

# Astronomy 330



This class (Lecture 16):  
Biological Evolution  
**Timothy Noffke**  
**Se Hee Jang**

Next Class:  
Biological Evolution  
**Jennifer Christie**  
**Jennifer Wojcicki**

Music: *Spaceboy* – Smashing Pumpkins

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# HW #3



- **Mike Murphy:**  
<http://www.geocities.com/area51/orion/3781/etreality.htm>
- **Danielle Campanella:**  
[http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/11/1114\\_031114\\_setisearch.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/11/1114_031114_setisearch.html)
- **Nick Leners:**  
[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in\\_article\\_id=470579&in\\_page\\_id=1770](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=470579&in_page_id=1770)

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# Presentations



- **Timothy Noffke:** [Archaeoastronomy](#)
- **Se Hee Jang:** [ETs, so Far?](#)

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# Outline



- Two types of cell life: Eukaryotes and Prokaryotes.
- All life can be divided into 3 types:
  - Bacteria
  - Archaea
  - Eukarya

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## Biomarkers: How to look for extrasolar life.



- We need to decide how to search for biomarkers or chemical signatures of life.
- On Earth, methane and oxygen are indicators. They normally react. Something is keeping it out of equilibrium. Sort of like Venus disequilibrium.
- The Galileo spacecraft on its way out to Jupiter, turned and looked at the Earth.
- Did it detect life?



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## Biomarkers: Looking at Earth.



- Strong “red edge” from reflected light. Absorption from photosynthesis.
- Strong O<sub>2</sub>. Keeping oxygen rich atmosphere requires some process. It should slowly combine with rocks.
- Strong methane. Should oxidize. Replenished by life.
- Strange radio emissions that could be intelligent life.
- Recently, researchers have looked at the Earthshine from the moon.
- They agree with Galileo result. There is life on Earth.
  - Water
  - Oxygen
  - Tentative detection of “red edge”

<http://epod.usra.edu/archive/epodviewer.php3?oid=56256>

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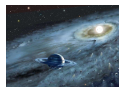


## Drake Equation



Frank Drake

That's 2.6 Life systems/year



$$N = R_* \times f_p \times n_e \times f_l \times f_i \times f_c \times L$$

# of advanced civilizations we can contact in our Galaxy today	Star formation rate	Fraction of stars with planets	# of Earthlike planets per system	Fraction on which life arises	Fraction that evolve intelligence	Fraction that communicate	Lifetime of advanced civilizations
	15 stars/yr	0.5 systems/star	2.7 x 0.134 = 0.36 planets/system	0.95 life/planet	intel./life	comm./intel.	yrs/comm.

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## Evolution of Intelligence



- First, we will examine the diversity of life; the fossil record shows a huge diversity with time.
- Organisms range from bacteria to humans.
- 1.8 x 10<sup>6</sup> known species
  - Insects account for most (1.0 x 10<sup>6</sup>)
  - Estimated that only 10% are known.
  - Bacteria are hard to classify—only 7700 species so far.



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<http://www.amonline.net.au/insects/images/site/insect1.jpg>



## Evolution of Intelligence



- Remember that all of these organisms use nearly identical genetic codes, so life descended from a common ancestor.
- Primary challenge of biology is to explain how life from a single type of organism, diversified so much.
- Evolution is the primary concept.



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## Life



If we took all the biomass of all the animals, and all the biomass of all the viruses, bacteria, protozoa, and fungi– who weighs more?



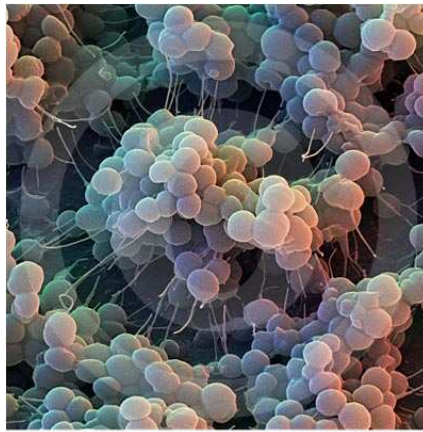
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## Bacteria



- 40 million bacterial cells in a gram of soil
- 1 million bacterial cells in a milliliter of fresh water
- Something like five nonillion ( $5 \times 10^{30}$ ) bacteria in the world.



