



Explore the Roots of HUMAN CIVILIZATION

FOR COMPETITIVE
EXAMS
UPSC | PSC | SSC
NTA | STATE EXAMS

PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD: PALEOLITHIC, MESOLITHIC, AND NEOLITHIC STONE AGE

A COMPLETE STUDY GUIDE WITH MCQs



TOOLS &
TECHNOLOGY



LIFESTYLE &
SHELTER



FOOD, AGRICULTURE
& DOMESTICATION



ART, CULTURE &
BELIEFS



IMPORTANT
SITES

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

✓ Easy to
Understand

✓ Exam-Oriented
MCQs

✓ Detailed
Explanations

✓ High Yield
Content

✓ Perfect for Quick
Revision



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MEANING OF PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD



IN SHORT

Pre-Historic Period is the time before the invention of writing.

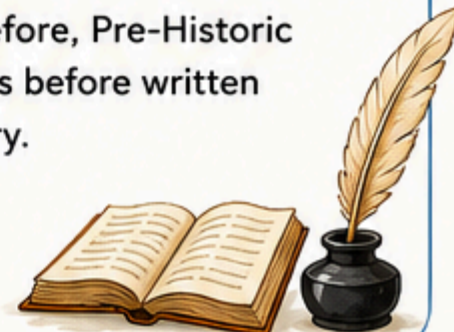
1. DEFINITION

- The period of human history before the invention of writing system.
- It is known only through material remains.



2. WORD ORIGIN

- "Pre" means before.
- "Historic" means history based on written records.
- Therefore, Pre-Historic means before written history.



3. KEY FEATURE

- No written records.
- People did not know how to write.
- Life is studied through archaeological sources.



PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD

The time before the invention of writing
(Records are not available)



4. TIME PERIOD

- It begins with the appearance of the first human beings.
- It ends with the invention of writing.
- The length of this period is very long (millions of years).



5. SOURCES OF STUDY

We know about this period through:

- ✓ Archaeological remains
- ✓ Tools and weapons
- ✓ Cave paintings
- ✓ Fossils
- ✓ Bones and ornaments



6. IMPORTANCE

- Helps us understand the beginning of human life and culture.
- Shows the development of tools, culture, and society.
- Forms the foundation of human civilization.

7. DIVISIONS

Pre-Historic Period is divided into:

- Paleolithic Age (Old Stone Age)
- Mesolithic Age (Middle Stone Age)
- Neolithic Age (New Stone Age)



KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER



No Writing



Known through material remains



Very long period



Stone tools were used



Cave paintings are important



Basis of human evolution





DIVISION OF PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD

Pre-Historic Period is divided into three main ages based on the development and use of stone tools.



IN SHORT

Pre-Historic Period is divided into:
Paleolithic Age,
Mesolithic Age, and
Neolithic Age.

THREE AGES

1. PALEOLITHIC AGE (Old Stone Age)

Time Period

About 26,00,000 BCE
to 10,000 BCE

Key Features

- Oldest and the longest phase.
- People used crude and rough stone tools.
- Depended on hunting, gathering and fishing.
- Lived in caves and rock shelters.
- Nomadic life (moved from place to place).
- First use of fire (in later part).



Tools

- Hand axes, choppers, cleavers, flakes, scrapers, etc.



Sites

- Soan Valley (Potwar Plateau)
- Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh)
- Hunsgi Valley (Karnataka)
- Narmada Valley
- Attirampakkam (Tamil Nadu)



2. MESOLITHIC AGE (Middle Stone Age)

Time Period

About 10,000 BCE
to 6,000 BCE

Key Features

- Transitional phase between Old Stone Age and New Stone Age.
- Tools were smaller, finer and more polished than before.
- Hunting, fishing and gathering continued.
- Domestication of dog.
- People lived in rock shelters, huts and temporary homes.
- Semi-nomadic life.



Tools

- Microliths (tiny tools) – arrowheads, blades, points, burins, etc.



