Prehistory is usually divided into three parts...
the Stone Age
the Bronze Age
and the Iron Age.

The Stone Age is
the first period in
human history
and it spans over
two million years.
It is called the Stone Age because most of the tools and weapons that people used were made from stones and flints. Some of the objects that were used still survive today.

Early Stone Age people constantly moved around to find food and places to hunt, so they didn’t have a permanent home.
Later, they gradually began to stay in one place. This is because they learned how to farm land and animals.

Many rock homes may have been used as living spaces for thousands of years!
The first artists created cave paintings, sculptures and carvings. Small carvings of prehistoric women have been found. These are called Venus figurines.

Archaeologists have to used special techniques (e.g. radiocarbon dating) to work out what life was like in Stone Age times.
The Stone Age covers such a large period of time that it is split into three stages. These include the Palaeolithic Period (when people made the first stone tools).

During the Mesolithic Period, people used new tools to hunt animals. In the Neolithic Period, the people started farming.
These periods lasted for different lengths of time in different parts of the world, so the dates of each period vary.

Stone Age people created their own music and dances. Some of their instruments include drums, bullroarers and flutes.
People in the Mesolithic period made their own homes. These had a timber frame and were covered with animal skins or turf to keep them warm.

Mesolithic people used spear throwers, bows and arrows and small, sharp flint blades called microliths. They also used canoes to travel along rivers and coastlines.
Neolithic people cleared areas of land with axes. They started farming, planting seeds from Europe and rearing sheep, cows and pigs.

Neolithic people dug mines in places where there was a lot of flint. As well as using flint themselves, they also traded it for other goods.
As people started to live in the same place, they began to bury the dead more carefully. Underground tombs were dug and burial sites were marked with special monuments.

Stone Henge was created over about a thousand years. It was started during the Neolithic period when people dug a ditch and bank in the shape of a circle.
People today are unsure why Stone Henge was erected. It might have been a temple, a burial site, a healing centre or a calendar!

The Stone Age came to an end when people started to work with metals on a large scale.