Staph bacteria  
[http://www.scharfphoto.com/fine\\_art\\_prints/archives/000608.php](http://www.scharfphoto.com/fine_art_prints/archives/000608.php)

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## You or not you?



- This is more non-you cells in your body than you-cells in your body!
  - You are outnumbered 10 to 1!
  - Mostly on your skin and in your digestive track



Bacteria under a toe-nail

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/02/070206-skin-microbes.html>

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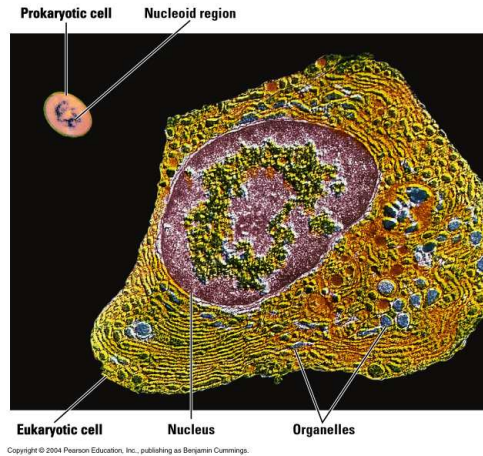
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# Classification of Life



## 1. Prokaryotes

- No cell nucleus– DNA floating around
- Always single-cell creatures like bacterium
- Came first
- Outnumber and outweigh the second class (eukaryotes)



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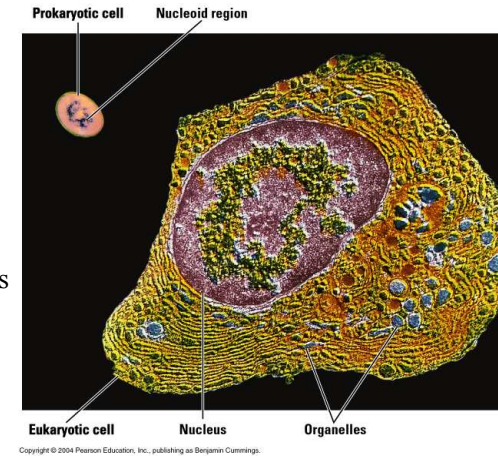
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# Classification of Life



## 2. Eukaryotes

- Have a cell nucleus, a membrane to protect the DNA
- Basis of all multi-cell creatures
- Also some single-cell creatures like amoebas.
- DNA arranged into chromosomes in nucleus– 23 pairs for humans.



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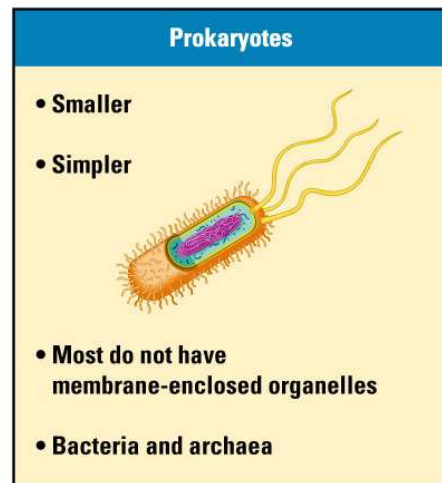
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## Prokaryotes



Divided into 2 domains:

1. Eubacteria or “true” bacteria
2. Archaea
  - 20% of the world’s biomass.
  - Thought to be the oldest surviving organisms.
  - Often found in harsh environments: hot springs, undersea vents, salty seashores, etc, which were probably more common on the early Earth.
  - Some evidence that ancient organisms were heat-lovers (maybe)



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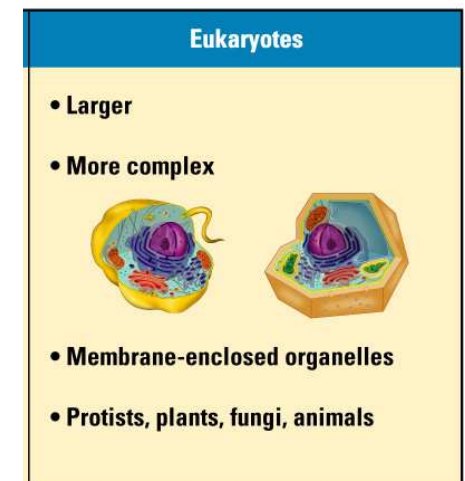
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## Eukaryotes



- All animals, plants, and fungi.



