

Proposal for Emoji STONE TOOL

Related to the HAND STENCIL proposal

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Identification.

CLDR short name: stone tool

CLDR keywords: prehistoric tool | prehistoric hand-axe | flint | stone axe | biface | prehistory

Images.



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Sort location.

- A. Category: *tool*.
 - B. After *scale*.
-

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Selection Factors for Inclusion.



Lanceolate shaped hand axe. Image via wikipedia.org

Compatibility.

n/a

Expected usage level.

Since there's no reference emoji to prehistory, this would be the go-to emoji when discussing human evolution. It can also be used as a reference to technology, both ancient and contemporary - when paired with a pictograph of a computer, computer mouse, or mobile phone.

The stone tool emoji is transnational, transcultural and extremely inclusive: all of humankind used stone tools such as this hand axe. It can be considered a reminder of our common origins.

Primary users: science related (archaeologists, evolutionary biologists, anthropologists).

Secondary users: technology and art related (media historians, art historians, technology historians).

The stone tool emoji is not expected to be used extensively, but this is made up by its societal and historical relevance. *It's rather surprising there isn't one already!*

Evidence of Frequency (I).

Google search results for the term stone tool 730.000.000

Bing search results for the term stone tool 20.800.000

Google video search results 31.800.000

See screenshots and further evidence of frequency at the Evidence of Frequency (II) chapter at the bottom of this pdf.

Multiple usages.

As indicated above, the proposed stone tool emoji not only represents a prehistoric tool, but the whole scope of human prehistory itself, the rise of technology, and our common origins. In another layer of meaning, the hand axe may also be at the start of symbolic thinking itself, since it may not

only have been made to use as a tool, but also as a decorative object, or even currency, though this is, admittedly, quite specialized knowledge and up for debate.

Use in sequences.

Combined with modern day technological emoji, it may form a sequence of technology. Combined with modern day tools, it may form a sequence of tool history. The stone tool emoji has a distinctive historic timeline connotation.



Breaking new ground.

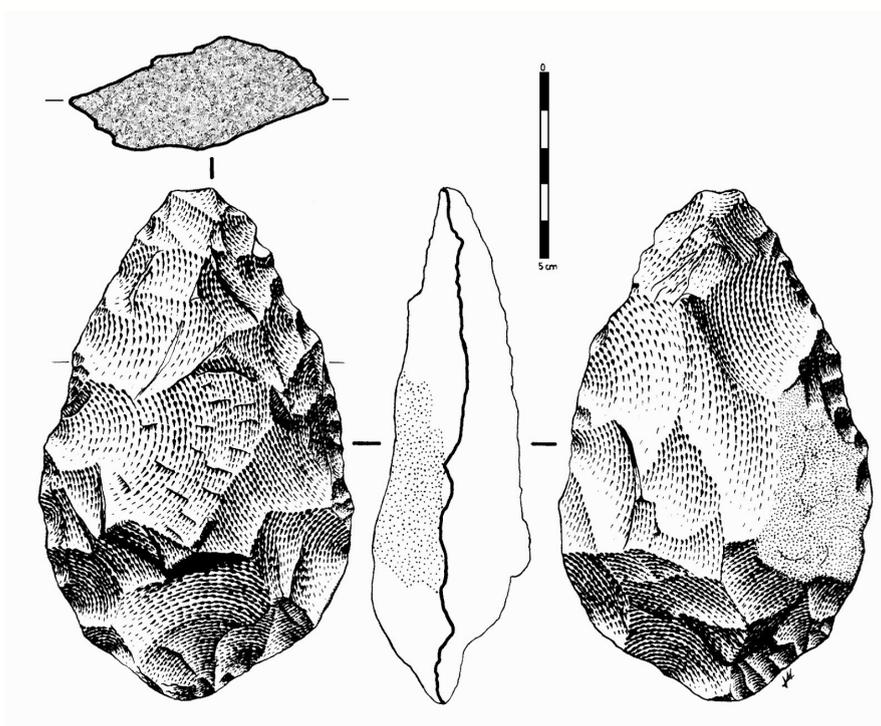
The proposed pictograph is breaking new ground. Human prehistory is at this point quite underrepresented if not totally absent in emoji. See also my other proposal for HAND STENCIL.

Distinctiveness.

