FAQs

List few prehistoric structures belonging to the paleolithic era and explain any one.

Few paleolithic structures are

- Menhir
- Dolmen
- Beehive hut
- Megalith
- Cromlechs

DOLMEN

The word dolmen originates from the expression taol maen, which means "stone table" in Brittany. The first builders used stones that were within their reach. They built dolmens - sort of structures in a form of a "table", consisting of two huge standing stones supporting a horizontal giant stone. Each of the stones weighs several tons, but those huge stone blocks are laid one upon the other without mortar. There were also low dolmens only about 1.5 meters tall. Originally, the dolmens were covered with more stones and earth, but as time went on, only the megalithic structures remained.

We find dolmens throughout Western Europe, from Italy to the northwest of Ireland, from southern Spain and Portugal to Denmark and southern Sweden. In Israel, hundreds of them are found in the Golan Heights and many others near Kibbutz Shamir.

The dolmen probably served as a grave or as an altar, a table of the gods who were conceived of as giants. There were also found dolmens laid out one after another, in sequence in a form reminiscent of a corridor. "Corridor" type dolmens appeared in western France in the 5thmillennium BCE.

When dolmens are standing in a long line (like those in Carnac), they are probably associated with the cult of death. Some of the "corridor" type dolmens served as collective graves, which is why some interpret them as tombstones.

Unlike the menhirs, around which many people gathered, the corridor type of dolmens allowed access only to a limited number of people, being structures with limited space. Findings from recent years indicate the overlap between the time of menhirs lines, menhirs circles and grave structures. These three elements were probably part of one religious system.

Apart from the corridor type of dolmens there was another form of structure - a room with a corbel vault created by a series of horizontal rows of stones, each placed above the other. There are also structures that integrate these two forms of construction, such as a corbel vault over a corridor type of dolmen.

Construction method depended on the type of stones found nearby. Often reliefs adorned the burial chambers with patterns such as zigzag, curved line, axe, and more

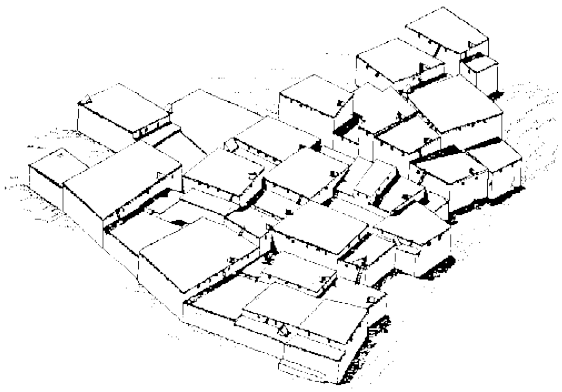
Explain the "Stonehenge"?

Stonehenge is a site in southern England, composed of a group of stones arranged in concentric circles. This array of stones is not a single structure, but a series of structures built and rebuilt over a period of about 1,500 years. Researches distinguish three phases of construction in Stonehenge. The first

