

On the traces of the Neolithic Revolution

11-12



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Topic: History

Level: 11-12 years old

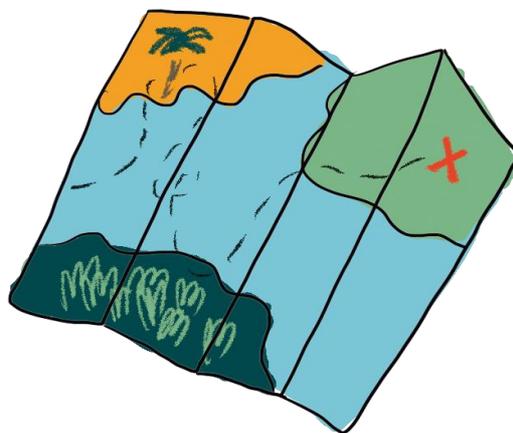
Concepts: The Neolithic Revolution

Time required: +/- 30 min

Summary of the activity: In this story, you are going back with your friends to the Neolithic Age. With the help of an archaeologist, you will have to gather clues to solve the final puzzle.

Material needed: A piece of paper, a pencil, your knowledge of prehistory and your motivation!

Advice: Write down the clues you get throughout the adventure so you can figure out the final answer!



1

Today, you are going on an excursion to discover a small prehistoric village with your friends Sam and Mariou. After a ride by bus, you head for the entrance where an archaeologist is waiting for you. "Good morning," she greets you with a large smile. "Today, we are travelling back in time: to the period of the Neolithic Revolution! This era lasted over seven thousand years: the first traces were discovered in the 10th millennium BC, and it developed until the 3rd millennium BC. Yet, the best way to understand this time is to live it. Follow me!"

 **Go to paragraph 3.**



2

The director walks towards a door, but just before crossing the threshold of the house, he looks at you with a glint of malice and asks: "Let's try again with a simple question. Do you know why we call this era the 'Neolithic'?" Mariou, who loves to study the etymology of words, proclaims: "It means New Stone Age". With this clue, you try to find the answer:

- **Because they found new materials**  **Go to paragraph 24.**
- **Because they polished flint**  **Go to paragraph 13.**

3

You follow the archaeologist and you enter a stone house. There is no sign of a living room nor a bedroom, only one single room, barely furnished. "There's nothing here!



What do we learn from this?" Sam exclaims with a snort. Mariou warns him with wide eyes: "Shhh, you shouldn't say this, Sam!". Unfortunately, it's too late. A middle-aged man with a pair of round glasses has already arrived, just in time to hear Sam's unpleasant comment. "Good morning, kids; I'm the director of the archaeological site", he says with a tight smile. "So you don't think that everything I've been working on for my entire career is useful or interesting, do you? Well, we will see about that..."

The archaeologist tries to fix the situation: "Oh I'm sure they didn't mean to be rude, director...", but the man won't listen to reason: "However, they were! And if they don't want me to tell their teacher about this, they would better prove to me that they care about this subject!". Mariou, Sam and you lower your head and nod vigorously. The director continues:

"During the visit, you will be asked to answer some questions. For each correct answer, you will be given a clue". The archaeologist tries to encourage you with a smile: "Come on, kids! These clues will enable you to discover one of the most fascinating inventions of that time! Ready?"

You nod in unison, you love puzzles! Let the challenge begin!

The director then asks you his first question: "Were humans of the Neolithic Age sedentary or nomadic?" You think for a couple of seconds and answer:

- **They were sedentary** >>> → **Go to paragraph 8.**
- **They were nomadic** >>> → **Go to paragraph 10.**

