

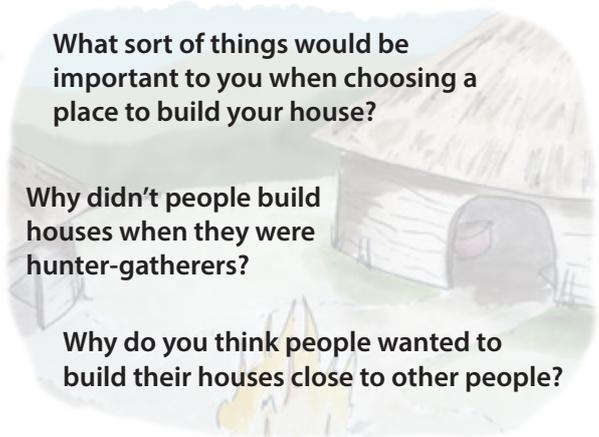
PREHISTORIC BRITAIN

Active Worksheet Pack

What sort of things would be important to you when choosing a place to build your house?

Why didn't people build houses when they were hunter-gatherers?

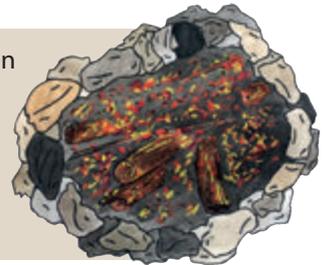
Why do you think people wanted to build their houses close to other people?



Home and Habitat

By the Neolithic (new stone age) era people had started to farm the land and domesticate animals which meant they needed to stay in one place. This led to the building of houses made from stone, wood and animal skins. As time passed from the Neolithic through to the Iron Age period, houses became more sophisticated and the construction techniques more complicated.

Round houses usually had a fire or oven at their centre so that the room would benefit from heat and light, and that smoke would float up into the highest part of the roof to avoid choking the people sat on the floor below.

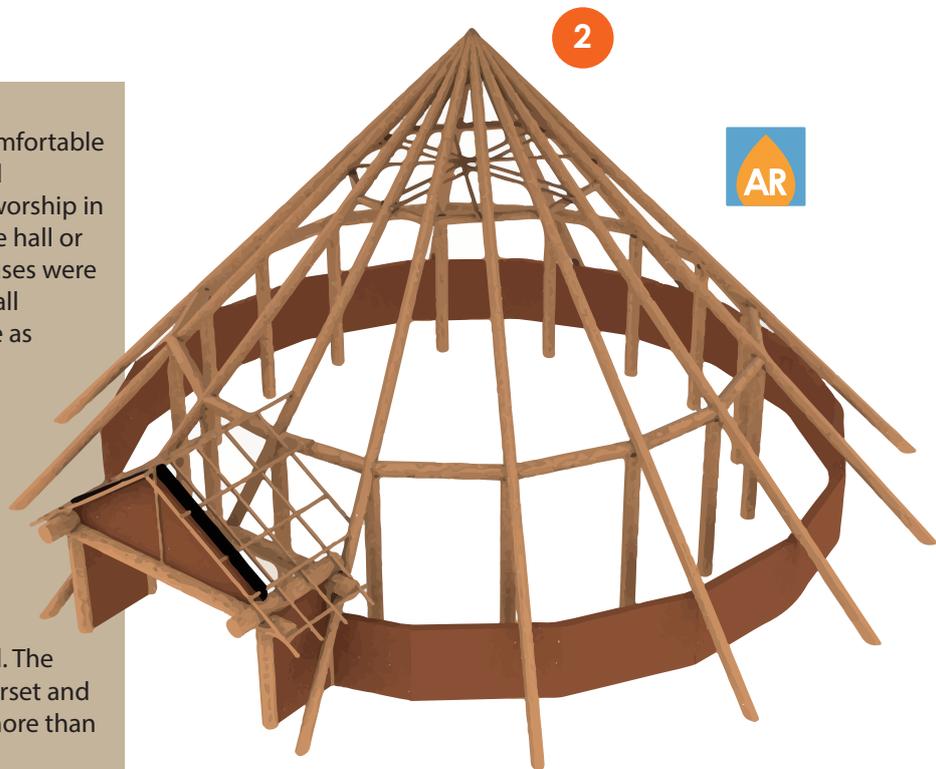


Life in the Round

During the Iron Age, houses became more comfortable and people started to build more complicated structures that they could gather or possibly worship in (serving the same purpose as a modern village hall or church). For some reason, more and more houses were built in a round shape. Most of these were small (5-8 metres across) but some could be as large as 15 metres across.

Why Round?

In building round houses, Iron age people in Britain were unusual. It could be they were copying the stone circle style. In most of Europe the older style of rectangular and square buildings were more common. People in Britain returned to building square or rectangular homes when the Romans invaded. The largest Iron Age round house was found in Dorset and had a floor area of 180 square metres (that's more than an average modern house).



Nomad to Settler

Remember, hunter gatherers were nomads so the first human made habitats were probably little more than tents. They would have been made from branches and animal skins. Fire was important to cook, provide light and keep wild animals away! Shelters like this could have been packed up and moved to follow a herd of elk or reindeer. When humans started to settle, they needed more permanent houses.

