



Making Tools and Weapons

Flint - knapping is a highly skilled craft. Having a go for yourself will quickly illustrate how skilled prehistoric people had to be to survive in their environment. But it can be also very dangerous. Shards of flint are sharper than glass so safety goggles and gloves should be worn at all times.

You will need:

- Large thick sheet of polythene
- Strong masking tape or gaffa tape
- Nodules of flint
- Assorted sizes of hammer stones
- Protective goggles and gloves

Please remember that the flint cliffs of the north coast are a protected feature of our environment. Only gather pieces of flint lying on the beach. Choose flint as clean of chalk as possible, this will make it easier to work with.



Basalt and granite make good hammer stones. Choose round stones of different sizes and weights. You will need small pebbles to shape your flint blades.

Directions:

Spread the polythene sheet out on the floor and tape down the edges to provide a working surface.

Divide the class into small groups of three or four to take turns at flint - knapping.

Each pupil should start with a large piece of flint and use a large hammer stone to strike a flake off an edge.

Rest the flint flake on a large flat stone and use a smaller hammer stone to gently knock small pieces off the edges to shape it gradually into a blade.

It is very easy to shatter the flakes while working on them, but do not be discouraged, it takes a little bit of practice!

Once pupils have gained a little confidence, they may want to try and make different shapes of blade, e.g. a knife, an arrow head, a scraper etc.



Activity Sheet



Microliths, mounted into wooden shafts to form a cutting tool (above) and a spear (middle)



Flat axe head



Borers or awls



Scraper



Picks



Large stone axe head



Axe head mounted into a wooden handle



Mesolithic Stone Tools found at Mountsandel

Courtesy of the Ulster Museum