

## FANTASTIC FLINT – 11 FANTASTIC FACTS

- Flint is a **mineral** made from the remains of tiny **fossilised** marine creatures. It occurs within chalk beds, the chalk is formed from tiny shells, while the flint is formed from other types of marine organisms.
- The earliest settlers in Scotland were using flint tools during the period known as the **Mesolithic** 9,000 years ago. Flint and stone tools continued to be used throughout the **Bronze Age** and **Iron Age** and were still widely used for some purposes right up until **Medieval times**
- Specialist craftsmen evolved who were skilled in the art of making flint tools and are known as **flint knappers**.
- Flint knappers were able to use their skills to make all types of tools from flint including knives, arrowheads and hide scrapers. They used small flakes of flint to form part of more complicated tools of two or more parts. These are called **composite tools**
- Flint was a valuable resource in Scotland, but it was not easy to find. **Flint cobbles** could sometimes be found on the beach
- Scotland's only major source of flint was at **Den of Boddam** near Aberdeen where archaeologists have found ancient flint mines dating back to the **Neolithic** Period
- As flint was difficult to get hold of, the resourceful prehistoric people were able to use other stones such as **chert**, **bloodstone**, and **quartz** to make tools and weapons
- Prehistoric people in Scotland may have **traded** in order to get flint from other parts of Britain. Beach flint which originated mainly in the South of England has been found at sites in Scotland
- People began to use metal in Scotland during the Bronze Age. This did not mean however, that people stopped using stone tools. Stone was much easier to come by than metal and flint was more effective for making detailed tools and weapons such as arrowheads
- Flint was still being used to make **gunflints** in the 19th Century
- A handful of modern day flint knappers are keeping alive the **ancient techniques** developed by our inventive ancestors!

## WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE...

### ***Museums***

The Early Peoples Gallery in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh displays many flint tools from the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age. Why not have a look in your local museum?

### ***Books***

*Wild harvesters: The first People in Scotland*, by Bill Finlayson, from the Making of Scotland series by Historic Scotland, (Canongate Books, 2005)

*Farmers Temples & Tombs: Scotland in the Neolithic & Early Bronze Age*, Gordon Barclay, from the Making of Scotland Series by Historic Scotland, (Cannongate Books 2005).

*Horrible Histories: The Savage Stone Age*, Terry Deary (Scholastic, 2014)

*The Boy with the Bronze Axe (Kelpies Series)*, Kathleen Fiddler, (Floris Books, 2012). Novel for ages 10 – 14 yrs.

*If Stones Could Speak*, by Mark Aronson (National Geographic, 2010). The story of Stonehenge, for ages 10 and over.

### ***Archaeology Scotland Resources***

The Archaeology Scotland website has information on further archaeological resources available to you and links to useful sites.

<http://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/learning>

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

### ***Mystery Objects (Observation & Communication Skills)***

Select an object from the box and ask the children to work out what the artefact is. Asking the following can help:

- What is it made of?
- What does it feel like?
- Does it look like anything you might use today?
- How big is it?
- Can you describe the shape, colour, material, weight?
- What was it used for? How was it used?
- Does it remind you of anything that you have seen or used?
- How could you classify it? Think about its material, age, colour, use, size

### ***Them & Us (Social Studies):***

Use the artefacts to help you think about the following:

- How would the life of a child living in a nomadic, hunter-gatherer clan differ from that of a child living in a Neolithic farming village
- What do you think your basic needs are? How do you think they are different from those of a child in the Neolithic? How are they the same?

### ***The Life of an Artefact (English and Literacy; Expressive Arts - Drama):***

Create a drama session around an artefact or write a story about its life. Ask the following questions:

- Where did it come from?
- Who made or used it?
- What kind of journey has the artefact been on?

### ***Reconstruction (Expressive Arts):***

Get creative using artefacts as inspiration.

- Make your own flint tools from clay.
- Re-create incomplete artefacts and draw them being used.

***Investigation (Science & Maths):***

Investigate and record the following.

- Measure and weigh the objects.
- Compare artefacts made from different materials.
- Think about materials that survive and don't survive over time and how you would care for the artefacts so they will last longer.

***Class Museum (Observing, describing and recording/  
Enterprise):***

Why not set up your own museum exhibition in the classroom by doing the following.

- Write your own labels for the artefacts.
- Use your own artwork and models to bring the display to life and make a class catalogue of the items on display.
- Give talks or guided tours to other classes or parents.