

Era	Period	Epoch	Approx. Age B.P. (yrs)	Significant Event(s)
Cenozoic	Quaternary	Holocene (Recent)	10,000—present	Civilization
		Pleistocene	2×10^6 —10,000	The Genus <i>Homo</i>
	Tertiary	Pliocene	5 — 2×10^6	Appearance of hominids
		Miocene	24 — 5×10^6	Grasses/savannas
		Oligocene	36 — 24×10^6	Tropical forests break up due to cooling and drying
		Eocene	58 — 36×10^6	Earliest whales and bats; tropical forests at high latitudes
		Paleocene	65 — 58×10^6	“Laramide orogeny” (formation of Rockies); WY coal forms
Mesozoic	Cretaceous		144 — 65×10^6	1 st flowers; <i>T-rex</i>
	Jurassic		208 — 144×10^6	1 st birds and mammals; phytoplankton → crude oil
	Triassic		250 — 208×10^6	Appearance of dinosaurs; abundant conifers
Paleozoic	Permian		290 — 250×10^6	Formation of Pangea; Greatest mass extinction
	Carboniferous—Europe (In US, Pennsylvanian—Upper, Mississippian—Lower)		360 — 290×10^6	Coal swamps; 1 st reptiles
	Devonian		410 — 360×10^6	1 st amphibians; 1 st seeds, large trees and forests
	Silurian		440 — 410×10^6	1 st land plants
	Ordovician		500 — 440×10^6	1 st fish
	Cambrian		550 — 500×10^6	“Cambrian Explosion”
			3.5×10^9	Origin of Life
			4.5×10^9	Origin of Earth