Sites

- Bagor (Rajasthan)
- Langhnaj (Gujarat)
- Sarai Nahar Rai (Uttar Pradesh)
- Adamgarh (Madhya Pradesh)
- Damdama (Karnataka)



3. NEOLITHIC AGE (New Stone Age)

Time Period

About 6,000 BCE
to 2,000 BCE

Key Features

- Use of polished stone tools.
- Agriculture and animal husbandry began.
- People lived in permanent settlements.
- Pottery making started.
- Weaving and basket making developed.
- Social life became more organized.



Tools

- Polished axe, adze, sickle, quern, pestle, chisels, etc.



Sites

- Mehrgarh (Baluchistan – Pakistan)
- Burzahom (Jammu & Kashmir)
- Chirand (Bihar)
- Daojali Hading (Assam)
- Payyampalli (Karnataka)



COMPARISON AT A GLANCE

Age	Time Period	Tools	Life Style	Main Activities	Settlements
Paleolithic Age	26,00,000 – 10,000 BCE	Crude, Rough	Nomadic	Hunting, Gathering, Fishing	Caves, Rock Shelters
Mesolithic Age	10,000 – 6,000 BCE	Small, Microliths	Semi-nomadic	Hunting, Fishing, Gathering	Rock Shelters, Huts
Neolithic Age	6,000 – 2,000 BCE	Polished	Settled	Farming, Animal Husbandry	Permanent Settlements

KEY

TAKEAWAY



Paleolithic

Humans survived in nature with crude tools.



Mesolithic

Humans adapted better with small tools and improved living.



Neolithic

Humans developed farming, settled life and civilization began.





COMPARISON TABLE OF PRE-HISTORIC AGES

PALEOLITHIC vs MESOLITHIC vs NEOLITHIC

IN SHORT

- Pre-Historic Period is divided into three ages based on the development and use of stone tools.

ASPECTS	PALEOLITHIC AGE (OLD STONE AGE)	MESOLITHIC AGE (MIDDLE STONE AGE)	NEOLITHIC AGE (NEW STONE AGE)
 Time Period	About 26,00,000 BCE to 10,000 BCE	About 10,000 BCE to 6,000 BCE	About 6,000 BCE to 2,000 BCE
 Meaning	Old Stone Age	Middle Stone Age	New Stone Age
 Climate	Very cold and harsh	Warmer and moister (End of Ice Age)	Warm and pleasant (Stable climate)
 Human Life	Nomadic (moved from place to place)	Semi-nomadic (moved less frequently)	Settled life (permanent settlements)
 Shelter	Natural caves, rock shelters	Rock shelters, temporary huts	Permanent houses made of mud, wattle and daub
 Food Source	Hunting, gathering, fishing, fruits, roots	Hunting, fishing, gathering, small animals, fruits	Farming, animal rearing, milk, grains, fruits
 Main Occupation	Hunting and gathering	Hunting, fishing and gathering	Agriculture and animal husbandry
 Tools	Large, crude and rough stone tools 	Smaller, finer and more polished tools (Microliths) 	Polished and well-finished stone tools 
 Types of Tools	Hand axes, choppers, cleavers, flakes, scrapers	Microliths (tiny blades, points, burins, scrapers)	Axes, adzes, sickles, querns, pestles, chisels
 Fire	Discovery and use of fire (in later part)	Regular use of fire	Regular and controlled use of fire
 Pottery	Not known	Early stage pottery (handmade, unburnished)	Well-made pottery (burnt and painted)
 Art and Culture	Cave paintings (Bhimbetka, Altamira), rock art	Rock paintings (more developed), ornaments made of shells and bones	Pottery art, beads, ornaments, figurines
 Social Life	Small groups (bands)	Larger groups or clans	Organized communities and villages
 Important Sites (India)	Soan Valley (Potwar Plateau), Bhimbetka (M.P.), Hunsgi (Karnataka), Narmada Valley	Bagor (Rajasthan), Langhnaj (Gujarat), Sarai Nahan Rai (Uttar Pradesh), Adamgarh (Madhya Pradesh)	Mehrgarh (Baluchistan – Pakistan), Burzahom (Jammu & Kashmir), Chirand (Bihar), Daojali Hadling (Assam), Payyampalli (Karnataka)
 Development Stage	Beginning stage of human culture	Transitional stage	Advanced stage of human culture

KEY TAKEAWAY

PALEOLITHIC AGE (OLD STONE AGE)

Humans were nomadic and depended on hunting and gathering. Tools were large, crude and unpolished.

