

Bronze Age craft fact file

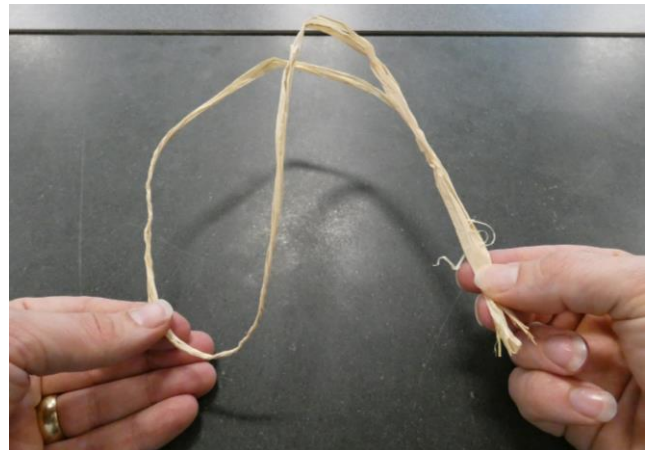
- People in the Bronze Age were expert craftspersons. They made metal tools, weapons and objects from bronze, copper and gold; created pots from clay; knapped tools from flint and made a wide range of artefacts from bone, antler and wood.
- It might sound surprising, but plants were also really important for making string (which is also called cordage), rope and textiles. The inner bark of some trees, such as willow or lime, are excellent sources of fibres to make string, and the stems of stinging nettles can also be used to make string and cloth.
- At the Late Bronze Age site of Must Farm in Cambridgeshire, excavations have recovered amazing fragments of textile and cordage made from plants; they even found a whole ball of string!

Activity

In this activity, learn how to make your own cordage from plants, just like people in the Bronze Age did! To do this, you will need some plant fibres - the best thing to use is raffia ribbon, which can be found in most craft stores cheaply. Follow the instructions below, and watch the accompanying video to help you make your cordage.

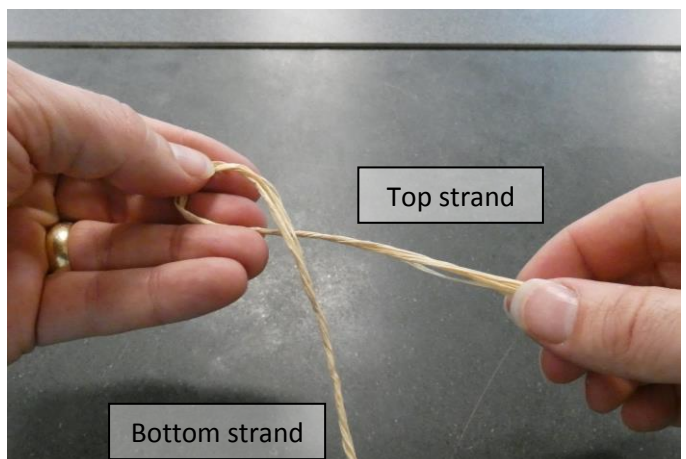
Step 1.

Take your strand of raffia, hold both ends in your right hand and hold the middle with your left hand.



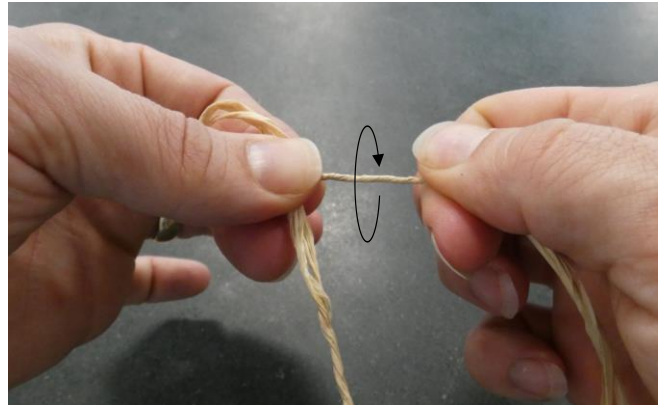
Step 2

Holding the middle of the strand with your left hand, create a loop as shown in the picture. Once the loop has been created, you need to identify your 'top' strand and 'bottom' strand.



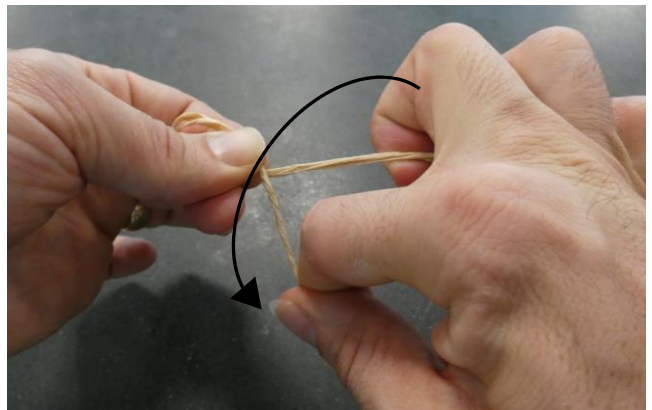
Step 3

Take your right hand and hold the top strand between index finger and thumb. Roll the strand between your finger and thumb, pushing your thumb away from you. This should twist the strand. Keep rolling until the strand is tightly twisted.



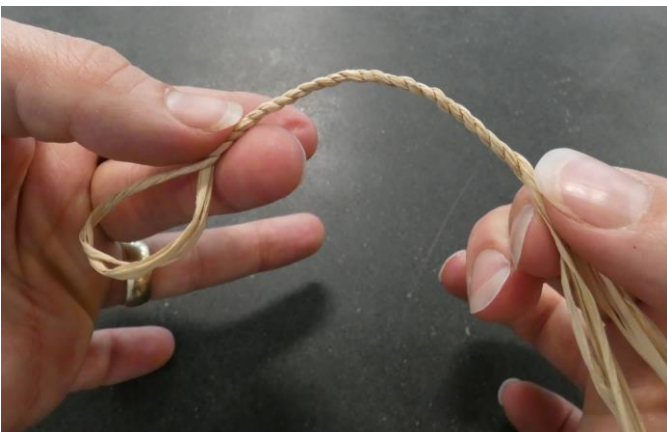
Step 4

With the top strand held between the finger and thumb of your right hand, use the other fingers on your right hand to grab the bottom strand.



Step 5

Keeping hold of both strands, twist your right hand toward you. This will twist the two strands together, pulling the bottom strand up to become the top strand, and pulling the top strand down to become the bottom strand.



Step 6

Let go of both strands with your right hand. Repeat steps 3-5 for the new top strand. Continue to repeat this to build up your cordage!