

The Bronze Age | Higher Level Notes

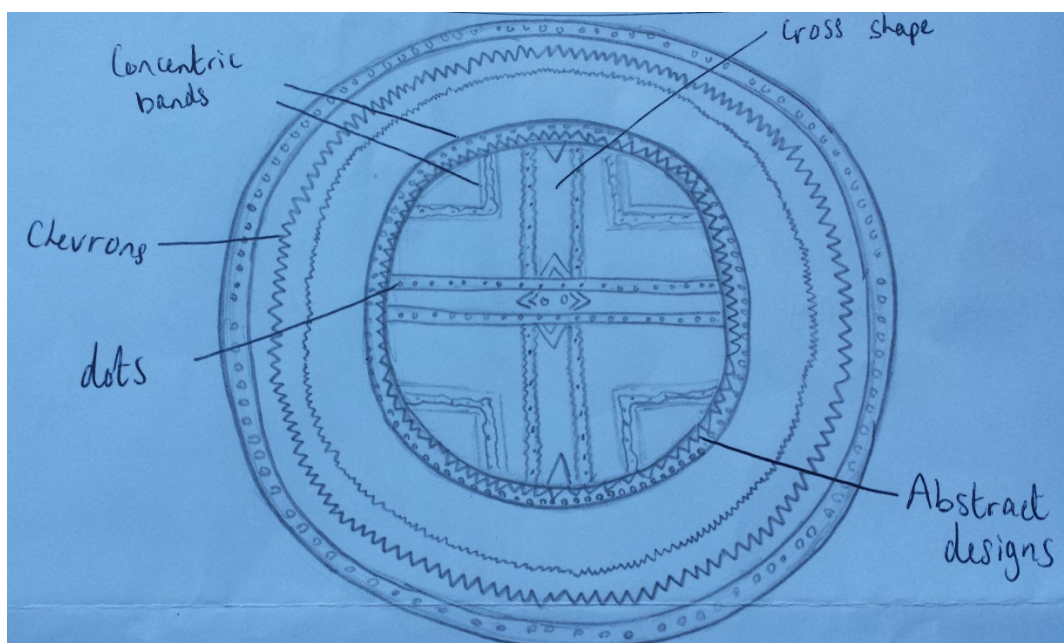
Background information (Often suitable for intro to bronze age essays):

There are three stages to the Bronze Age. The Early Bronze Age lasted from 2000-1500 BC, the Middle Stage from 1500-1200 BC and the Late Stage from 1200-500 BC. During the Early Bronze Age, Stone Age culture was still prominent in south and west Ireland, meanwhile new Bronze Age culture and technology was starting to develop in the north, east and midlands, thought to have been introduced to the country by the Beaker People.

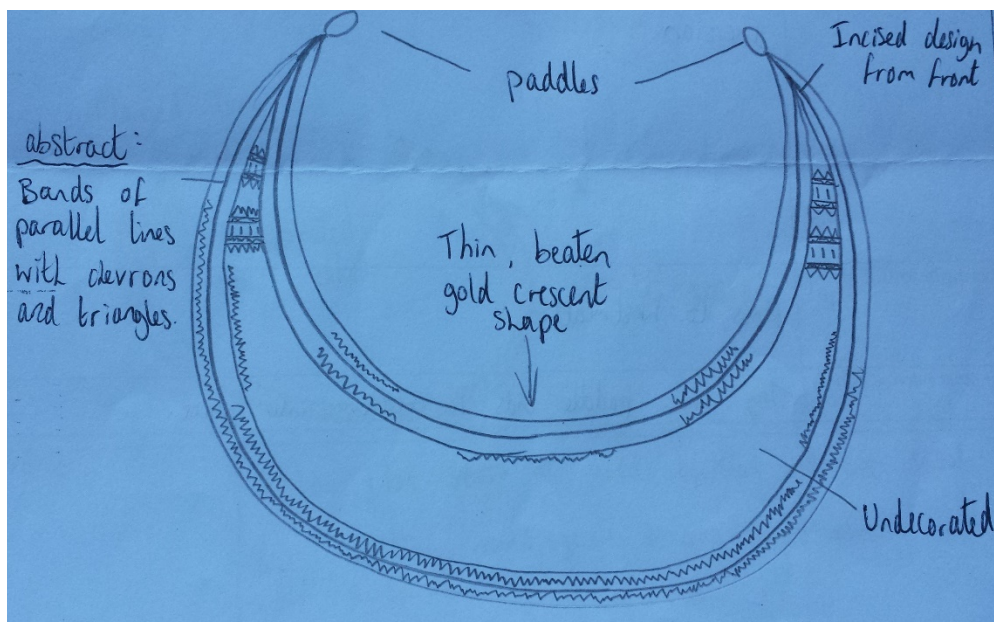
The Beaker People came from mainland Europe and got their name from the shape of their unusual pottery. It is believed that the Beaker People came to Ireland in search of metals, leading to the Bronze Age, when bronze took over from stone as the main material that was used to make tools, weapons and decorative pieces.