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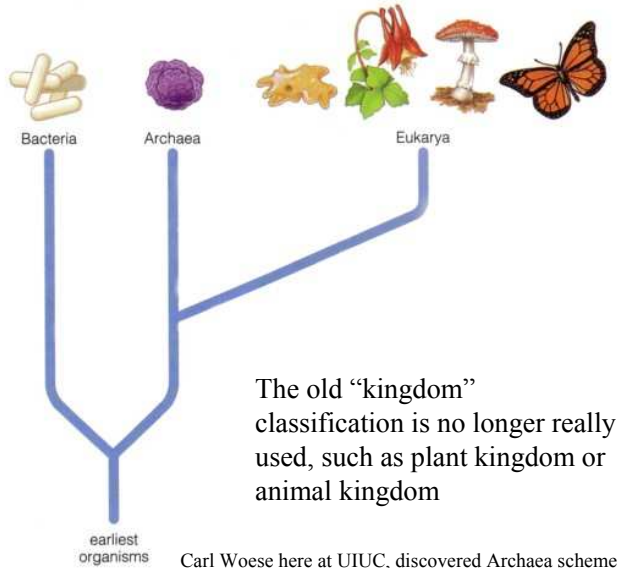
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## 3 Domains of Life



- Genetically speaking, Archaea and Eukarya are more similar to one another than are Bacteria and Archaea
- Implies that Archaea and Bacteria split and then all Eukarya split from Archaea
- A major implication for the evolution of life on Earth



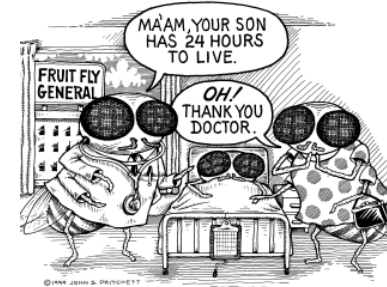
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## Genetic Relations



- This is a major change from the old methods of assigning groups based on outward form and anatomy.
- Instead based on studies of the genetic code.
- Surprise: Human and chimpanzees share about 99% of the same DNA, and about 97% with mice.
- Surprise: 2 species of fruit fly look very much alike, but only share about 25%. Some of this differences is due to *junk* DNA.

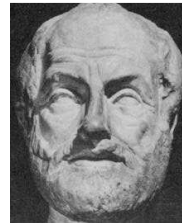


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<http://www.uglybug.org/index00.shtml>  
<http://www.pritchettcartoons.com/fruitfly.htm>

## Changes?

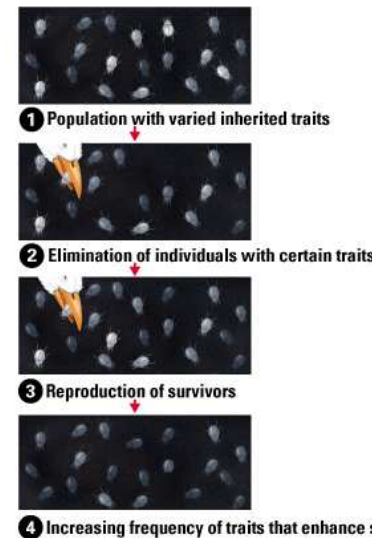


- Today's view: evolution is the most important and unifying property of life.
- Anaximander (c. 610–547 BC): life arose in water and gradually became more complex
- Empedocles (c. 492–432 BC): survival of the fittest (but, *"a good idea stated within an insufficient theoretical frame loses its explanatory power and is forgotten"* by Hans Reichenbach)
- Aristotle (384–322 BC): species are fixed and independent of each other → evolution discarded for 2000 years
- Fossil record: slowly broke down the Aristotelian theory

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## For the Species Survival



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- Darwin (1809–1882) & Malthus (1766–1834):
  - Populations can grow faster than food sources can support them.
  - Creates a struggle for survival that can wipe out competitors.
  - Individual variations has advantages or disadvantages in the struggle for survival
  - Natural selection can create unequal reproductive success

