

Flint Identification

Start
What is it made from?

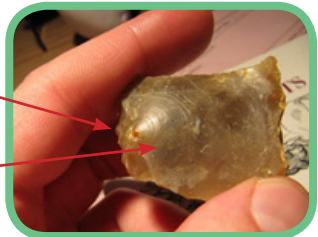


This can't be a stone tool! Try searching the internet or asking an archaeologist to identify it.

It may be hard to see some of the features of stone tools mentioned in this guide on your piece of stone, but most pieces worked by humans will show at least one or two of these.

Can you see a bulb of percussion or a striking platform?

Striking Platform - the flat surface where a blow from a hammer hits.
Bulb of percussion - a swelling below the point of impact.



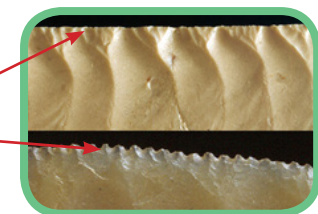
Are there ripples radiating across the inner face of the flake?

The ripples will spread out from the point of impact, with the concave side facing this point.



Are there any signs of retouching?

The edges of flint tools may be retouched to make them sharper (or blunter). This involves striking more material from the edge of the flake of flint. Some of this retouching can be very fine, others may take off larger chunks.



Does it have a fractured pattern across its surface?

When flint is heated, for example in a campfire, it can make the surface of the flint crack and sometimes turn pink or red.



Flint is the most common material for prehistoric tools. This is because it is a common natural material and is very sharp when it breaks. Bone tools are also quite common, but are not preserved as well.

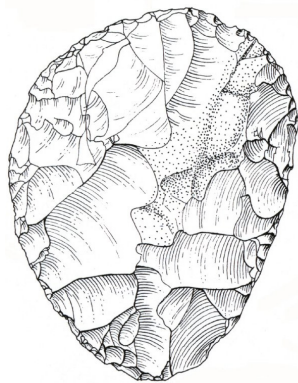
The oldest stone tools date to about 3.3 million years ago, and they were made in Africa by another species that pre-dated humans. Human beings began to make stone tools about 2.6 million years ago, and stone continued to be the main material for tools until metalworking was discovered in the Bronze Age.

Flints could be used to make arrowheads, axes, spear points, or quern stones (a stone used for grinding - they were first used in the Neolithic to grind cereals into flour).

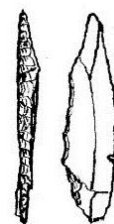
Flint tools can come in lots of shapes and sizes. Some of the most common ones are:



Handaxes - often about the size of a hand but can be bigger. Narrower at one end.



Scrapers - smaller, often about the size of the palm of the hand.



Microliths - very small flakes intended to be put into a wooden or bone shaft.