MESOLITHIC AGE (MIDDLE STONE AGE)

Humans adapted to changing climate. Tools became smaller and better. People lived in rock shelters and used microliths.

NEOLITHIC AGE (NEW STONE AGE)

Humans started farming and animal rearing. They lived in permanent villages and made polished tools and pottery.



CHALCOLITHIC AGE (COPPER AGE)



IN SHORT

The Chalcolithic Age is a transitional phase where humans used both copper and stone tools.

The period between Neolithic Age and the Early Iron Age.
Use of Copper along with Stone tools.

1. MEANING

- "Chalco" means Copper.
- "Lithic" means Stone.
- People used copper tools along with stone tools.



3. KEY FEATURES

- Use of copper along with stone tools.
- People lived in small villages.
- Agriculture and animal husbandry developed.
- Pottery making was common.
- Weaving and basket making practiced.
- Trade and exchange increased.
- Social life became more organized.



5. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

- **Agriculture:** Wheat, barley, pulses, millets were grown.
- **Animal Husbandry:** Cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, pig, dog reared.
- **Hunting and Fishing:** Still practiced along with farming.
- **Trade and Exchange:** Copper, stone tools, pottery and beads were traded.



6. POTTERY

- Handmade and wheel-made pottery.
- Painted with geometric designs.
- Red ware, black and red ware common.



2. TIME PERIOD

- About 3,300 BCE to 1,300 BCE (dates vary in different regions).



4. TOOLS AND WEAPONS

Made of Copper:

- Axes
- Arrowheads
- Knives
- Fish hooks
- Ornaments



Made of Stone:

- Grinding stones
- Querns
- Pestles
- Microliths (in some regions)



7. SOCIAL LIFE

- People lived in small villages.
- Family system was common.
- Division of labor developed.
- Early forms of community life.



8. ART AND CULTURE

- Pottery designs: Geometric patterns.
- Beads and ornaments made of copper, stone, terracotta and shells.
- Figurines of animals and goddesses.
- **Burial practices:** People buried their dead with pots and ornaments.



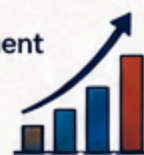
9. IMPORTANT SITES IN INDIA

- Ahar (Rajasthan)
- Gilund (Rajasthan)
- Kayatha (Madhya Pradesh)
- Malwa Region (Madhya Pradesh)
- Jorwe Culture (Maharashtra)
- Inamgaon (Maharashtra)
- Savalda (Gujarat)
- Daimabad (Maharashtra)



10. IMPORTANCE

- Important link between Neolithic Age and Iron Age.
- Development of metallurgy (copper).
- Growth of agriculture, trade and village life.
- Foundation for the development of early civilizations.



QUICK COMPARISON

Aspect	Neolithic Age	Chalcolithic Age	Iron Age (Early)
Tools	Stone tools	Copper + Stone tools	Iron tools
Settlements	Small, simple villages	Larger villages	Towns and cities
Main Activities	Farming, animal husbandry	Farming, animal husbandry, trade, pottery	Farming, trade, crafts, state formation
Technology	Stone tools, pottery	Copper tools, pottery, weaving	Iron tools, advanced pottery



KEY TAKEAWAY

Chalcolithic Age was a period of change and progress where humans used copper along with stone tools, developed agriculture, trade, pottery and village life, paving the way for the next stage of civilization.





QUICK EXAMINATION FACTS

REMEMBER
Small facts
build strong
memory and
high scores!

PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD: PALEOLITHIC, MESOLITHIC, NEOLITHIC & CHALCOLITHIC AGE

● Paleolithic Age (Old Stone Age)

Oldest and longest phase of Pre-historic period.