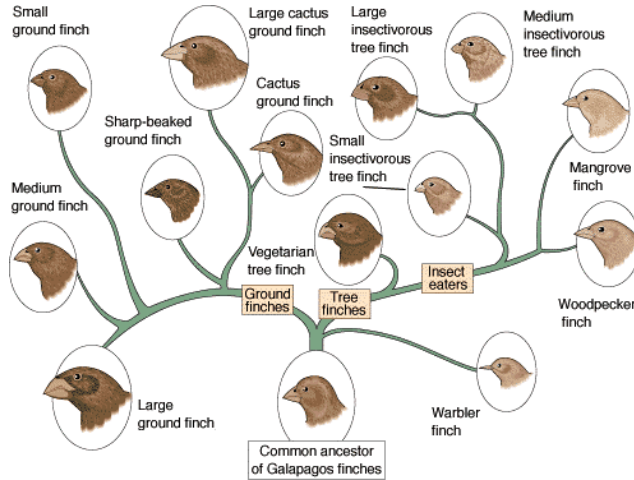
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# Filling the Niche with Finch



- Other Evidence:
  - Adapted species in the Galápagos Islands, in particular finches
  - Artificial breeding of house/farm animals and vegetables
- DNA is really the mechanism of natural selection, but evolution requires both heredity and environment



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# Mutant Sex



- Mutations from changes in the bases of DNA.
- Usually copying errors, but also radiation—radioactivity, cosmic rays, chemical agents, or UV light.
- About 3 mutations per person per generation.
- Most mutations are neutral, changes in the *junk* DNA.
- Why is sex important to this class?



[http://www.mutantx.net/features/press\\_vwSexy.html](http://www.mutantx.net/features/press_vwSexy.html)

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# Mutant Sex



- Sexual reproduction leads to greater genetic diversity— a difference between prokaryotes and eukaryotes?
- Asexual reproduction does not allow 2 new and beneficial mutations to combine.
- Blackberries have not changed much in 10 millions years, but sexual plants have produced: raspberries, thimbleberries, cloudberrries, dewberries, etc.
- Sex is useful in the process, but the mutations are still key.

<http://www.alcasoft.com/arkansas/blackberry.html>

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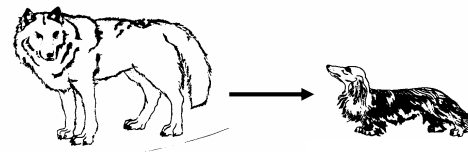
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# Does it take a long time?



Cabbage, kale, kohlrabi, brussels sprouts, cauliflower and broccoli have same common ancestor— wild mustard. All bred by humans on a very short time scale.

This is selective breeding, but still the potential is in the DNA.



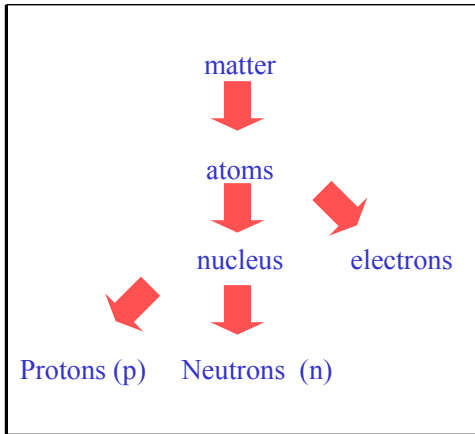
Or domestic lap dogs from wolves in about 5000 years.

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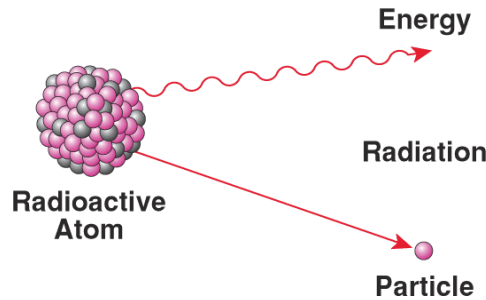
# Radioactive Dating



Recall:



- Most atomic nuclei stable
- But some nuclei are unstable.  
 $\Rightarrow$  decay to new nucleus  
**"radioactive"**



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# The Law of Radioactive Decay



As radioactive "parent" decays, the number of decay product or "daughters" increases

Decay Rule

Start out with N parents, 0 daughters

Time t since start	# parents	# daughters
0	N	0
$t_{1/2}$	$\frac{1}{2} N = \text{half as much}$	$\frac{1}{2} N$ have appeared
$2t_{1/2}$	$\frac{1}{4} N = \text{half again as much}$	$\frac{3}{4} N$
$3t_{1/2}$	$\frac{1}{8} N$	$\frac{7}{8} N$
$30t_{1/2}$	About $N/10^9$	99.9999999% N