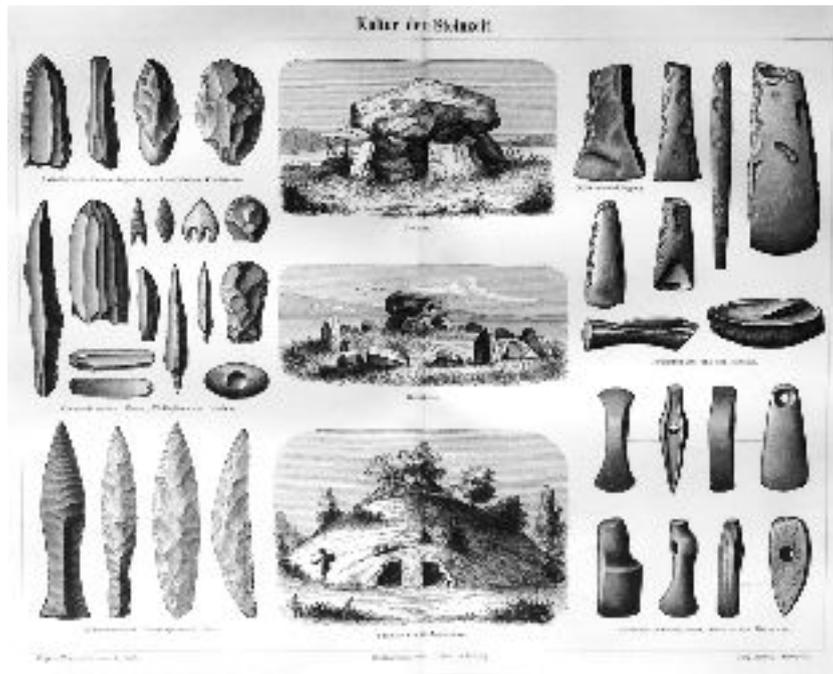
A stone tool form can be hard to define and comes in various shapes, sizes and colours. The archetypical stone tool is a multipurpose axe, scraper, hammer, or knife, made of red, yellow or grey coloured silex or flint, has a drop-like silhouette with a wider base and a more or less pointy tip, and has edges shaped by the removal of parts of the stone.

It distinguishes itself from a rock because of these pronounced chips. It's also different from a mountain due to its curved base.

People may very well be puzzled by the emoji at first, in a similar way as by the introduction of the Moai emoji or - a personal favorite - the hole emoji.



A typical Acheulean handaxe; this example is from the Douro valley, [Zamora](#), Spain.



Page from the German 1897 Meyers Konversation Lexicon, showing variations of Neolithic stone age tools.

Completeness.

As stated below 'Breaking new ground', the proposed pictograph does fill in a gap in existing types of emoji. There are many variations of stone tools, but the use of the lanceolate shaped Acheulean example, as one of the more distinct primal forms of prehistoric tools, should more or less cover all types.

Exceptions could, in theory, be flint arrowheads, and even (bone) fish hooks. Images below for comparison:



Selected factors for exclusion.

None.

Note point J. Transient: the proposed emoji transcends any kind of past or future temporary fad.

About this proposal.

About the submitter.

I'm Alexandra Crouwers (NL, 1974), a visual artist and artistic doctoral researcher at Leuven University in Belgium. My work arises in the digital realm. Using a combination of 3D software, digital post production and photography, I make animations, (video-)installations, woven tapestries, and works on paper. I'm concerned with the origins of art within human evolution, and I'm investigating ways to make artistic contributions to the internet. Often my work connects to the genre of science-fiction, and encompass references towards ecological collapse and eschatology.

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Trust game computer mouse and Neolithic stone scraper (12.000 - 8.000 B.C.). Collection of the artist.

The stone tool proposal.

Human history is evidenced by archaeological finds such as bone fragments, tools, and cave paintings that have survived millennia of decay or geological processes. The oldest stone tools - rocks that have purposely been optimized for use by shaping them - are a whopping 3.3 million years old.¹

¹ Lomekwi site, Kenya. See also <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lomekwi>

The first tools were made by an early human ancestor or a related species, such as *Australopithecus* or *Kenyanthropus*. Stone tools were a highly successful addition to our way of life, and were used extensively and globally until iron production took off, about 3000 years ago. ²

From the collection of the [MET Museum](#), New York:

Suitable for a variety of tasks, including digging, chopping, and butchering, Paleolithic hand axes are the earliest and longest-used kind of tool made by diverse species of hominids, with documented usage over a period of 1.7 million years. These nine examples, which were all discovered within a small geographic area in Aisne, France, are remarkable for their variety and the high quality of their workmanship.

They are a potent manifestation of an early and continuous human interest in perfection of form, and aesthetics in general, as demonstrated by their makers' efforts to endow them with symmetrical faces and edges, well beyond practical requirements.

The largest bifaces in this group are so substantial that they would have been of little to no use as tools. Although their specific functions remain a matter of speculation, it is clear that they must have been prized for their appearance rather than utility.

