

## How did it get like this? Ice Age Britain!

### Look at the past to understand the present

#### Student Introduction

- ▶ Look back to the prehistoric past to understand what the future might hold!
- ▶ Observe the Solent area and understand how it was formed.



#### TASK 1 - Pre-Visit

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The study of the past can explain how things are now, and gives us clues how things might look in future.

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Geology (the study of the history of the Earth) and Archaeology (the study of pre-historic people) help us understand what life was like for our ancestors.

Around 10,000 years ago ("pre-history"), modern humans (Homo Sapiens) already existed.

They were **hunter-gatherers** and hunted wild animals for meat, skin and bones and gathered wild plants for fruit and vegetables.

They had not invented reading and writing yet, so we have to guess quite a lot!

The archaeological evidence we can find are their **stone tools** (that's why this period is known as the Stone Age), **bones of animals and people**, and occasionally their **artwork which showed religious images**.

The world 10,000 years ago was quite different to the one we live in now.

For humans the change would have been gradual, taking place over a long time.

Look at the timeline to the right which is a **rough guide** (and not to scale) which shows **how far back in time** you have to go and what happened before that time.

The most recent Ice Age lasted from c.110,000 years ago to c.11,000 years ago and in that time the **River Solent** and the **Channel River** were created.

#### FUTURE

Birth of Jesus Christ

#### c.10,000 years ago

Climate changes significantly:

- ice ages end
- sea levels rise
- stone tools improve
- farming begins to develop



#### c.70,000 years ago

Humans (Homo Sapiens) spread into Europe



#### c.190,000 years ago

Homo Sapiens first appear in Africa



#### c.2 million years ago

The Ice Ages begin

#### c.63 million years ago

Dinosaurs become extinct



#### PAST

ICE AGES

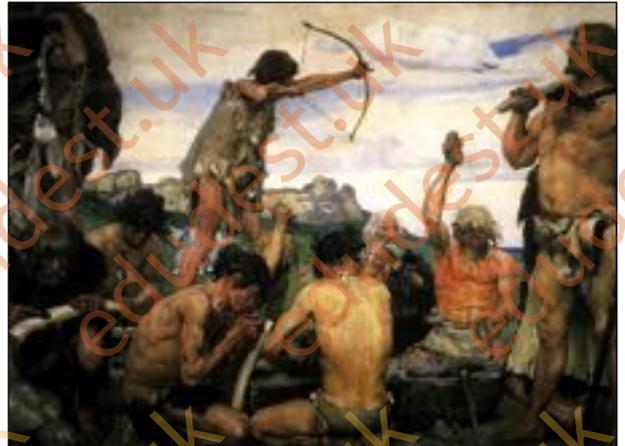
**TASK 2 - Pre-Visit**

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The life of Palaeolithic (Stone Age) people may have looked like these images. Write down what each of these pictures show (there are clues in the previous text!).



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### TASK 3 - Pre-Visit

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Look at these two maps and answer the questions which follow.

#### Europe during the last Ice Age (c. 20,000 years ago)



#### KEY



Land under ice during ice age



Outline of present day countries



Land which disappeared when ice melted

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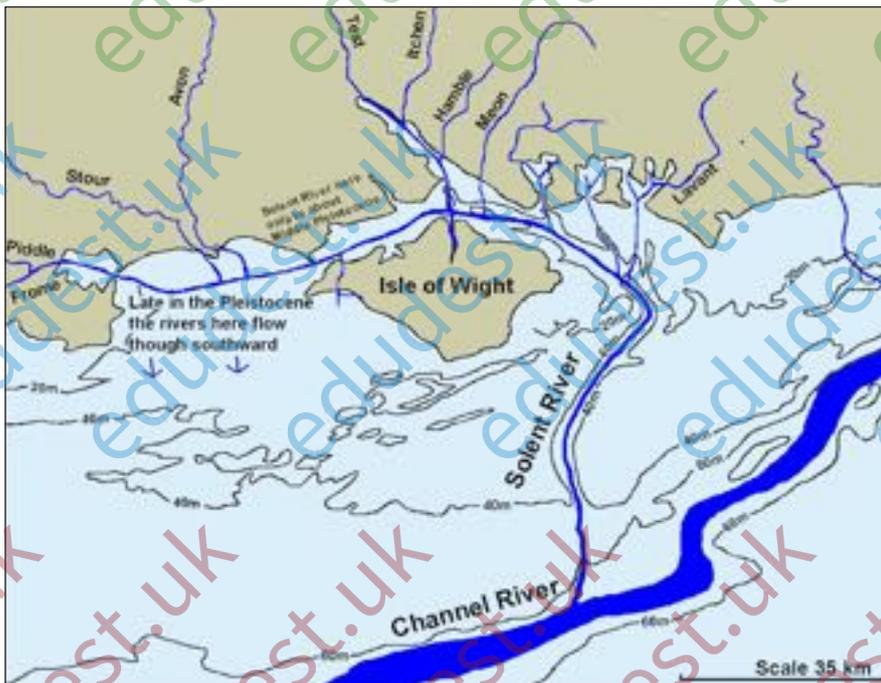
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Extent of the ice cap

Q1. Was YOUR local area covered with ice? \_\_\_\_\_

Q2. What do you notice about Britain and the continent of Europe at that time? \_\_\_\_\_



This map gives you an idea what the Solent area looked like before the end of the last Ice Age c.10,000 years ago, before the land between Europe and Britain became flooded. It shows the prehistoric River Solent, its tributaries and how it joined the Channel River.

Q3. What would life have been like for people and animals **before the ice melted**? \_\_\_\_\_

## TASK 4 - On the Ferry

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Whilst you are sailing on the Red Funnel ferry from Southampton to East Cowes on the Isle of Wight, you are travelling along the “drowned valleys” of the ancient rivers Test and Solent.

You will be able to see in the distance the vast flooded area where once the Channel River flowed (now known as the English Channel).

Since the last Ice Age, water has flooded much of the once dry land and separated the Isle of Wight from the English mainland.

Nature – and human - activity is still changing the geography around us. We try to protect ourselves from these changes by erecting structures designed to slow down or stop change from happening.

**TASK:** Whilst on the ferry, look around you and try to **spot as many features** (physical or human) as possible that show the changes that are happening around us, despite our best efforts to stop or delay them.

Take a tally for each of the examples shown, and **include more as you see them**. Mark them on your map (next page).

### Physical Change / Processes

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Weathering & Erosion

Transportation & Deposition



### Human Reaction / Activities



Sea Walls & Defences



Groynes



Rocks or “Rip-Rap”



Breakwater





▲ Mark on a map what kinds of change you have seen and where you have seen it.  
 ▲ Mark the information on the map to give you a better idea of the features.

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## TASK 5 - After your trip

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The Solent area today - consequences of physical change and human adaptation.

**Work through the following questions** providing detailed answers based on your observations during the ferry crossing.

### Q1

a) Use the marks and annotations from your map and look for patterns. Where have you seen the most evidence for physical change?

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b) What is the reason for that?

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### Q2

a) Where have you seen most evidence for human reaction/activity, building sea defences, groynes etc.?

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b) What is the reason for that?

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