

# Iron

## 1 INTRODUCE



**What is this object called?**

An Iron.

**What job did this object do?**

It irons clothes.

**What object today does the same job? An electric iron.**



## 2 INVESTIGATE



Let the children feel the weight of the iron and ask them to think about how it is different from modern day irons.

## 4 HOW DID IT WORK?



***Tell the students that in the past it was always necessary to iron in the kitchen, near the wood fired stove. Ask them if this gives them a clue as to how the iron might work.***

**How does it work?**

The iron was placed on the wood fired stove to heat up. (Show Image 1).

**How long did it stay hot for? Not very long.**

**Why do modern day irons stay hot for a long time? Because they are powered by electricity.**

PTO

## 3 DESIGN/MATERIALS



**What is this object made out of? Iron (think correlation with name).**

**Why isn't it made out of plastic and metal like our irons today?**

Plastic was not available then.

**Why is it so heavy?**

Because it is made from iron. Iron is very dense and this makes it heavy.

**How would this weight affect the person using it? They would quickly get tired.**

**Did just the bottom of the iron heat up?** Some irons had a wooden handle, and that was okay, but for those that had an iron handle, this handle would heat up also. Ladies had to put a cloth around it to stop it burning their hands.

**Why did every house have two irons?** Because while one was heating up, the other one was being used.

**Who used it?** Generally Mum and the older girls. In more affluent households maids would do this job.



### **5 LEARN MORE...SAY...**

*In the past ironing was a big job and took a long time. Generally Tuesday was set aside for ironing. This was because Monday was usually wash day. A lot of women didn't use an ironing board like we use today, but instead used the kitchen table. If the iron got too hot it would burn the clothes so you needed to be careful. Sometimes while ladies were adjusting clothes on the table, they would put the hot iron on a piece of sunlight soap. This kept the hot iron off the table and also the soap made the iron glide more easily over the clothes.*

### **6 COMPARE IT TO TECHNOLOGIES TODAY**



**How is the iron different to irons of today?** Different fuel – electricity vs wood fired stove. Different materials – plastic vs iron. Electric irons are lighter. Electric irons shut off by themselves. Ironing can be done anywhere there is an electric plug.

**Do you think it is easier to iron clothes today or in the past? Why?**

### **7 THINK**



**What does this item tell us about the past?** That ironing took a long time. That there was no electricity in the past. That plastic was not always available.

**How would your life be different if you had to use these irons instead of the irons we use today?**

Image 1