● Mesolithic Age (Middle Stone Age)

Transitional phase between Paleolithic and Neolithic Age.



● Neolithic Age (New Stone Age)

Marked the beginning of settled life and agriculture.



● Chalcolithic Age (Copper Age)

Transition between Neolithic Age and the Iron Age.



● Paleolithic humans were nomadic.

They moved from place to place in search of food.



● Main activities in Paleolithic Age

Hunting, gathering and fishing were the main activities.



● Tools in Paleolithic Age

Large, crude and rough stone tools were used.



● Paleolithic people used microliths.

Microliths were small, fine and polished stone tools.



● Mesolithic humans lived in camps.

They lived in rock shelters, temporary huts and tents.



● Neolithic people were the first farmers.

They grew crops like wheat, barley, pulses and millets.



● Neolithic Age saw settled life.

People lived in permanent villages with houses made of mud and daub.



● Domestication of animals began in Neolithic Age – cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, dog.



● Pottery was invented in Neolithic Age.

People made well-finished pottery by using potter's wheel.



● Chalcolithic people used copper.

They used copper along with stone tools.



● Chalcolithic Age saw trade and exchange.

People traded copper, pottery, beads, stones and other goods.



● Weaving and basket making developed in Neolithic and Chalcolithic Age.



● Fire was used by humans.

It was discovered in Paleolithic Age and used for cooking and protection.



● Important site of Paleolithic Age

Soan Valley (Potwar Plateau), Bhimbetka, Hunsgi, Narmada Valley.



● Important site of Mesolithic Age

Bagor (Rajasthan), Langhnaj (Gujarat), Sarai Nahar Rai (Uttar Pradesh).



● Important site of Neolithic Age

Mehrgarh (Pakistan), Burzahom (Jammu & Kashmir), Chirand (Bihar), Daojali Hading (Assam).



● Important site of Chalcolithic Age

Ahar (Rajasthan), Kayatha (Madhya Pradesh), Malwa Region, Jorwe Culture (Maharashtra).



— ONE LINE MEMORY TRICKS —



Paleolithic

Big tools,
Nomadic life,
Hunting &
Gathering.



Mesolithic

Small tools
(Microliths),
Rock shelters,
Semi-nomadic.



Neolithic

Polished tools,
Farming,
Settled life,
Pottery.



Chalcolithic

Copper + Stone,
Villages,
Trade & Exchange,
Weaving.

KEY TAKEAWAY

From stone to copper, from nomadic to settled –
human journey of progress and civilization.





PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD: PALEOLITHIC, MESOLITHIC, AND NEOLITHIC STONE AGE

MCQs

PAGE 1



Exam Focused



Concept Clarity



Better Retention



Score Higher

1

Which of the following is known as the Old Stone Age?

- A. Neolithic Age
- B. Mesolithic Age
- C. Paleolithic Age
- D. Chalcolithic Age



✓ Answer: C. Paleolithic Age

💡 Explanation:

The Paleolithic Age is also called the Old Stone Age. It is the earliest phase of the Pre-historic period when humans used large, crude and rough stone tools.

2

Which period is also known as the Middle Stone Age?

- A. Paleolithic Age
- B. Mesolithic Age
- C. Neolithic Age
- D. Chalcolithic Age



✓ Answer: B. Mesolithic Age

💡 Explanation:

The Mesolithic Age is called the Middle Stone Age. It is a transitional period between the Paleolithic Age and the Neolithic Age. People used microliths (small stone tools).

3

Which of the following activities is characteristic of the Neolithic Age?

- A. Hunting and gathering
- B. Domestication of animals
- C. Use of iron tools
- D. Living in caves



✓ Answer: B. Domestication of animals

💡 Explanation:

In the Neolithic Age, humans started domesticating animals like cattle, sheep, goat, and dog. They also practiced agriculture and lived in permanent settlements.

4

Which of the following tools were commonly used during the Mesolithic Age?

