



Ice Age Worcestershire

Notes for teachers and educators

iceageworcestershire.com

The Ice Age is where human history begins. It's also when large parts of the landscape as we know it were formed. At first, it seems remote and difficult to approach. But there are clues all around us that can be seen, and explored.



The **Ice Age Worcestershire: Early Stone Age life** booklet can be used on its own as a teaching resource, or together with a loan box of replica artefacts; a general prehistory box available from Museums Worcestershire at Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum, or a Palaeolithic specific box from Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service at The Hive, Worcester.

There are 2 PDF versions: one ready for booklet printing, and one for viewing on screen. It can be used to introduce the Key Stage 2 **Stone Age to Iron Age** topic. Human life within the Ice Age is known as the **Palaeolithic** period (Old Stone Age). In the West Midlands, this goes from the earliest local evidence for humans 500,000 years ago, up to the end of the Ice Age about 12,000 years ago.

There are many other great ways to teach the Stone Age; you can use this introduction to provide a basic overview of the lives and landscapes of the earliest humans in Worcestershire, before going on to look at things like cave art, homes and shelters, and post-Ice Age adaptations through the Mesolithic and Neolithic.

You don't have to go to Lascaux or the British Museum to see the Stone Age at first hand. There's plenty of inspiration to be found in the rocks, rivers, and fields of Worcestershire. The booklet will help you to get children thinking about what lies beneath their feet, about the people who lived in their area thousands of years ago, and about the process of science and discovery.

The accompanying A3 diagram offers an overview, for educators, of what is happening at different times and periods. We tend to find that children quickly progress to asking questions that can be difficult for educators to answer without specialist knowledge: "How long have we been an island?", "how cold was it 400,000 years ago?", "how long did the cold periods last?". You'll find more detailed information, especially about the geology and local landscapes, in the **Lost Landscapes: the story of the Ice Age in Worcestershire** A4 booklet, included in the resource boxes or available for £2.50 from The Hive or Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust.

If you'd like some help bringing the topic to life, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service can do school visits and workshops. Find out more at: explorethepast.co.uk/services/learning-and-outreach/





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Key concepts and terms

Pleistocene Pleis-to·cene | \ 'plī-stə-, sēn \
Geological period of global cooling, 2.6 million to 12,000 years ago, aka the Ice Age.

Hominin hom-i·nin \ 'hä-mə-nən, -, nin\
Any of a group of species (Hominini) that includes recent humans together with extinct ancestral and related forms

Palaeolithic Pa·leo·lith·ic \ pä-lē-ə-'li-thik \
of or relating to the earliest period of the Stone Age, within the Ice Age

Artefact ar-te·fact \ 'ɑ:trfakt \
an object made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest

Marine Isotope stages

Sometimes you may see resources refer to Marine Isotope stages (shortened to **MIS**). These are alternating periods of global cool and warm temperatures, deduced from drilling deep sea core samples. Even numbers are cold, odd numbers are warm. We are in MIS1. The last time ice sheets were in Britain, 21,000 years ago, was within MIS2. The period when Worcestershire was mostly covered in glaciers, about 450,000 years ago, fell within MIS12.



Useful sites and resources

There are many brilliant resources out there, but be wary! Many, even from respected education sources, are inaccurate. As a rule of thumb, avoid anything that talks about 'cavemen'! Try to steer clear of reconstructions (beetle-browed men wrestling a mammoth, women in fur dresses picking berries) that tell us more about 20th century attitudes to the Stone Age than they do about life in the Ice Age.

You may like to look for local Ice Age deposits using the British Geological Survey viewer: mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html or search 'iGeology' for the mobile/tablet app. Select 'superficial' deposits to look at those formed in or since the Ice Age.

Reliable sources and resources:

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust (local geology): <http://www.earthheritagetrust.org>

BBC Bitesize: bbc.com/bitesize/topics/z82hsbk

Historic England: historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/classroom-resources/

Young Archaeologists' Club: yac-uk.org/session-resources-and-ideas

Other educators offering school visits and expertise:

Schools prehistory: schoolsprehistory.co.uk

Ancient Craft: ancientcraft.co.uk

Discover History: discover-history.co.uk

Rob Hedge, February 2019

