

GEOLOGIC TIME SCALE



Era	Period	Epoch	Beginning of Interval (Millions of Yrs. ago)	Important Events
Cenozoic (2%)	Quaternary	Recent	.01	Modern man spreads worldwide Many mammals vanish
		Pleistocene	1.5 - 2	
	Tertiary	Pliocene	5	Oldest-known hominids Mammals reach their maximum diversity Grasslands - grazing mammals  Modern types of flowering plants appear Spread and diversification of mammals
		Miocene	22 - 23	
		Oligocene	37 - 38	
		Eocene	53 - 54	
		Paleocene	65	
Mesozoic (4%)	Cretaceous		136	Dinosaurs and many other organisms become extinct Peak of dinosaur diversity Flowering plants appear First birds. Dinosaurs increasingly abundant  First dinosaurs, first mammals
	Jurassic		195+	
	Triassic		225	
Paleozoic (10%)	Permian		280	Abundant cycads and conifers Extinction of many animals  First reptiles. Great coal forests, first conifers, first cycads  First amphibians First insects(?) Fishes abundant  First land life (plants and invertebrates)  First tabulate and rugose corals First bryozoa  First abundant record of marine life: trilobites common, first vertebrates
	Carboniferous	Pennsylvanian*	345	
		Mississippian*		
	Devonian		395	
	Silurian		435	
	Ordovician		500	
Cambrian		570		
Precambrian (approximately 84% of the history of life)				First living things - perhaps 3.5 billion years ago

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\*The Pennsylvanian and Mississippian Periods together are equivalent to Carboniferous.

**30 ENE. 1986**