

Earth History Vocabulary Unit 5

Mass extinction—when a large number of species die out (become extinct) in the same time period

Eon—the largest time break down (there have been 4)

Era—the middle time break down (there have been 3 in the last eon)

Period—the smallest time break down (there have been more than 10 in the last eon)

Cambrian period—the period where we see a lot of early life (540 – 490 million years ago)

Half-life—the time it takes for half of something radioactive to change into another form

Radioactive—an atom that gives off smaller parts

Radioactive dating—using how much an object has of something radioactive compared to what it breaks down to

Absolute dating—using radioactive dating to find when an object came from

Relative dating—using layers of rock to estimate when an organism lived compared to other organisms

Fossil—traces or imprints of living things preserved in rock

Imprint—a mark made by pressure from an object

Trace—evidence left by something that was there (like a footprint)

Decompose—to break down into simple parts (to rot or decay)

Paleontologist—someone who studies what happened in the past using fossils