

All about
Mesolithic Brighton




Mesolithic



Does the ending of this word remind you of another word we've looked at? Why do you think that might be?

Mesolithic?



So what
does it
mean?

Meso = Middle

Lithic = Made
of stone

Mesolithic =
The Middle
Stone Age



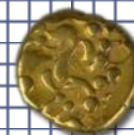
Palaeolithic

Black Rock
250,000 years BP



Neolithic

Whitehawk
5,700 years BP



Iron Age

Hollingbury
2,600 years BP

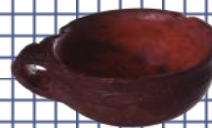
Mesolithic

Falmer
10,000 years BP



Bronze Age

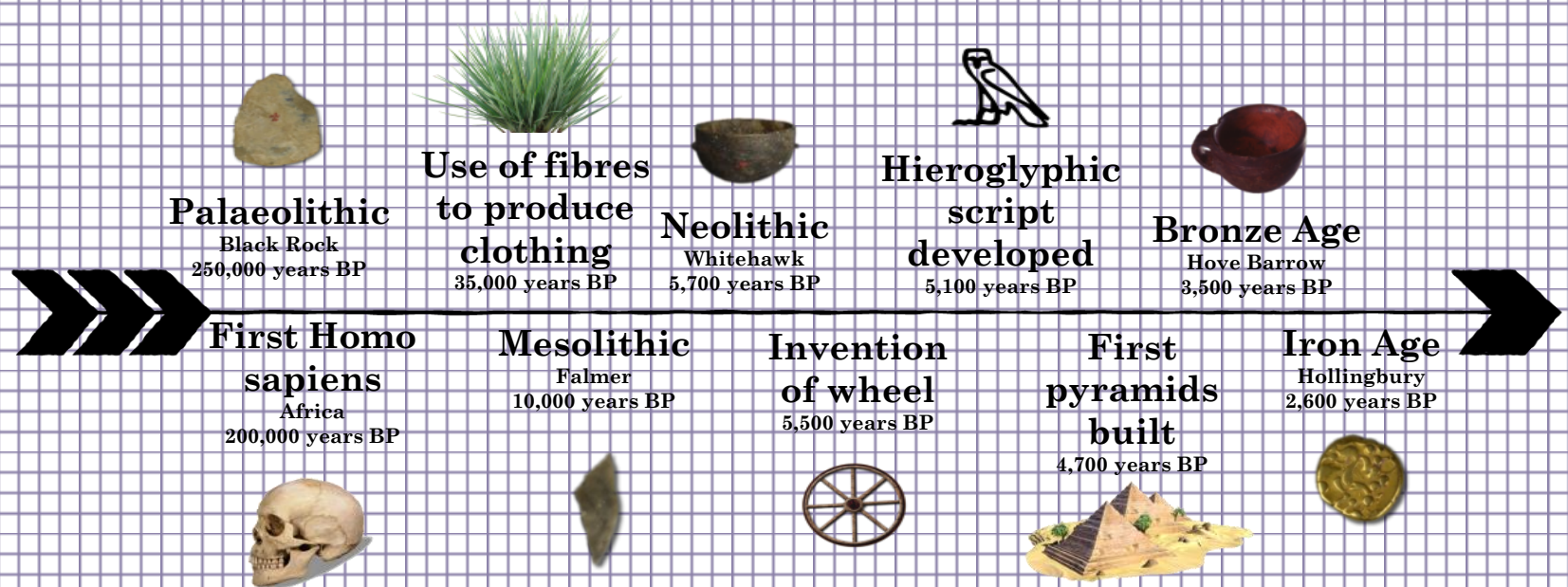
Hove Barrow
3,500 years BP



Here's how the Mesolithic fits into our local timeline
– it comes directly after
the much longer
Palaeolithic period



How does this period fit into worldwide prehistory?



Find out about the Mesolithic

It's time to use your investigation and IT skills to go on a fact-finding mission about life in Mesolithic times...