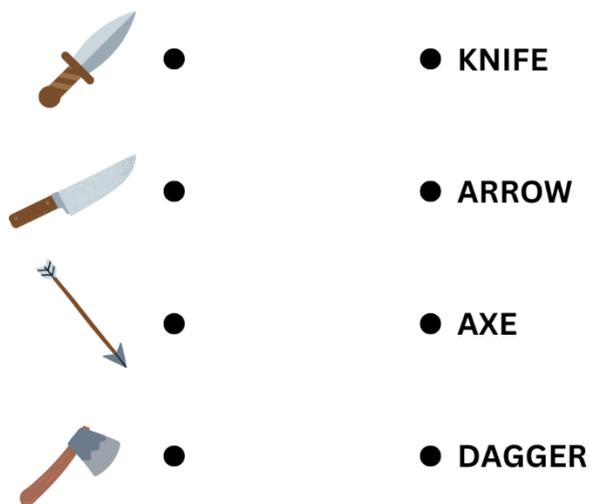
4

The archaeologist shrugs: "Don't worry, you'll have another chance to collect other clues." You still want to correct yourself and reply: "So, I guess that the correct answer is a craftsman!"

 **Go to paragraph 18.**

5

"Don't worry! To help you find the name of the tools, here is an easier exercise: you must pair the image to the word it corresponds to", says the archaeologist while secretly giving you a piece of paper. You try to fill out this exercise, determined to find this second clue!



• You succeeded  **Go to paragraph 11.**

• You did not succeed  **Go to paragraph 7.**

6

The director approves: "Indeed, the craftsman is the person who crafts tools with their hands. It is a very old job! Here is another clue:"

The objects made from this material are often decorated, even in the Neolithic Age.

You go out in the open and behind the house, there is a field. It is a ploughed land but nothing has grown on it yet. The archaeologist motions for you to turn over so that you can see the sickle laying against the stone wall. "What do you think a sickle is for?"

You answer straight away:

- **To hunt bisons**  **Go to paragraph 16.**
- **To harvest wheat**  **Go to paragraph 15.**

7

The director warns you: "You can give it another try or you can simply continue, but in that case, you won't receive the clue and you will lose other points with me. What are you intending to do?"

You hesitate for a bit, but you eventually make a decision:

- **You give another try to the crosswords**
 **Go to paragraph 8.**
- **You skip this exercise, but you don't get the clue**
 **Go to paragraph 2.**

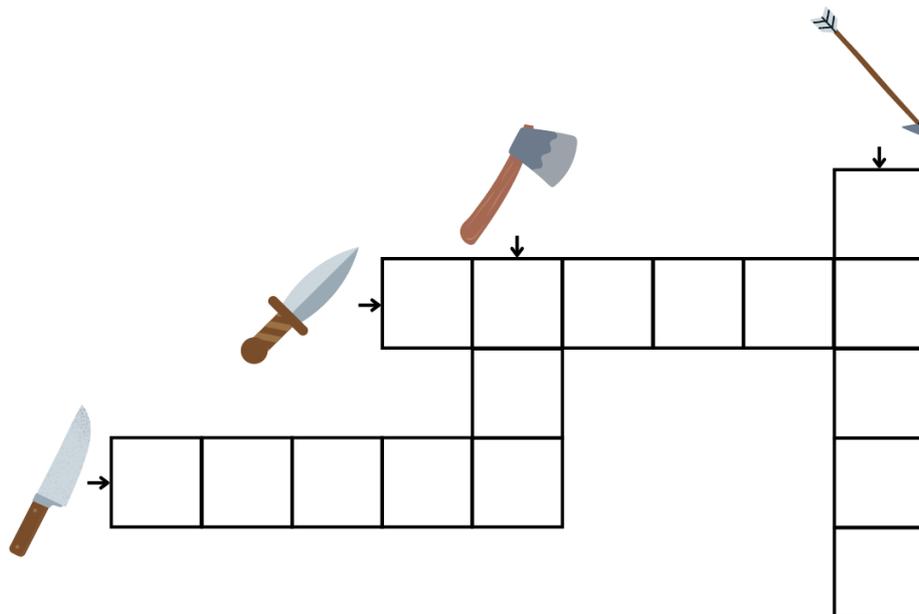
8

The archaeologist nods and says: "You are right! Humans had become sedentary at that time. In other words, they settled in a single location, contrarily to nomadic populations who move from one place to another. Good job kids!"

"Mmmm, it was too easy," comments the director. "Anyway...Here's your first clue:"

The invention that you are looking for is a technique or an art of pottery, but it can also refer to the material that is made of baked clay.

