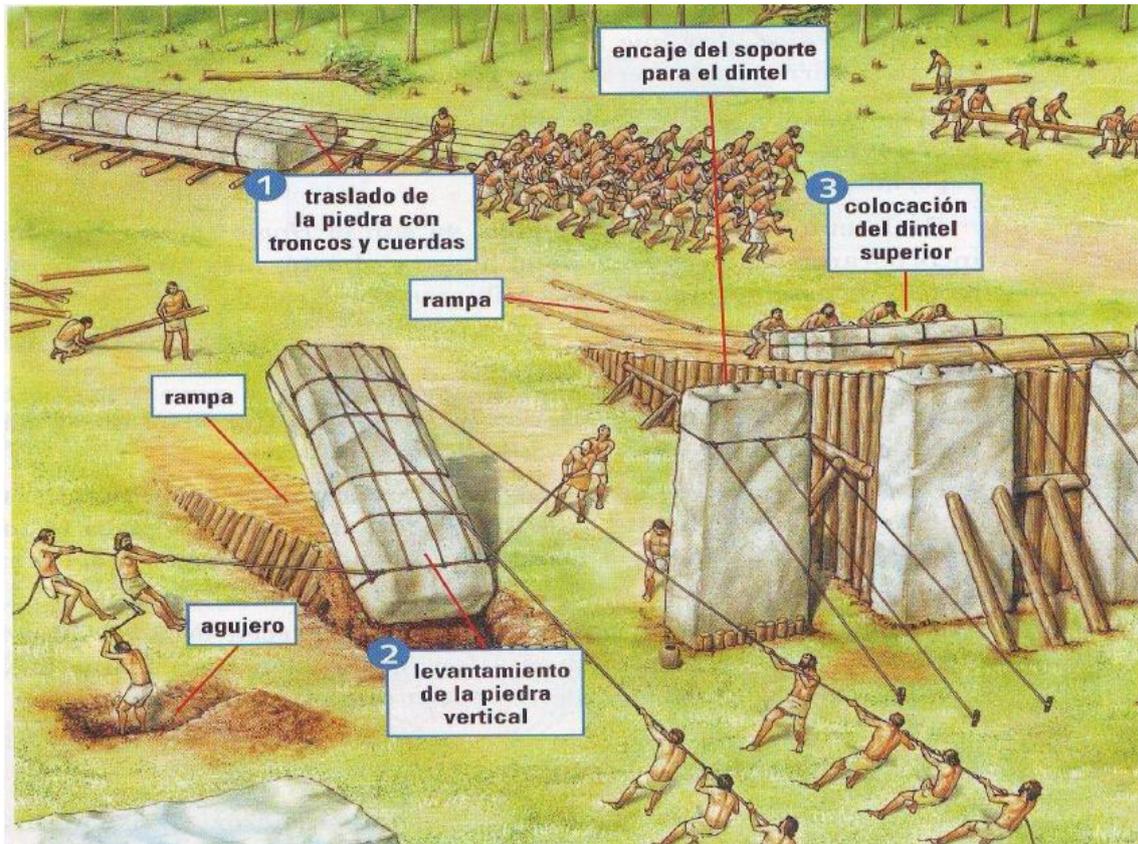
The village was shown to be about 4,600 years old, the same age as Stonehenge and as old as the pyramids in Egypt. The village is less than 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) from Stonehenge and lies inside a massive manmade circular earthwork, or “henge,” known as Durrington Walls.

Remains found at the site included jewelry, stone arrowheads, tools made of deer antlers, and huge amounts of animal bones and broken pottery. These finds suggest Stone Age people went to the village at special times of the year “to feast and party,” says Mike Parker Pearson from Sheffield University in England.

He said many of the pig bones they found had been thrown away half-eaten. He also said the partygoers appeared to have shot some of the farm pigs with arrows, possibly as a kind of sport before barbecuing them.

An ancient road which led from the village to a river called the Avon was also unearthed. Here, the experts think, people came after their parties to throw dead relatives in the water so the bodies would be washed downstream to Stonehenge.

The experts believe Stonehenge was a like a cemetery where ancient Britons buried the dead and remembered their ancestors. “The theory is that Stonehenge is a kind of spirit home to the ancestors,” Parker Pearson says.



Next to the village there was a giant wooden version of the famous stone circle. Archaeologists say this timber circle, which was only temporary because it eventually rotted away, was a symbol of life. Stonehenge, on the other hand, was a permanent symbol of the afterlife.

Parker Pearson says the recent discoveries made around the newly found village show that Stonehenge didn't stand alone but was part of a much bigger religious site.

People still come to worship and celebrate at Stonehenge today. They meet there when the sun sets on the shortest day of winter and when it rises on the longest day of summer. But the days of barbecuing whole pigs there and throwing family members into the river are a thing of the past.

READING QUESTIONS

- According to the archaeologists, what did this ancient people do with pigs before eating them?
- How old is the village that was discovered? It is the same age as...
- What do people do today when they gather in Stonehenge?

VOCABULARY

UNIT 7- Prehistory

- To refer to
- Stage
- Tool
- Human being
- Hominin
- Chimpanzee
- Upright
- Thumb
- Brain
- To increase
- To allow
- Ability
- Stock farming
- Therefore
- Hunter-gatherer economy
- Hatchet
- Axe
- Knife
- Arrow
- Cave
- Hut
- Trunk
- Branch
- Tent
- To range
- To search
- To lead
- To provide
- Wool
- To polish
- Pottering
- To store
- To settle
- Hamlet
- To weave
- Copper
- Lack of
- Bronze
- Iron
- Sword
- Shield
- Wheel
- Sail
- Passageway
- Chamber