1. The Mesolithic period started around 10,000 years ago. What started happening 10,000 years ago that changed the way people in Britain lived?
2. What happened to the shape of Britain around this time?
3. Name three types of trees that started to grow in abundance over most of the British Isles.

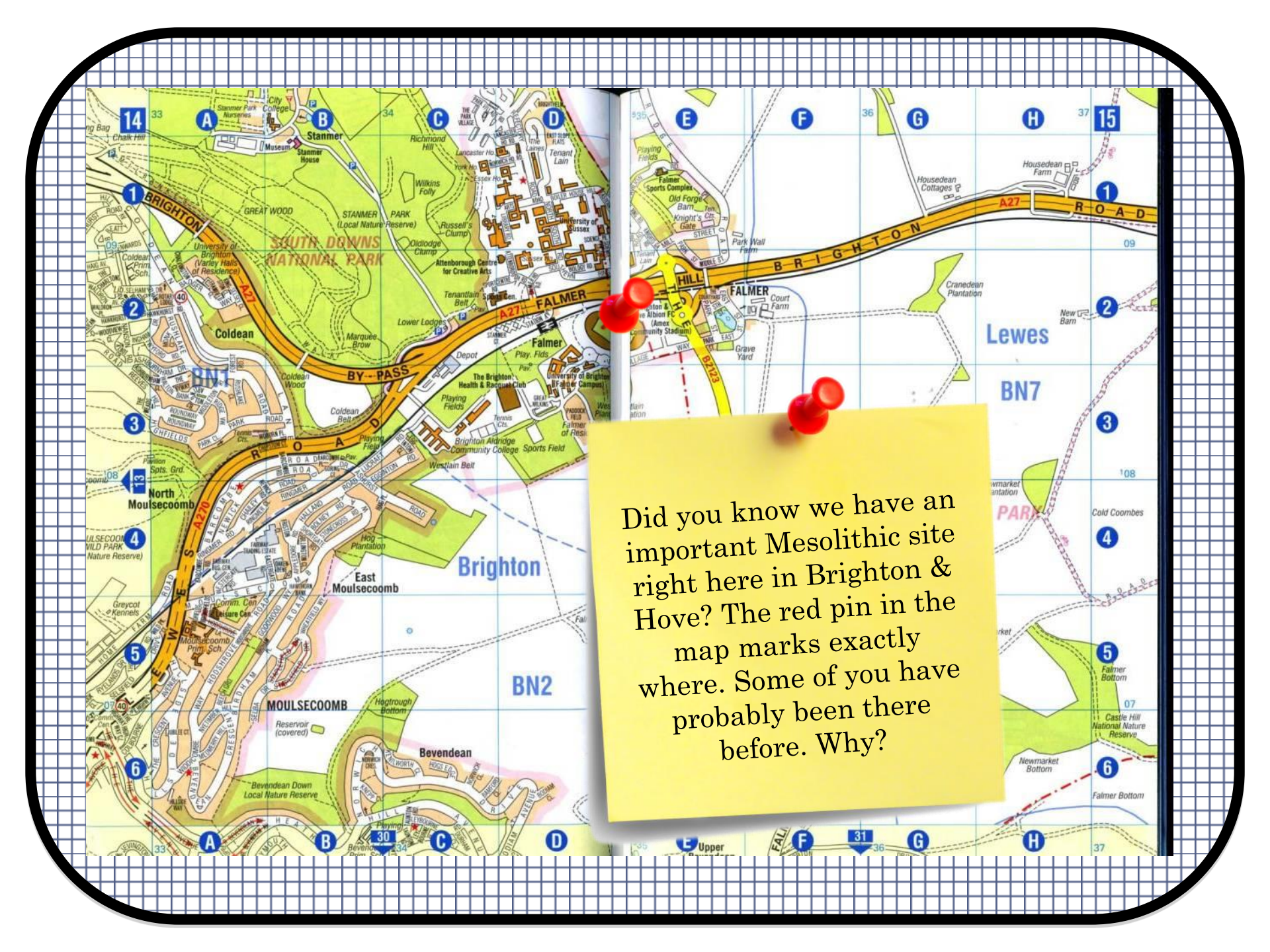
Palaeolithic Vs. Mesolithic

Palaeolithic

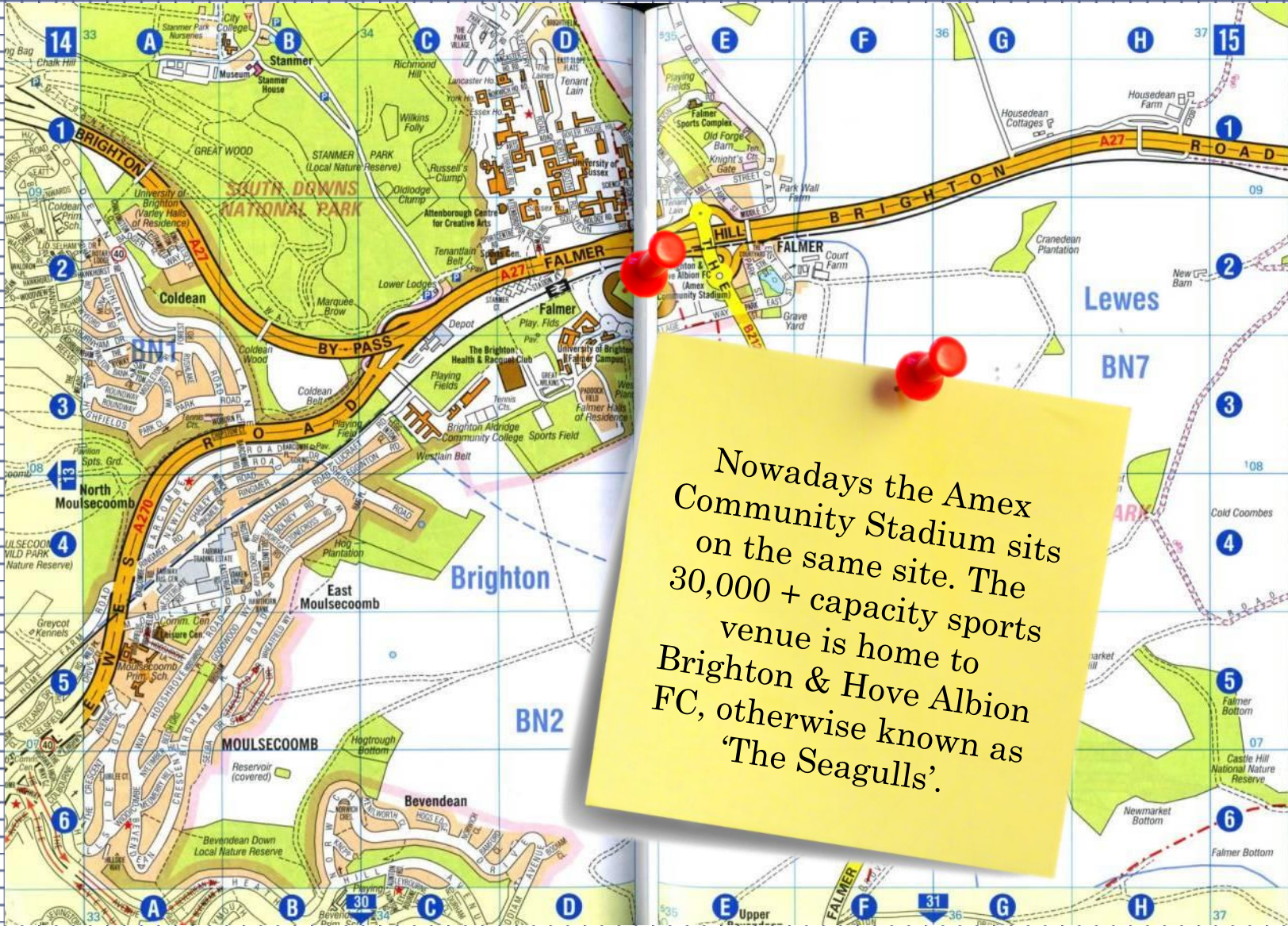
- Several species of human living on the planet
- Britain still joined to mainland Europe via France and Doggerland
- Britain colder with lots of open grassland
- People in Britain hunt mammoth and reindeer

