

GEOLOGICAL TIME SCALE

A Student's Guide to Earth's History

		Quaternary	2.6 - Present	Evolution of humans; Ice ages.
Phanerozoic	Cenozoic	Neogene	23 - 2.6	Bovids and early hominids appear.
		Paleogene	66 - 23	Mammals diversify; first primates.
		Cretaceous	145 - 66	Dinosaurs peak; mass extinction.
Phanerozoic	Mesozoic	Jurassic	201 - 145	First birds; dinosaurs dominant.
		Triassic	252 - 201	First mammals; first dinosaurs.
Phanerozoic	Paleozoic	Permian	299 - 252	Reptiles diversify; Pangea forms.

	Carboniferous	359 – 299	Coal-forming swamps; giant insects.
	Devonian	419 – 359	"Age of Fish"; first amphibians.
	Silurian	444 – 419	First vascular plants and jawed fish.
	Ordovician	485 – 444	Invertebrates dominant; first land plants.
	Cambrian	541 – 485	Cambrian Explosion; hard-shelled organisms.
Proterozoic	-	2,500 – 541	Oxygen increases; multicellular life.
Archean	-	4,000 – 2,500	Earliest life (single-celled bacteria).

Hadean

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4,600 -
4,000

Formation of Earth
and Moon.