You move forward into the room and you discover a corner where tools are stored. You notice that the stone being used is polished. On the wall hangs a slate on which a crossword has been written. To get the second clue, you must fill it correctly:



- You filled it all  Go to paragraph 11.
- You can't fill it all  Go to paragraph 5.

9

The director shakes his head with disappointment. The archaeologist, who assisted the scene, provides you with a little hint: "Remember, at that age, humans became sedentary. Therefore, they are no more hunter-gatherers. To help you understand it, tell me if the following works are considered as crafts:"

- A. Blacksmith Yes No
- B. Computer engineer Yes No

- You answered Yes and No  Go to paragraph 6.
- You answered No and Yes  Go to paragraph 4.

10

You're not quite sure. The director tells you with an irritated voice: "No, they weren't nomadic. Look around you. It wouldn't be convenient to build a new stone house every time they had to move, don't you think?"

They were sedentary then!

 Go to paragraph 8.

11

The archaeologist congratulates you, and the director gives you the second clue:

The invention that you are looking for was created in -6000 BC, in Europe.

He walks towards a door, but just before crossing the threshold of the house, he looks at you with a glint of malice and asks: "By the way, do you know why we call this era the 'Neolithic'?" Mariou, who loves to study the etymology of words, proclaims: "It means New Stone Age". With this clue, you try to find the answer:

- **Because they found new materials**  **Go to paragraph 24.**
- **Because they polished flint**  **Go to paragraph 13.**

12

The archaeologist slips behind your back while you struggle to find a way to fill the gaps in the panel. "I can give you a hint, she whispers. The first word means 'able to give life.' The second one is the name for a quarter moon."

- **You've got an idea!**  **Go to paragraph 15 and try again!**
- **You struggle to find an idea...**
 **Go to paragraph 26 but you don't get a clue.**

13

“You’re right!” the director exclaims. “It’s because, from that moment, they polished flint to craft tools, such as axes. You don’t seem so disinterested after all. Here is your new clue:”

The word that you are looking for comes from the Greek word “keramos”, which means “clay”.

Sam looks at the tools with great interest, and, as in school, raises his hand. The director lets him ask his question: “What did we call the person who crafted the tools?” The director turns to you: “Do you know the answer?”

You reply:

- **A craftsman**  **Go to paragraph 6.**
- **A hunter**  **Go to paragraph 9.**

14

“Not really, explains the archaeologist. Cob was used to build houses because humans were using the materials they found in nature.”

You give it another try!

 **Go back to paragraph 23.**

15

The archaeologist approves: "Indeed, as you can see, there is a field behind the house." "But first – the director shouts – here is your new clue:"

This material is used to create crockery.

You follow the archaeologist who heads towards a meadow where animals are grazing. She explains: "Humans started to farm the land and animals; this is why they are considered sedentary". "It was the beginning of farming – the director intervenes – It started in the Middle East, also called the..." He points out a wood panel on which the first letters of two words are engraved. You have to fill in the other letters:

F _ _ _ _ _ C _ _ _ _ _

- You find the correct answer  Go to paragraph 21.
- You have no clue of the word you should find...
 Go to paragraph 12.

16

"The answer is...no", the director says. "Humans had found another way to feed, just as cultivating cereals. What do you think a sickle is for then?"

You make the connection with the roughed field behind the house and you propose another answer: to harvest wheat!

 Go to paragraph 15.



17

Mariou shakes her head: "No, that's not it." Another word comes to your mind: megalith!

 **Go to paragraph 23.**

18

The archaeologist approves: "Indeed, the craftsman is the person who crafts tools with their hands. It is a very old job!" You go out in the open and behind the house, there is a field. It is a ploughed land but nothing has grown on it yet. The archaeologist motions for you to turn over so that you can see the sickle laying against the stone wall. "What do you think a sickle is for?"

- **To hunt bisons**  **Go to paragraph 30.**
- **To harvest wheat**  **Go to paragraph 15.**

19

Mariou shakes her head: "No, that's not it." Another word comes to your mind: megalith!

