



Geologic Timeline

Hints for Teachers

Scale

The scale of this timeline will change based on the size at which it is printed:

Print Size	Scale	Distance to formation of the Earth (4.6 BYA)
Letter	1 in. = 60 million years	5.5 ft. from end of chart
Legal	1 in. = 50 million years	6.5 ft. from end of chart
4 ft. long	1 in. = 12.5 million years	26 ft. from end of chart

Abbreviations

Due to space constraints, the following abbreviations were used:

P. – Paleocene, 65–56 million years ago

E. – Eocene, 56–34 million years ago

O. – Oligocene, 34–23 million years ago

M. – Miocene, 23–5 million years ago

P. – Pliocene, 5–2.5 million years ago

Names

The names used on this timeline are those that are most often used in conversation and within the Harvard Museum of Natural History's exhibits to denote different times in the past. However, the names represent different categories of time units. For example, the Proterozoic is an eon, while the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous are periods, and the Miocene, Pliocene, and Pleistocene are epochs.

The Holocene

The Holocene is the name for the most recent epoch, the one in which we live today.

Note that the name Holocene is written past the end of the time line. This most recent epoch began 0.01 million years ago and therefore could not be shown at this scale.