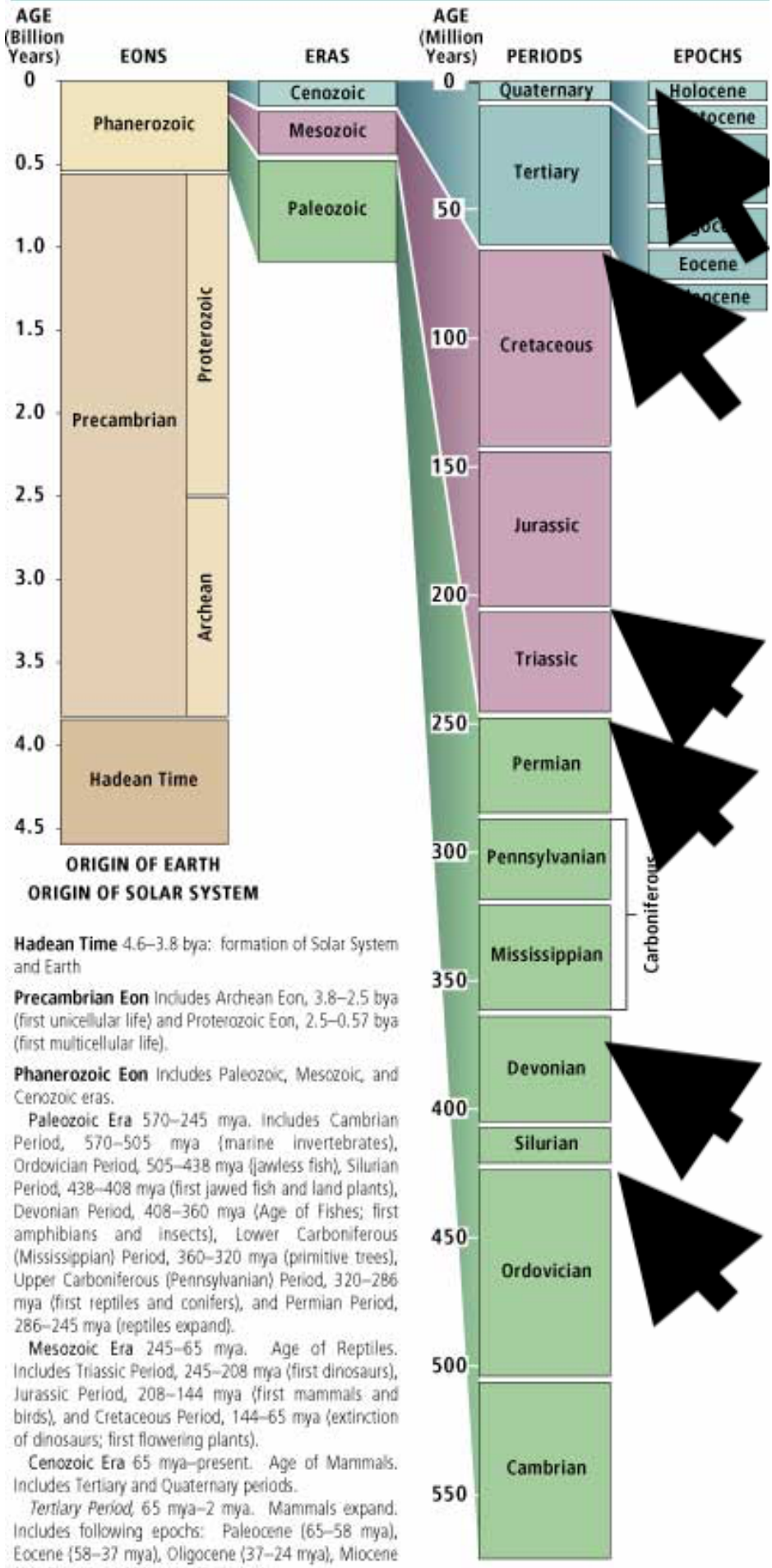
GEOLOGIC TIME SCALE



Hadean Time 4.6–3.8 bya: formation of Solar System and Earth

Precambrian Eon Includes Archean Eon, 3.8–2.5 bya (first unicellular life) and Proterozoic Eon, 2.5–0.57 bya (first multicellular life).

Phanerozoic Eon Includes Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic eras.

Paleozoic Era 570–245 mya. Includes Cambrian Period, 570–505 mya (marine invertebrates), Ordovician Period, 505–438 mya (jawless fish), Silurian Period, 438–408 mya (first jawed fish and land plants), Devonian Period, 408–360 mya (Age of Fishes; first amphibians and insects), Lower Carboniferous (Mississippian) Period, 360–320 mya (primitive trees), Upper Carboniferous (Pennsylvanian) Period, 320–286 mya (first reptiles and conifers), and Permian Period, 286–245 mya (reptiles expand).

Mesozoic Era 245–65 mya. Age of Reptiles. Includes Triassic Period, 245–208 mya (first dinosaurs), Jurassic Period, 208–144 mya (first mammals and birds), and Cretaceous Period, 144–65 mya (extinction of dinosaurs; first flowering plants).

Cenozoic Era 65 mya–present. Age of Mammals. Includes Tertiary and Quaternary periods.

Tertiary Period, 65 mya–2 mya. Mammals expand. Includes following epochs: Paleocene (65–58 mya), Eocene (58–37 mya), Oligocene (37–24 mya), Miocene (24–5 mya), and Pliocene (5–2 mya).

Quaternary Period, 2 mya–present. Humans develop. Includes Pleistocene Epoch (2 mya–10,000 years ago) and Holocene Epoch (10,000 years ago to present).

Key
bya = billion years ago
mya = million years ago

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