Decay is a good "clock"

- Each radioactive species has different "tick"
- Rate= "half-life"
- Exponential decay from original population of  $n_0$

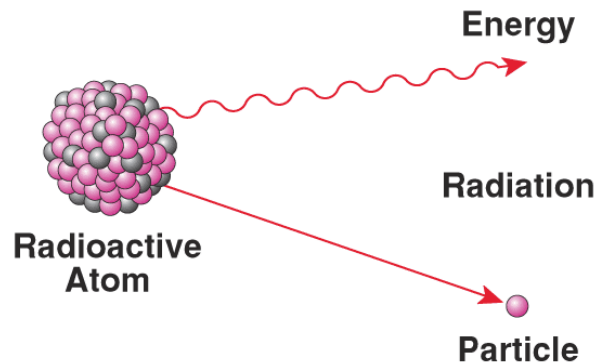
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# Radioactive Decay Examples



[http://www.colorado.edu/physics/2000/isotopes/radioactive\\_decay3.html](http://www.colorado.edu/physics/2000/isotopes/radioactive_decay3.html)



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# Radioactive Dating

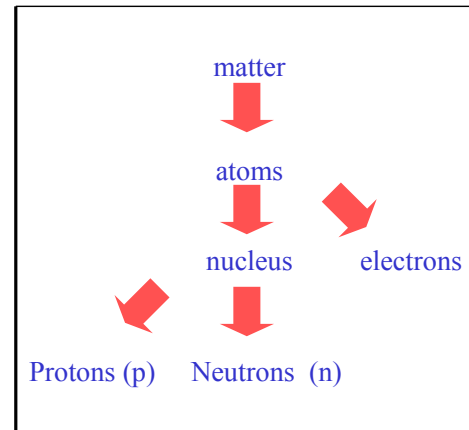


Example 1: Carbon C=6p

- Carbon-12: 6p+6n, stable
- Carbon-14: 6p + 8n, unstable (1/2 life of 5730 years)
- $^{14}\text{C} \rightarrow ^{14}\text{N}$  (nitrogen)
- Nitrogen-14: 7p + 7n, stable

Example 2: Uranium U=92p

- Uranium-238: 92 p + 146 n (1/2 life of 4.5 billion years)



$^{238}\text{U} \rightarrow \text{chain of decays} \rightarrow ^{206}\text{Pb}$  (lead)

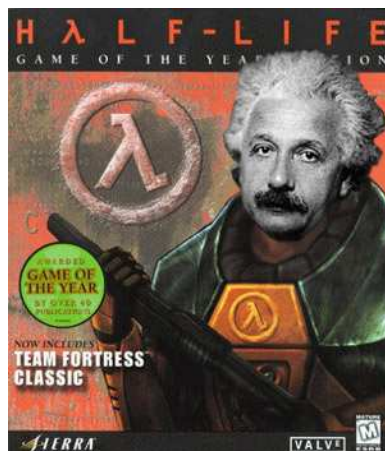
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## Carbon-14



- Cosmic rays from space are constantly hitting the Earth.
- React with  $^{14}\text{N}$  in atmosphere to create  $^{14}\text{C}$ .
- Decays back to  $^{14}\text{N}$  with half life of 5730 years.
- But, there is an equilibrium in abundance
- In atmosphere, the  $^{14}\text{C}$  is mostly in  $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ .



[http://bbspot.com/Images/News\\_Features/2003/12/half-life.jpg](http://bbspot.com/Images/News_Features/2003/12/half-life.jpg)

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## Carbon-14



- Plants take in  $^{14}\text{CO}_2$  with the  $^{12}\text{CO}_2$  and other animals eat the plants.
- So, every living creature has a equilibrium ratio of  $^{14}\text{CO}_2/^{12}\text{CO}_2$ .
- When the organism dies, the  $^{14}\text{C}$  decays to  $^{14}\text{N}$ . By measuring how much  $^{14}\text{C}$  remains, you can date the fossil.
- This works well to about 60,000 years.
  - Viking remains in Newfoundland– 500 yrs before Columbus.
  - Shroud of Turin to 1330 AD



<http://web.mit.edu/smcguire/www/newfoundland/newf16.html>

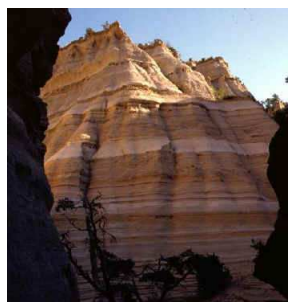
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## Dating Rocks