 **Go to paragraph 23.**

20

“Exactly”, the archaeologist approves. The director adds: “We have found traces of fortifications around the villages, which proves that people of the Neolithic Age were familiar with conflicts. Well done. Here is your last clue:”

Containers made of that material have enabled humans to preserve food and cook it.

You're about to give the answer but the director interrupts you with a sign, he encourages you to follow him back to the home you left earlier. You notice an object covered by a blanket that you hadn't spotted before. The director uncovers it and you discover a whiteboard on which a timeline has been drawn. You have to place the different periods in the correct order by pairing the letters with the dates they correspond to:

A. Paleolithic: period during which humans are nomadic hunters-gatherers. They use tools made of cut stone.



**3 000 000 -
10 000 years BC.**

B. Bronze Age: period during which humans invent metallurgy and craft bronze objects which leads to the development of trades.



**10 000 -
3 000 years BC.**

C. Neolithic: period during which humans become sedentary and invent farming. They use new tools made of polished stone.



**3 000 -
800 years BC.**

- You found the correct answer  Go to paragraph 29.
- You haven't found the correct answer  Go to paragraph 22.

21

"The Fertile Crescent!" Sam exclaims by your sides. A cow, taken aback, pricks up an ear. For the first time from the beginning of the challenge, the director's eyes fill with pleasant amazement: "Yes, you're right! Here is your new clue:"

The word that you're looking for ends with a C.

While Sam is petting the cow to reassure it, you are looking for Mariou. She got nearer to a giant stone. You join her and you hear her mumble: "I have the name of this stone on the tip of my tongue..." Willing to help her, you suggest:

- **A megastone**  **Go to paragraph 19.**
- **A megalith**  **Go to paragraph 23.**

22

"Dates are always difficult to remember, right?" The archaeologist puts the periods in order: "First, there is the Paleolithic when humans are nomadic hunter-gatherers. Then comes the Neolithic era when humans become sedentary farmers. Finally, it is the Bronze Age when humans mix copper and tin to create bronze objects and they start to develop trades. It is a logical process, if you think about it: humans went from moving around living on what they managed to hunt, to living permanently in a place building houses and cultivating the land. Only after creating conditions of stability were they able to give rise to new discoveries and new socioeconomic developments"

 **Go to paragraph 29.**

23

Astonished, Mariou looks at you: "Yes, I think that's it." "Someone was paying attention at school, after all", the director states. "These large stones remain an enigma for historians. We believe they were used for social and religious reasons. And yet, thousands of years of mystery, and you dare to say it is boring... Anyway, you've deserved another clue:"

The first letter of the word you're looking for is C.

The archaeologist motions to Sam to join you and, with one hand on the stone, she explains its meaning: "This is where they buried their dead. On some of them, we have been able to find objects with great value, which proves that they already differentiate people at that time." Then, the director continues your visit and stops in front of three objects.

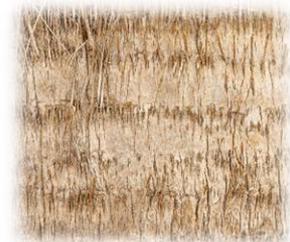
"First, I will give you their definition. Then, you'll have to tell which one of these objects proves that conflicts already existed at that period."



The **swing plough** is a tool to work the land.

➤➤➤ ➔ **Go to paragraph 28.**

Cob is a mixture made of subsoil, water, fibrous organic material (typically straw) used to build walls.



➤➤➤ ➔ **Go to paragraph 14.**



Fortifications are strong structures that are built to protect a place.

➤➤➤ ➔ **Go to paragraph 20.**

24

The archaeologist points the axe out and invites you to have a closer look. "Don't you see its polished aspect?" she asks. You understand what your mistake was and you correct your answer: they polished flint.