There is plenty of evidence to prove that mining for silver, gold and copper took place in Ireland. Copper was mined at Mount Gabriel in Co. Cork, gold in the Vale of Avoca in Co. Wicklow and silver in Co. Tipperary. However, tin is needed along with copper to make bronze since it is an alloy metal, but it could not be found in Ireland so it was traded for gold with Britain.

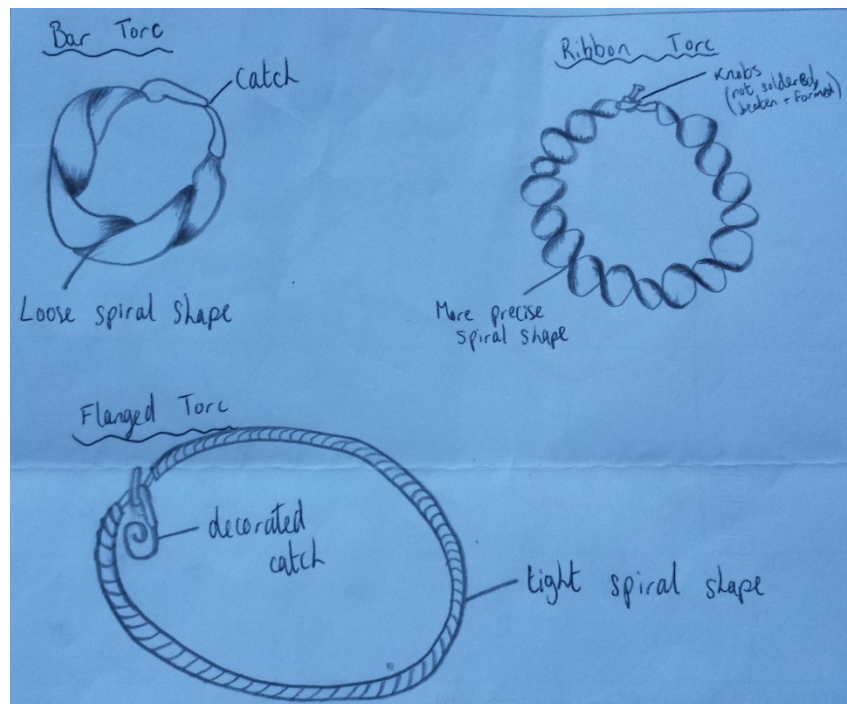
Bronze Age Objects:



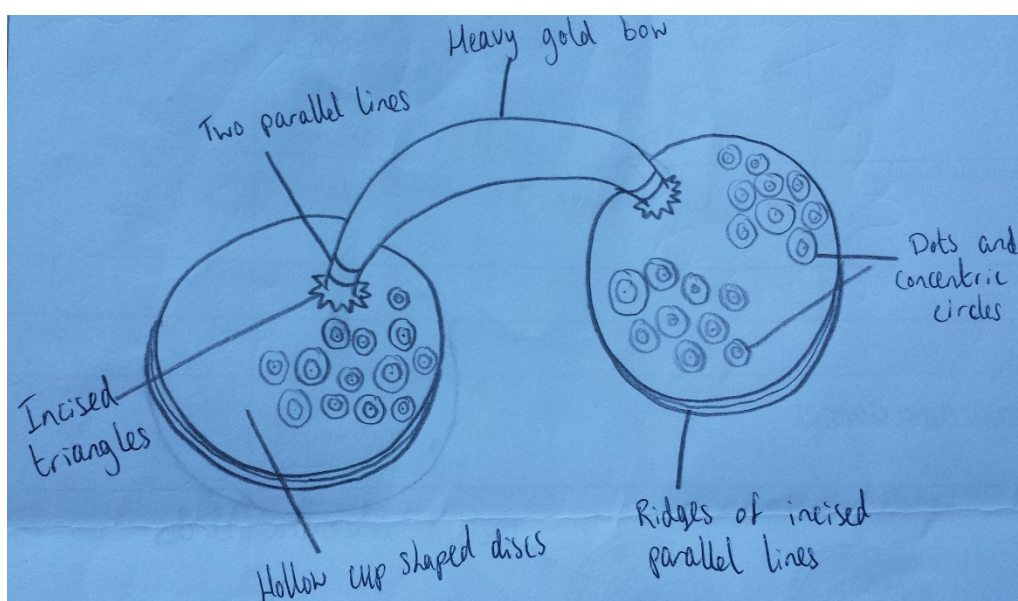
Name	Sun disc
Form	Thin, circular disc of gold
Function	Possibly used to decorate clothing
Decoration	Simple geometric designs (usually chevrons, dots and triangles)
Technique	Repoussé
Example	Tedavent, Co. Monaghan