- A. Hand axes
- B. Microliths
- C. Polished stone axes
- D. Copper tools



✓ Answer: B. Microliths

💡 Explanation:

People of the Mesolithic Age used microliths (small, fine stone tools) such as points, blades and burins. These tools were made by chipping small stones.

5

Which of the following is an important site of the Paleolithic Age in India?

- A. Mehrgarh
- B. Bhimbetka
- C. Burzahom
- D. Chirand



✓ Answer: B. Bhimbetka

💡 Explanation:

Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh) is a well-known Paleolithic site famous for rock shelters and cave paintings. It provides important evidence of early human life.



Understand the features, tools, lifestyle and important sites of each age for better retention and scoring high.



Smart Practice Today,
Success Tomorrow! ★



PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD: PALEOLITHIC, MESOLITHIC, AND NEOLITHIC STONE AGE

MCQs

PAGE 2



Exam Focused



Concept Clarity



Better Retention



Score Higher

6

Which of the following is a characteristic of the Neolithic Age?

- A. Nomadic life
- B. Use of copper tools
- C. Settled life and agriculture
- D. Hunting large animals



Answer: C. Settled life and agriculture



Explanation:

The Neolithic Age is marked by settled life. People built permanent houses, practiced agriculture, domesticated animals and produced food instead of depending only on hunting and gathering.

7

Pottery was first invented during which period?

- A. Paleolithic Age
- B. Mesolithic Age
- C. Neolithic Age
- D. Chalcolithic Age



Answer: C. Neolithic Age



Explanation:

Pottery was first developed in the Neolithic Age. People made hand-made pottery using the potter's wheel for storing food, water and grain. In the Chalcolithic Age, pottery became more advanced and well-decorated.

8

Which of the following metals was used for the first time during the Chalcolithic Age?

- A. Iron
- B. Copper
- C. Bronze
- D. Silver



Answer: B. Copper



Explanation:

The Chalcolithic Age is also called the Copper Age because people started using copper along with stone tools. This was an important step towards the later use of bronze and iron.

9

Which of the following activities became important in the Chalcolithic Age?

- A. Hunting and fishing
- B. Agriculture and animal husbandry
- C. Trade and exchange
- D. All of the above



Answer: D. All of the above



Explanation:

In the Chalcolithic Age, people practiced agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, fishing and also started trade and exchange of goods like copper, pottery, beads, stones and other items.

10

Which of the following is NOT an important site of the Neolithic Age?

- A. Mehrgarh
- B. Burzahom
- C. Chirand
- D. Hunsgi



Answer: D. Hunsgi



Explanation:

Mehrgarh, Burzahom and Chirand are important Neolithic sites in India. Hunsgi is a Paleolithic site, not Neolithic.



EXAM TIP



Revise key features, tools, lifestyle and important sites of each age regularly for better results.



*Practice More,
Score Higher! ★*



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PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD: PALEOLITHIC, MESOLITHIC, AND NEOLITHIC STONE AGE

MCQs

PAGE 3



Exam Focused



Concept Clarity



Better Retention



Score Higher

11

Which of the following was the main food habit of humans during the Paleolithic Age?

- A. Agriculture
- B. Hunting and gathering
- C. Animal husbandry
- D. Trade and exchange



✓ Answer: B. Hunting and gathering

💡 Explanation:

People of the Paleolithic Age depended on hunting wild animals and gathering fruits, roots, seeds and berries for food. They did not know agriculture or animal husbandry.

12

Which period is considered a transition between the Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages?

- A. Chalcolithic Age
- B. Mesolithic Age
- C. Iron Age
- D. Bronze Age



✓ Answer: B. Mesolithic Age

💡 Explanation:

The Mesolithic Age is a transitional period between the Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages. During this time, people gradually adopted sedentary life and learnt new ways of living.

13

Which of the following is a polished stone tool commonly used in the Neolithic Age?