 **Go to paragraph 13.**

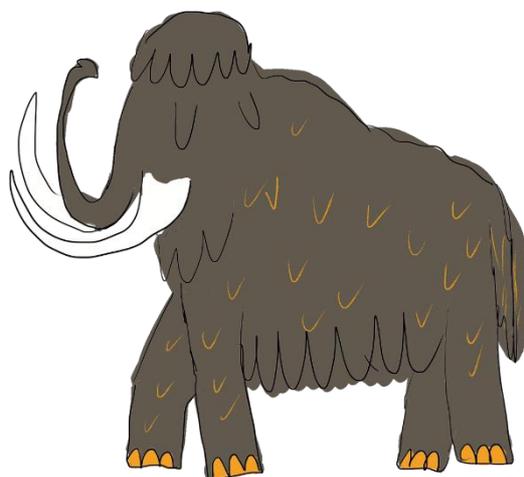
25

"Don't be afraid! The director is a demanding and somewhat gruff man, but he doesn't really want to put you in difficulty," the archaeologist reassures you.

"You are more than welcome to come and see me again", he adds with a gentle voice. With everything you've learnt today, it will be easier next time!"

These words comfort you: the challenge has made you appreciate the things you've learned even more. However, you can't wait to go back to school...better the teacher than the director!

The end



26

The archaeologist gives you the solution: “This is what we call the Fertile Crescent.” Of course! Now that you have the answer you remember your teacher saying it during one of your history classes.

While Sam is petting the cow, you are looking for Mariou. She got nearer to a giant stone. You join her and you hear her mumble: “I have the name of this stone on the tip of my tongue...”

Willing to help her, you suggest:

- **A megastone** >>> → **Go to paragraph 17.**
- **A megalith** >>> → **Go to paragraph 23.**

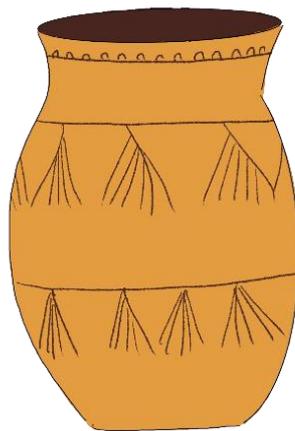


27

"I achieved my goal in the end", the director comments amused. "Now you know more about the field I study and, who knows, maybe in the future one of you will take my place!" he says with what looks like a smile.

The archaeologist offers to each of you a ceramic that you can decorate at home. "Now you know why the Neolithic Age is a true revolution: it is because humans have a whole new lifestyle: more sedentary and related to farming, as we do nowadays!" You're very satisfied with your day because you learnt many things and you spent time with your friends. Yet, you're tired and the idea of going back home and having a rest delights you a lot.

The end



28

"Not really, explains the archaeologist. A swing plough serves to work the soil in order to sow on his lands." You give it another try.

 **Go back to paragraph 23.**

29



“Well done, kids!” the archaeologist exclaims, clapping her hands. “It is a logical process, if you think about it: humans went from moving around living on what they managed to hunt, to living permanently in a place building houses and cultivating the land. Only after creating conditions of stability were they able to give rise to new discoveries and new socioeconomic developments”.

You go back to the entrance of the village and the director looks at you questioningly: “One more clue and you will have earned my admiration. Can you tell me now, thanks to the clues you've gathered, what is this mysterious invention from the Neolithic Age?”

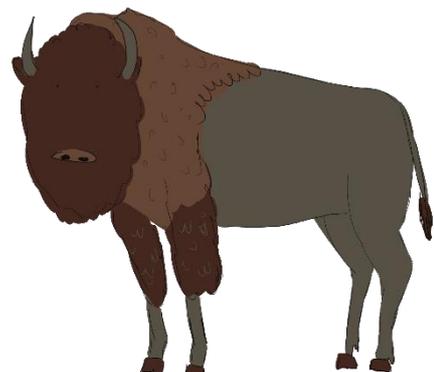
- **You've got the answer**  **Go to paragraph 27.**
- **You don't really know**  **Go to paragraph 25.**

30

“The answer is... no,” the director says. “Humans had found another way to feed, such as cultivating cereals. What do you think a sickle is for then?”

You make the connection with the roughed field behind the house and you propose another answer: to harvest wheat!

 **Go to paragraph 15.**





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