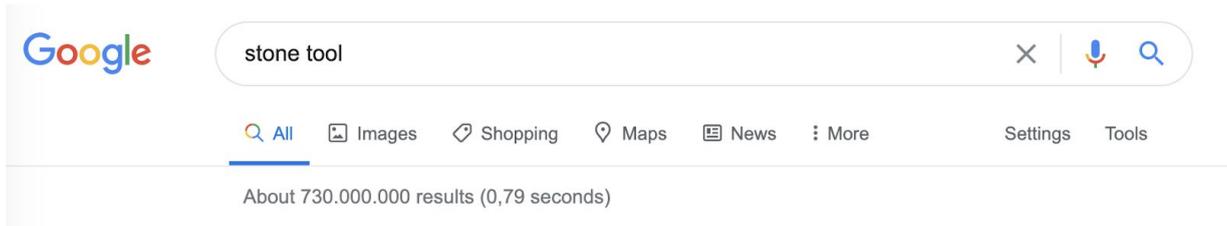


Nine Acheulean Bifaces: 700,000–200,000 B.C.

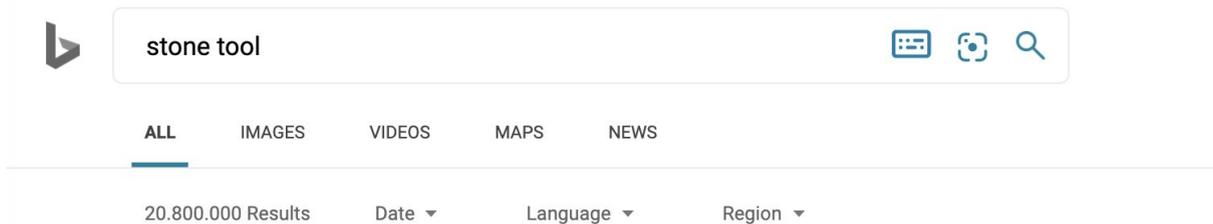
² Development of iron metallurgy. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron#Development_of_iron_metallurgy

Evidence of Frequency (II).

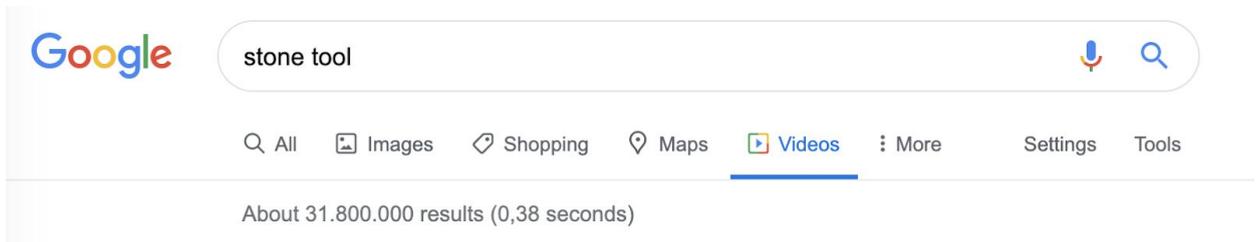
Google search for *stone tool*: 730.000.000 results.



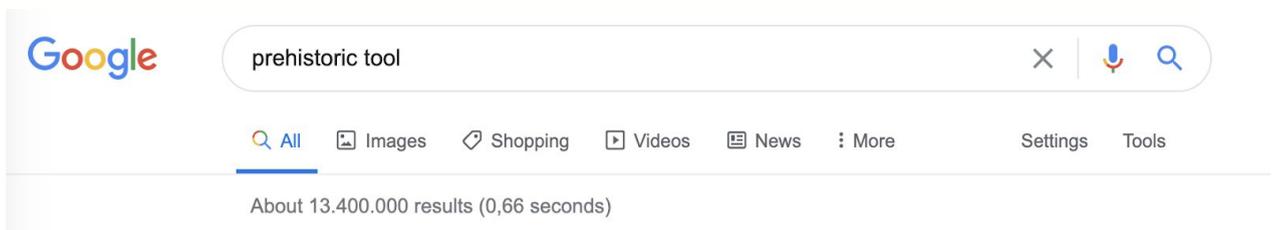
Bing search for *stone tool*: 20.800.000 results.



Google video search for *stone tool*: 31.800.000 results.



Related: Google search for *prehistoric tool*: 13.400.000 results.



