

Ancient Ireland

Headings	Notes
MESOLITHIC IRELAND (8000 BC - 3500 BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the first human life in Ireland was found at Mount Sandal, Co. Derry. Their houses were round huts covered in animal skins with a hearth in the middle. They were nomadic hunter-gatherers who used tools made from flint.
NEOLITHIC IRELAND (3500 BC - 2000 BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the first farmers has been found in the Céide Fields, Co. Mayo. Their houses were made from wattle and daub with thatched roofs while stone was polished. New burials were used such as: Portal Dolmens – Poulmabrone, the Burren, Co. Clare; Court Cairns – Creevkeel, Co. Sligo; Passage Tombs – Newgrange, The Boyne Valley, Co. Meath. 5,200 years old; the sun illuminates the burial chamber on the Winter Solstice. Magnificently decorated entrance kerbstone
BRONZE AGE IRELAND (2000 BC - 500 BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The arrival of metal to Ireland came with the Bronze age with the alloy of copper and tin smelted together to create Bronze. Food was cooked in the fulacht fiadh. Houses remained wattle and daub houses with thatched roofs. More people meant smaller burial tombs were used such as Wedge Tombs and Cist Graves.
IRON AGE IRELAND – THE ARRIVAL OF THE CELTS (500 BC – 500 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Celts arrived in Ireland from Central Europe and brought iron with them. First evidence of writing was used by the Celts in Ireland using ogham stones. Their houses were more defensive with the inventions of: Raths (Ring forts) – the Hill of Tara;; Co. Meath, Promontory Forts – Dunbeg Fort, Co. Kerry; Crannógs – Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly The Celts were an organized, warrior society with a clear hierarchy in society. The land was organized by tuaths (kingdoms) which were ruled by a Rí. The Rí was supported by the Aos Dána which were made up of brehons (judges), druids (priests), filí (poets) and craftsmen. The Celts were pagans who believed in many gods such as Daghda and Lug. Some of their past times included báire and ficheall. The Táin is evidence of how important cattle were to the Celts. Jewellery and coloured clothing was used by the Celts. Their art style is named after the area in Switzerland where the Celts originated from: La Tene
Keywords	Summary
Nomads Ogham Stone	<p>Ancient Ireland covers the periods of the Stone Age right up to the Iron Age. Most of our knowledge from this time depends on archaeology. The Mesolithic people were nomads who hunted and gathered to survive while the Neolithic people started to settle and form permanent settlements. The burial tombs of the Neolithic Era (Portal Dolmens, Court Cairns and Passage Tombs) can still be seen all over Ireland. The Bronze Age saw the first use of metal on the island of Ireland with the alloy of Bronze being used.</p> <p>They also started to use smaller burial tombs with Wedge Tombs and Cist Graves. The arrival of the Celts saw the arrival of iron and writing to Ireland with ogham stones. As a warrior society, the need for defensive houses were needed (raths, promontory forts and crannógs) was needed to protect tuaths by the Rís and Aos Dana. They introduced the Brehon Laws which remained for over a millennium.</p>
Hunter-gatherer Raths	
Wattle and daub Promontory Forts	
Portal Dolmens Crannóg	
Court Cairns Tuaths	
Passage Tombs Rí	
Alloy Aos Dana	
Wedge Tombs Pagans	
Cist Graves Brehon Law	

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Keywords	Definitions
Aos Dána	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The warriors and nobles who supported the Rí
Brehons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judges who knew the complex law of the Celts.
Bronze Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The period of time when people made tools and weapons using bronze.
Cist Graves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bodies buried in a crouched position.
Court Cairns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open space (court) at the front and a chamber covered in stones for burials (cairn).
Crannógs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built on man-made lakes to protect themselves from enemies.
Druids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pagan or Celtic priest. Druids believed in many gods and had great influence over Gaelic Chieftains.
Filí	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poets who preserved the history of the Celts.
Fulacht Fiadh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stone-lined pit filled with water where heated stones were placed in to boil the water for cooking meat.
Grave goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items buried with the dead.
Hunter-gatherers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who hunted animals for food and gathered berries and nuts.
Iron Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The period of time when people made tools and weapons using iron.
La Tène Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celtic art style
Megalithic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large stone
Mesolithic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle Stone Age
Neolithic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Stone Age
Nomadic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved from place to place, never settling for long.
Ogham stones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standing stones marking boundaries or burial sites with letters carved as lines on the side
Palaeolithic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old Stone Age
Passage Graves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A huge mound built over a central passage which led to a burial chamber; e.g. Newgrange.
Portal Dolmens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or more standing stones and a huge capstone with remains buried between.
Promontory Forts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built on the side of a cliff, surrounded by fosses and chevaux de frises.
Raths (Ring-forts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A settlement on land, surrounded by risen earthen mounds and wooden fences.
Rí	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> King; ruled a tuath
Smelting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melting metal at a high temperature to separate from core before combining with another metal to make a stronger one.
Souterrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underground passage used as storage for food or protection.
The Celts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A warrior-society from central Europe (Austria and Switzerland) who came to Ireland during the Iron Age.
Tuath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kingdom
Wattle and Daub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woven mesh plastered with a mixture of mud, dung, sand and straw.
Wedge Tombs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Bronze Age smaller version of portal dolmens.