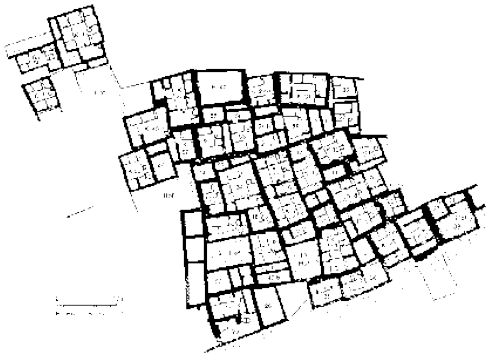
was completed in c.2900 BCE, the second took place during the years c.2900 – c.2500 BCE and the third - from c.2550 to c.1600 BCE.
This is the best preserved megalithic site in Europe. It included a large external circle of triliths (only in Stonehenge the dolmens are called triliths; trilith, literally in Greek: three stones), two internal circles built in a similar manner, and altar-shaped stone in the center.
Today it is hard to distinguish between the circles because some of the stones were gone and some have fallen out of position. In the heart of the inner circle stood a group of stones arranged in a horseshoe shape. The open side of the horseshoe was exactly directing to the point where the sun rises on the longest day of the year. During sunrise, the rays of the sun shine for several minutes exactly into the central axis of the horseshoe.
The round shapes repeated in Stonehenge are an example of a universal reference to celestial events in prehistoric architecture. Bodies that are visible in the sky are round, and according to many cosmological theories, from earlier times, the sun and the stars emerge from earth and return to earth every day.
According to a hypothesis of archaeologists, Stonehenge was a kind of temple where rituals were held on the dates of the longest and shortest days of the year. The relationship between the form of the structure and the "movement" of the sun in the sky made it easier for priests to identify the times when rituals associated with change of seasons would be held. These dates had a special meaning for the primitive man, who practiced agriculture and depended on climate conditions for his living.
The layout of stones in Stonehenge in its architectural structure anticipates later temples and cathedrals, whose orientation was planned according to the sun's daily east to west "movement".
About 80 stones called "bluestones", were brought from Preseli Mountains in southwest Wales to Stonehenge. The question is how the huge stones were brought into place and how the triliths were built. Researchers speculate that they were brought on barges along the southern coast of England, carried by the river, and finally dragged on the ground in sleds.
Apart from bluestones, there was another kind of huge stones in Stonehenge. These are sandstone rocks called sarsen, which were brought from a distance of 40 kilometers north of Stonehenge. These stones, much larger than the bluestones, were placed in a circle about 33 meters in diameter. Today this circle is called the "sarsen Circle". Over 30 stone pillars were placed with lintels (stone beams) above them forming a continuous ring of sarsen stones.Before being erected, they were fashioned with mortise and tenon joints.
The sarsen circle, due to its planning and design, is considered one of the greatest achievements of Stonehenge. The sophisticated engineering of the structure shows that its builders were experienced in building large wood structures.
Out of the 30 original sarsen pillars, 17 are still standing today, bearing six lintels. The horseshoe-shaped structure is also built from sarsen stones. Five pairs of these huge stones hold the lintels above them.

What is catal hayuk? Explain.
Catal Huyuk (pronounced cha-tel hoo-yek, or Çatalhöyük in Turkish) is an archaeological site in what is now south-central Turkey. It's considered one of the oldest cities in the world, dating from almost 7500 BC. With basic square

shaped dwellings and flat roofs, Catal Hoyuk's architectural development can only be considered as being in its childhood period. The entrances to the attached buildings were via the ceilings. This style of architecture can still be found in the eastern provinces of Turkey. Despite being very close in proximity to one another, the houses display separate walls with a small gap between them. The walls were built with sun-dried mud bricks supported by wooden beams. This technique is called "himis" and is still utilised in certain areas of Anatolia. The small doorways in the houses are thought to have been for small domestic animals to get in and out. The inhabitants of Catal Hoyuk used the flat roof tops as a means of getting from one dwelling to another. The roofs were made from clay, wood and reeds and measured approximately 60 centimetres in width. The roof tops were a convenient place to carry out daily activities as the interiors of the houses had poor light and ventilation.



Catal Hoyuk's architectural structure allowed Mellaart to make use of the square shaped buildings when excavating by using the walls as a guide to designating parcels for research. This was made easier for the researchers as the walls were easily visible after slighty sweeping the surface of the roofs and because the excavations continued house by house the entire process was made less difficult.



However, because the plans and sizes of the buildings are all similar it is difficult to ascertain whether any of them are ordinary dwellings or sacred places. The dwellings have a main rectangular room with two side rooms used for storage. For means of heating a round or rectangle shaped stove was used. Furthermore, horseshoe shaped ovens were found. Each house also had a raised bank of earth or stone which was used as a table, divan and bed. These raised banks were also used for the burial of the dead and were covered with woven mattings thought to be earliest forms of kilims