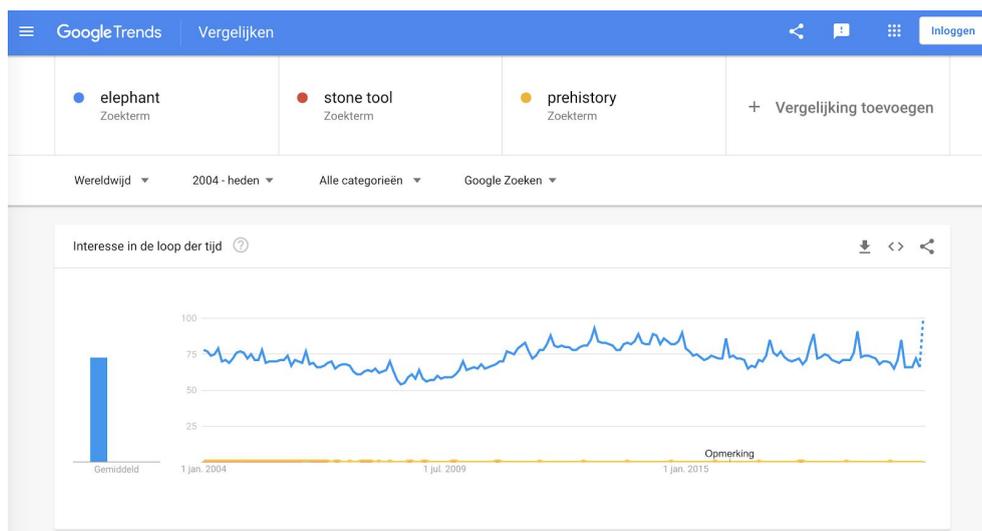
Google Trends: Web Search.

Note: the Google Trends page is in Dutch, but this doesn't affect the results. The search was done in incognito mode, using the parameters Global and the longest available period (2004 - now).

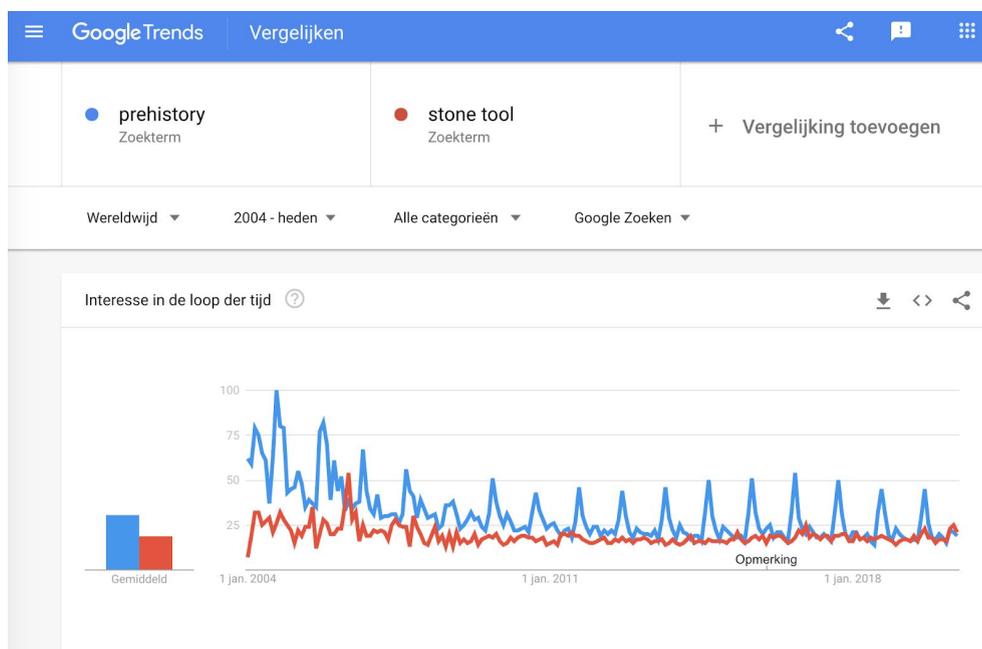
Elephant, stone tool, prehistory comparison.

Following the recommendation in the guidelines for this proposal, the results below show a comparison with the search term 'elephant', 'stone tool', and 'prehistory'.

Clearly, the results for both *prehistory* and *stone tools* are dwarfed by *elephant's* results. The images further down show a comparison between *prehistory* and *stone tool*. The results for stone tools have been stable over the period of more than ten years. Interestingly, each september, *prehistory* shows a spike in web search results. This may very well be related to the start of a new school- or academic year.



Below: Comparison 'prehistory' and 'stone tool'.



Below: Google Trends: Image Search.
Comparison 'prehistory' and 'stone tool'.

