

# Sedimentary Rocks:

## A Link to Native American Tools

### Teacher Background



Flint knapping is the age-old art of making arrowheads and other edged stone tools. Hunter-gatherers relied upon this key wilderness survival skill to create important tools and hunting implements. At its most basic level, flint knapping consists of: breaking open a piece of parent material (called a core); striking flakes off of that core; and then shaping those flakes into the intended tool.

The best stones for making arrowheads include **flint, chert, obsidian, jasper, quartzite** and other stones that are somewhat brittle and have a fine-grained, uniform texture that is free of cracks, fissures, and fractures. Glass and porcelain can also be used. You can also tap the stone and listen to the pitch. Stones that produce a higher pitch when tapped are generally better for knapping. Flint is found in the layers of sedimentary rock and has undergone the same rock process.

In prehistoric times, flint was used to make axes, knives, scraping tools and spearheads. Their survival depended upon having a durable material that could be used to produce sharp tools. Flint was used discovered and utilized by Stone Age people in almost every early culture located where flint was easily found. Their survival depended upon having this durable material that could be used to produce sharp tools and weapons. If these tools were broken or damaged in use, they were reshaped into smaller tools.