- First you ask them out?
- No, you need a radioactive decay that has a longer half-life than  $^{14}\text{C}$ .
- Potassium-argon
  - $^{40}\text{K}$  decays to  $^{40}\text{Ar}$  with a 1200 Myr half-life.
- Uranium-lead
  - $^{235}\text{U}$  to  $^{207}\text{Pb}$  with 700 Myr half-life.
- But these only work with volcanic layers.
- So, the ages of fossils are interpolated from ages of volcanic layers above and below them.



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<i>Era</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Myr Ago</i>	<i>Life Forms</i>	<i>Events</i>
Cenozoic	Quaternary	2	H. Sapiens	Ice ages
	Tertiary	65	Primates	Extinction of Dinosaurs
Mesozoic	Cretaceous	136	Birds	S. Atlantic open to 1900 miles
	Jurassic	190		N. Atlantic open to 600 miles
	Triassic	225	Mammals	Continental drift
Paleozoic	Permian	280	Reptiles	Pangaea breaks up
	Carboniferous	345	Amphibians	Formation of coal
	Devonian	395	Insects	
Precambrian	Silurian	430	Land Plants	
	Ordovician	500	Fish	
	Cambrian	543	Trilobites	
		545	Small Shelly Fossils	
		580	Ediacarans	
		600-800	Multicellular life	Snowball Earth episodes

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# Increase of Complexity



- Last table showed only the last 800 Myrs.
- More complex and intelligent organisms appeared later on.
- For many years it was thought that life originated in the Cambrian era, then Precambrian fossils were found.
- Then, it was realized that there were single-celled fossils that required microscopes.

<i>Myr Ago</i>	<i>Era</i>	<i>Event</i>
Now	Cenozoic	
	Mesozoic	
	Paleozoic	Macroscopic life/Snowball Earth
	Precambrian	
1000		Worm tracks
		Multicellular algae
		Eukaryotes certain
		Sexual reproduction
2000		Eukaryotes possible
	Protozoic	Oxygen-rich atmosphere
		Snowball Earth
		Formation of continents
3000	Archean	Life begins?
4000		Formation of Oceans
		Bombardment decreases
		Frequent impacts
	Hadean	Earth formed

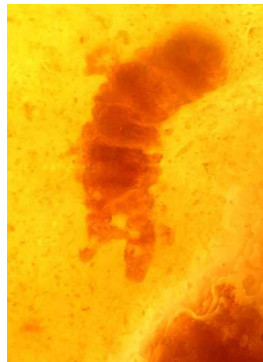
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# Concepts



- As prokaryotes are simpler than eukaryotes, we expect them to exist first.
- Identifying fossil prokaryotes is difficult: they're tiny!
- But there is enough evidence that before 1500-2000 Myrs ago there are only prokaryotes fossils.
- Note: the oldest fossils (3800 Myrs ago) are under dispute, but the 2800 Myr old fossils are universally accepted.
- All of the macroscopic life only arose in the last 600 Myrs– 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the history of life on Earth.



<http://www.earth.ox.ac.uk/research/geobiology/geobiology.htm>

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# Making Oxygen!

- The early prokaryotes played a crucial role for life on Earth by producing oxygen through photosynthesis.
- Cyanobacteria (was called blue-green algae) changed the world!
- Lived in colonies that formed mats or films, growing into large structures called stromatolites.
- Still around, but much more common before 700 Myrs ago.



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# Making Oxygen!

- Oxygen was new and important step in intelligence
- It allowed a new energy extraction method
  - Aerobic (using oxygen) metabolism
  - More complex life.
  - Created ozone layer (dry land now an option for life on Earth).



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# Relationship to ETs



- Would evolution on other planets have a similar time-scale?
- Evolution is not a deterministic process.
- Selection seems to be mostly luck, rather than adaptation.
- On the other hand, many traits have developed in several lineages– warm blood and eyes.
- Some say that intelligence seems to increase in many lineages, so it is likely that if life exists then intelligent life exists.
- On the other hand, the plant kingdom never developed neurons.

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# Summary



- This following slides are from:  
<http://www.udayton.edu/~INSS/>
- Nice timeline of life on Earth.

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