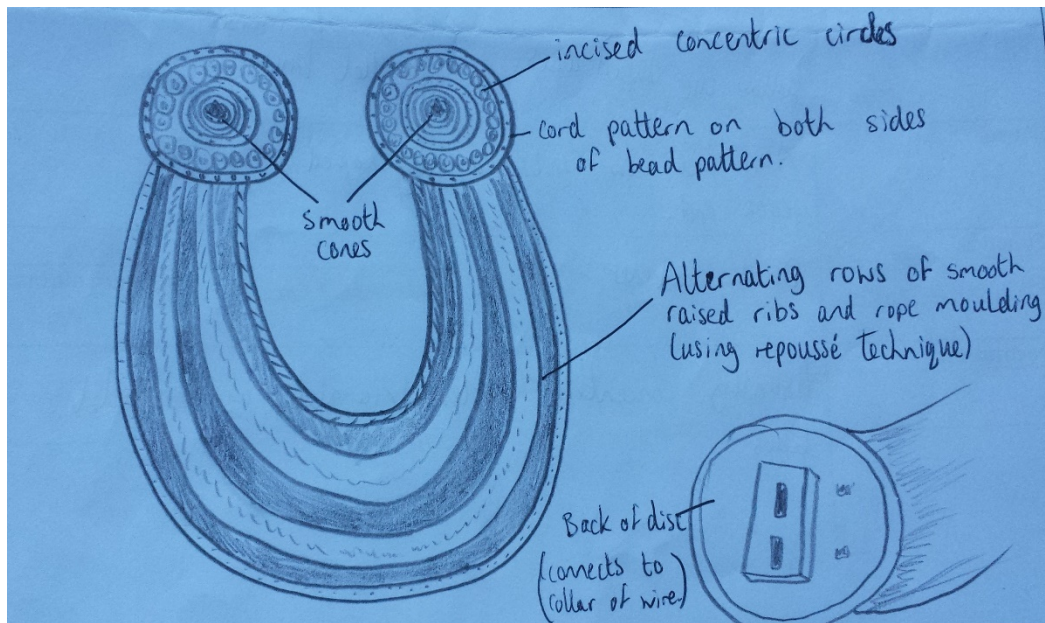
Name	Lunula
Form	Thin sheet of gold cut into crescent moon shape
Function	Neck collar ornament
Decoration	Simple geometric (usually parallel lines, chevrons, hatched triangles)
Technique	Incision
Example	Ross, Co. Westmeath



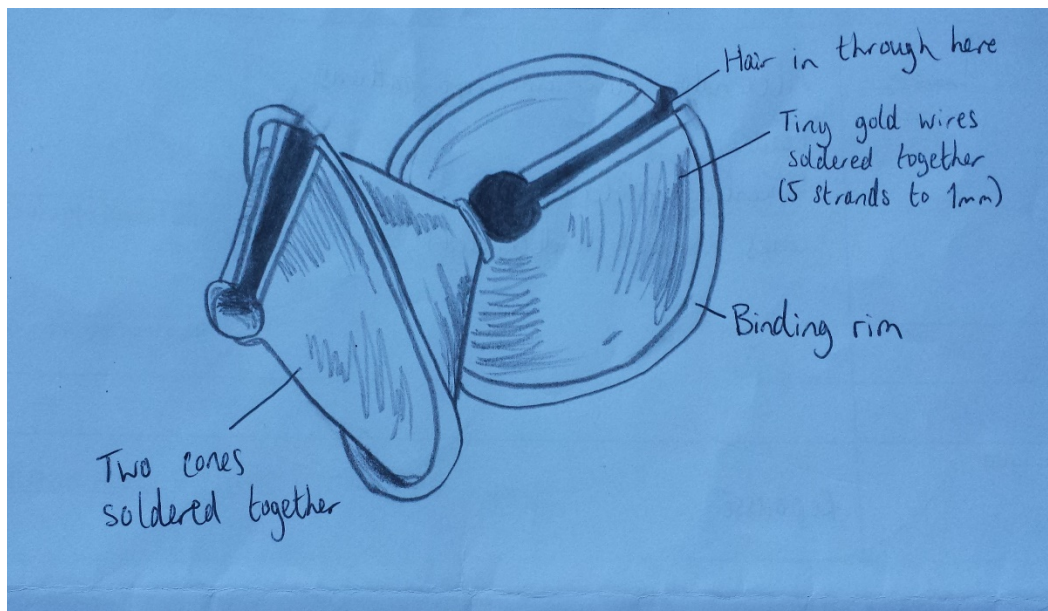
Name	Torc (Bar, Ribbon and Flanged)
Form	<p>Ribbon: Flat strip of gold twisted into even spiral</p> <p>Bar: Round, square or cross-shaped rods of gold twisted into spiral.</p> <p>Flanged: Flanges hammered out from angles of square rods before twisting.</p>
Function	Jewellery



Name	Fibula
Form	Gold bow with a cup-shaped disc at each end
Function	Dress fastener
Decoration	Simple geometric
Technique	Incision
Example	Clones, Co. Monaghan



Name	Gorget
Form	Semi-circular collar with a gold disc at each end
Function	Neck collar/ornament
Decoration	Alternate plain and rope patterns, beads, concentric circles, cones
Technique	Repoussé
Example	The Burren, Co. Clare



Name	Lock rings
Form	Fine gold wires soldered together into a double cone shape with a narrow opening down one side
Function	Hair ornaments
Example	Gorteenreagh, Co. Clare