

Dart Points

The atlatl (or spear thrower) is a short stick, two feet or so in length with a small prong or hook at one end. It was used to throw a light spear or dart, which was tipped with a chipped stone point. Although simple in design, the atlatl is an extremely effective weapon, allowing the user to throw a dart or spear much farther—the length of a football field—than he could without it and with the force necessary to bring down large game. The atlatl is a very ancient weapon—no one really knows how old, but it was in use in the Old World at least 20,000 years ago—and there is a strong likelihood that the earliest people to enter the New World were equipped with it.

Discuss the following questions in your group:

What device do we use today to perform the same job that a dart point did then?

Which do you think is more effective, a dart point or the modern device?

