

Stone Age Tools

Multipurpose tools

A multipurpose tool is something that can do many different things

Handaxe

This is a multipurpose tool used by people in the Stone Age, specifically the Palaeolithic era (950,000 to 12,000 years ago). We call it a 'handaxe'. They were usually made from stone or flint.

These tools, believe it or not, had many functions:

- ▶ they could cut meat
- ▶ they could chop wood
- ▶ they could dig for animals
- ▶ they could be used as weapons.



This image is a handaxe which is in RAMM's collection. It was found in Broom, in Devon, amongst 100's of other handaxe's just like it!

If you look closely, you'll see that the sides of the handaxe are sharp. This helped them to cut into things. The flat surfaces could have been used to scoop up dirt to help them dig. The flat surfaces might have been used to crush things like seeds and plants.

Other Stone Age tools



The handaxe was created during the Paleolithic era. This Microlith was crafted later, during the Mesolithic era. Microliths were very small flint tools. They can be compared to small blades or knives with long sharp edges. The microliths were crafted from flint, which was a widely used material in the Stone Age. These tools were likely used:

- ▶ to cut meat
- ▶ to skin animals
- ▶ to drill into stone and bones
- ▶ as arrowheads for hunting.

This microlith was found in Westward Ho on the North Devon coast!

The Neolithic era, which runs into the Bronze Age, saw further advancement in tools having new uses. Flint sickles were crafted for agricultural use. They were long, oval and curved with sharp edges and were used to cut crops and foliage to feed families and, perhaps, livestock as people were now keeping animals for food and work. The example pictured here was found in Hembury. It would have probably been hafted to a long wooden handle.





Leaf arrowheads were also crafted in the Neolithic era. As expected, they are shaped like leaves with one end being sharp and pointed, and the other being rounded. These arrowheads were usually crafted from flint and differ from the previous tools because they were likely used as weapons. The arrowhead pictured was potentially used to attack a fortification at Hembury, which is near Honiton.

This last one is a barbed and tanged arrowhead. These arrowheads were crafted in the late Neolithic era moving through to the Bronze Age and were used for hunting wild animals. They are triangular in shape with three prongs on the bottom. The two outer prongs are 'barbs' and the middle prong is the 'tang'. The barbs are slightly longer than the tang. They were crafted like this because it meant the arrowheads were less likely to be knocked or pulled out by the animal if it tries to escape. They were crafted from flint and, sometimes, different metals. This arrowhead was found in Dartmoor.



And, finally, here is an example of a modern multipurpose tool. This modern Swiss Army Knife has lots of attachments all made for different jobs. They might have blades for cutting and screwdriver attachments.

