

1. absolute dating	determining the age in years for a rock or fossil e.g. by use of radiometric dating	17. kingdom	the five major groups into which living things are divided e.g. plants, animals, fungi, monera and protista
2. adaptive radiation	the development of a number of new species from one ancestral species	18. law of superposition	the idea that, in a sequence of sedimentary rocks or lava flows, each layer is younger than the one beneath it and older than the one above it
3. banded iron formations (BIFs)	banded chemical sedimentary rocks consisting of alternating iron-rich and silica-rich layers; a major source of iron ore	19. lithosphere	solid mantle and crust of the Earth
4. carbonisation	the process of converting a carbon-containing material to carbon by removal of other components	20. megafauna	extinct but giant versions of many reptiles and mammals well known today
5. cast	to give a shape to a substance by pouring liquid or plastic into a mould and letting it harden without pressure		
6. chemosynthesis	the process that produces organic compounds from inorganic compounds using chemical energy		
7. chromosomal mutation	mutation involving changes in the number or structure of the chromosomes		
8. cyanobacteria	a group of photosynthetic micro-organisms classified as either plants or bacteria because they possess characteristics of both plants and bacteria		
9. environment	an organism's physical and biological surroundings; the conditions under which an organism lives		
10. eon	one of four divisions of the geological time scale: Phanerozoic, Proterozoic, Archaean and Hadean		
11. evolution	the biological changes that have taken place as life changed from simpler to more complex organisms		
12. fossil	the remains of a once living thing, or direct evidence of its presence (e.g. tracks), as preserved in rocks		
13. gene or point mutation	mutation involving a change in the chemical structure of the DNA which makes up the genes on the chromosome		
14. geographical isolation	a term that refers to a population of animals, plants, or other organisms that are separated from exchanging genetic material with other organisms of the same species		
15. half-life	the time it takes for half a sample of radioactive atoms to decay		
16. isotope	any two or more atoms of a chemical element with the same atomic number and nearly identical chemical behaviour but with differing atomic mass		