- A. Hand axe
- B. Microlith
- C. Polished axe
- D. Bone needle



✓ Answer: C. Polished axe

💡 Explanation:

In the Neolithic Age, people used polished and well-finished stone tools such as axes, adzes and chisels. These tools were used for farming, cutting trees and other daily tasks.

14

Which of the following animals was domesticated during the Neolithic Age?

- A. Elephant
- B. Horse
- C. Cattle
- D. Lion



✓ Answer: C. Cattle

💡 Explanation:

In the Neolithic Age, humans domesticated animals like cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat and dog. These animals helped in farming, transport, milk and protection.

15

Which of the following is a feature of the Chalcolithic Age?

- A. Use of only stone tools
- B. Use of copper along with stone tools
- C. Nomadic life
- D. No use of pottery



✓ Answer: B. Use of copper along with stone tools

💡 Explanation:

The Chalcolithic Age is also called the Copper Age because people started using copper along with stone tools. Pottery, farming, animal husbandry and trade also developed during this period.



STUDY TIP

Understand the key features, tools, lifestyle and important sites of each age to answer MCQs with confidence.



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PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD: PALEOLITHIC, MESOLITHIC, AND NEOLITHIC STONE AGE

MCQs

PAGE 4



Exam Focused



Concept Clarity



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Score Higher

16

Which of the following is an important site of the Mesolithic Age in India?

- A. Mehrgarh
- B. Bagor
- C. Burzahom
- D. Chirand



✓ Answer: B. Bagor



Explanation:

Bagor (Rajasthan) is an important Mesolithic site on the banks of the Banas River. It has provided evidence of microliths, rock shelters, animal bones and other remains of this age.

17

Which of the following was NOT a feature of the Paleolithic Age?

- A. Nomadic life
- B. Use of polished stone tools
- C. Hunting wild animals
- D. Living in caves



✓ Answer: B. Use of polished stone tools



Explanation:

Polished stone tools were NOT used in the Paleolithic Age. People used large, crude and rough stone tools. Polished tools appeared later in the Neolithic Age.

18

Which of the following was first developed in the Neolithic Age?

- A. Metallurgy
- B. Pottery
- C. Writing
- D. Wheel



✓ Answer: B. Pottery



Explanation:

Pottery was first developed in the Neolithic Age. People made hand-made pottery using the potter's wheel later. It was used to store food, water and grains.

19

Which of the following best describes the Chalcolithic Age?

- A. Age of Iron
- B. Age of Copper and Stone
- C. Age of Bronze
- D. Age of Silver



✓ Answer: B. Age of Copper and Stone



Explanation:

The Chalcolithic Age is also called the Copper Age because people started using copper along with stone tools. This was a transitional stage towards the Bronze Age.

20

Which of the following activities was NOT important during the Mesolithic Age?

- A. Hunting and fishing
- B. Gathering wild fruits
- C. Building permanent houses
- D. Making microliths



✓ Answer: C. Building permanent houses



Explanation:

During the Mesolithic Age, people lived in rock shelters, temporary huts and tents. They did NOT build permanent houses. Permanent settlements appeared in the Neolithic Age.



EXAM TIP

Understand the timeline, tools, lifestyle and key sites of each age. Practice regularly to master the concepts!



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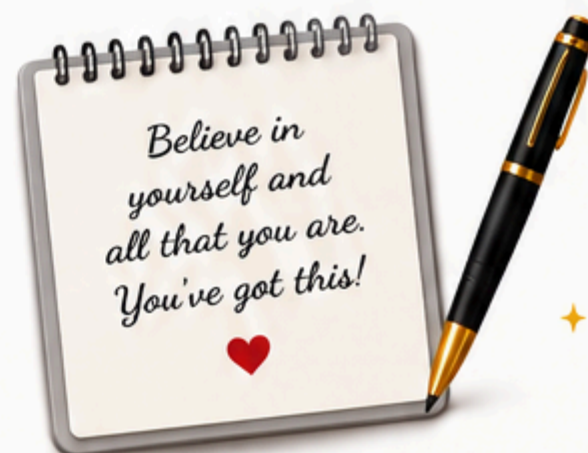
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