Mesolithic

- Homo sapiens the only human species in existence on the planet
- Doggerland floods, and Britain becomes an island
- Britain becomes warmer, and forests begin to grow
- People in Britain began to hunt red deer, wild boar and wild ox




Did you know we have an important Mesolithic site right here in Brighton & Hove? The red pin in the map marks exactly where. Some of you have probably been there before. Why?



Nowadays the Amex Community Stadium sits on the same site. The 30,000 + capacity sports venue is home to Brighton & Hove Albion FC, otherwise known as 'The Seagulls'.




Digging the foundations of the site was a huge job, and in the process archaeologists discovered evidence of human life going back over 10,000 years. The earliest activity was a Mesolithic Camp.



Here's an artist's impression of what life might have looked like at a Mesolithic Camp. 10,000 years ago Falmer would have been covered in thick, dense forest. We think a few families decided to set up camp in a clearing one day, and went on to visit the site at the same season every year to hunt and gather food like deer, boar, nuts and fruit. They would have made their shelters from wooden poles and brush or animal skins, a bit like modern day tents! Once the season was over and the food had run out they might have moved on to the coast, to catch fish and gather shellfish. There would have been other small tribes like this living all over the country.



An archaeologist digging at a Mesolithic site might have a hard time of it, as there's not much to find...



What kind of things would you look for?

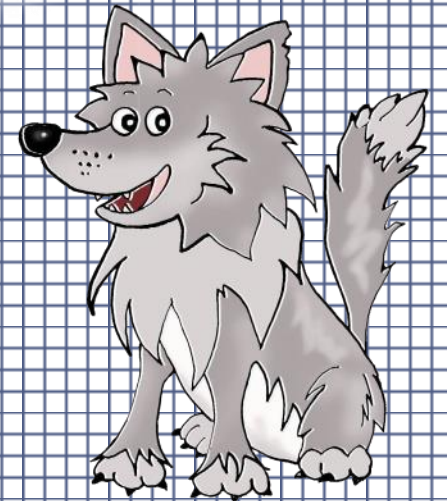
Mesolithic Excavation Checklist

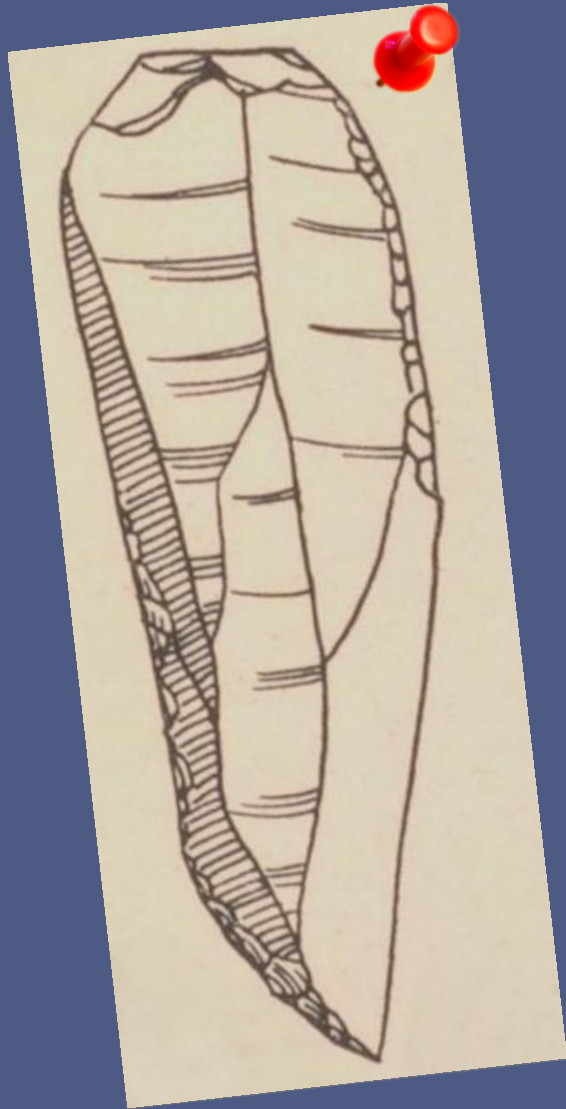
- Filled in rubbish pits filled with charred nuts and seeds etc.
- Marks in the ground where tent poles have been stuck in the ground
- Small flint tools and arrowheads

