

Week 5 Lesson 2

Tools and weapons from iron and copper

New words

technology	applying knowledge to practical problems
(metal) ore	a special type of rock that contains a large amount of metal
smelting	melting metals at a high temperature
furnace	a special kind of fireplace or fire pit
cultivate	prepare the fields for crops
blacksmith	a person whose job is making things by hand out of metal that has been heated to a high temperature

The Southern African Farmers knew that working the land by hand was hard work and they needed strong, sharp tools to make work easier and faster. In order to chop down trees and to cultivate fields, farmers need to have the right tools. Iron and copper are better for these purposes than bone or stone. Iron Age technology was therefore better than Stone Age technology.

Iron ore is found in rocks in many parts of Africa. Around 1 700 to 2 000 years ago, during the Iron Age, the early African farmers discovered metal ores, and learnt how to extract (take out) the metal from the ores. The first farmers mined the iron ore and figured out how to turn the ore into liquid metal through a process called smelting.



A simple smelter consisted of a hollow in the ground over which a dome-like structure of clay was built. Skilled men would gather as many of these metal ores, mainly containing copper and iron and smelt them into a solid lump of metal. They would then take this lump of metal to the local male blacksmith. It was smelted down in a hot fire or furnace by the blacksmith. It could then be worked and shaped into whatever they needed to make.

Women were not allowed near the furnaces.

The tools that were made, were very important to the farmers. They needed hammers, strong axes and hoes to work the land, and the men needed knives, spears and arrowheads for weaponry. Not only tools and weapons were made from these metals, but also jewellery and ornaments, if there was enough metal for these objects.



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Answer the questions below

1. Using your knowledge from the text, complete the following paragraph: (if you have not printed the worksheets, then just write the words for number 1.)

The African farmers then discovered that a) _____ certain rocks or ore gave them a stronger material for them to use for tools.

These ores contained b) _____ and c) _____.

When someone works with metals through smelting them, they are called a d) _____ .

How were iron tools made?

First, they e) _____ ,

then they f) _____ in a g) _____

and then they took it to the h) _____ who i)

_____ again and then j) _____.

2. What else do you think they would have made with the iron and copper ore? (3)

3. Do you think 'Iron Age' is a good name for this time in history? Why do you think so?