(if you find all these things you can be pretty sure you've found a Mesolithic site!)



At the Falmer excavation they found lots of small stone tools like these ones from the Brighton Museum collection, called microliths.





In this detailed sketch of one you can see more clearly how sharp it is (very!) and also the marks where it has been struck into shape by another stone. This process is called 'Knapping'



They are teeny tiny, smaller than a five pence coin

They were glued to spears and arrows and used to hunt prey

Would they have been hard to make? Why?

How would they have been made?

How sharp would they have to be?

How can you tell they have been worked by a human hand and aren't just naturally occurring flint shavings?

More of these microliths were found while developing the Falmer site than at any other site in Sussex



THE MESOLITHIC ECHO

Friday 25 March 10000 BP


MAN CAUGHT 'KNAPPING' AT FALMER SETTLEMENT

TRIBE MOTHER SAYS:
'HE KNAP FLINT—
NOT NOD OFF!'

The shelter at this Mesolithic campsite may one day have a stadium for the Seagulls built on it. Tribe mother doesn't know anything about seabirds playing sport but will happily eat one for tea, given half the chance.



What do you think
the Mesolithic
people would think
about the new
football stadium?



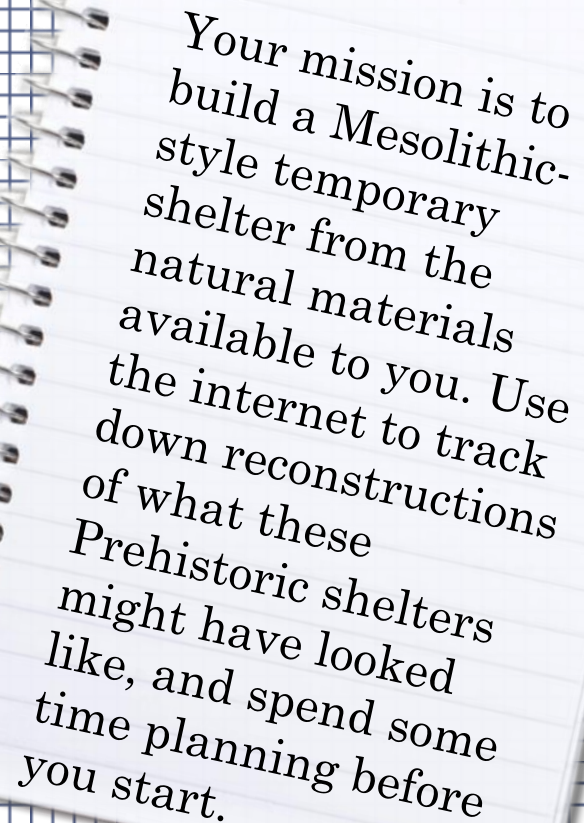
Survival,
Mesolithic
style!

You will need:


- A grassy outside space or clearing
- Some big branches
- Some animal hide
(Well, some big pieces of cloth will do!)
- Some strong string



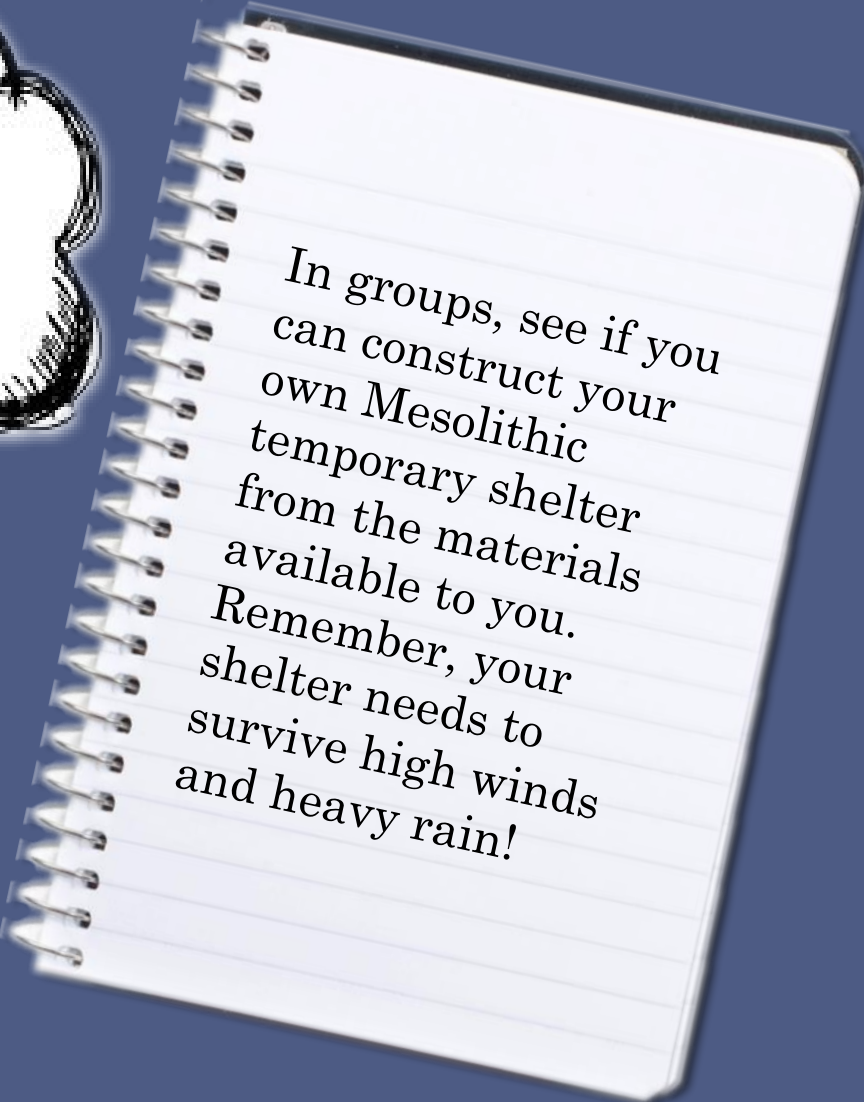
Your
mission...



Your mission is to
build a Mesolithic-
style temporary
shelter from the
natural materials
available to you. Use
the internet to track
down reconstructions
of what these
Prehistoric shelters
might have looked
like, and spend some
time planning before
you start.



In the
open air...



In groups, see if you
can construct your
own Mesolithic
temporary shelter
from the materials
available to you.
Remember, your
shelter needs to
survive high winds
and heavy rain!

Now that you understand a bit more about Mesolithic Brighton, it's time to put the theory into practice. It is still quite common to find prehistoric microliths on the South Downs. So next time you're out riding your bike or having a picnic in the sunshine be sure to keep your archaeologist eyes peeled – you'll be amazed at what you might find!



Thanks for
downloading.
See you soon!



Supported using public funding by
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