

500 million years ago
The oceans were teeming with life. Trilobites, corals, sea lilies, ammonites and the first relatives of squid and cuttlefish appeared — all animals with no backbones.

465 million years ago
The first fish with backbones appeared in seas.

450 million years ago
The Earth's seas were very shallow. There were many volcanoes.

425 million years ago
'The Age of the Fish'

420 million years ago
Plants appeared on the land.

315 million years ago
Winged insects appeared. Amphibian-like animals lived on land but bred in water.

350 million years ago
Fish came out of the water on to land. They were the first creatures with backbones to colonize the land. The first trees appeared.

385 million years ago
Wingless insects appeared.

400 million years ago
Segmented worms appeared on land. Great mountain building was taking place over the Earth's surface.

300 million years ago
Reptiles appeared. They were the first animals able to live away from water. This was the Carboniferous period when warm swamps and forests covered much of the Earth.

250 million years ago
Reptiles increased in numbers and spread. Dinosaurs flourished. Cockroaches appeared looking much the same as they do today.

230 million years ago

135 million years ago **140 million years ago**
First appearance of very primitive mammals.

150 million years ago
Bird-like creatures appeared.

183 million years ago
The animals which form the fossils that can be found today at Lyme Regis and Charmouth were living in shallow seas and lagoons.

200 million years ago
'The Age of the Reptiles'

100 million years ago
Flowers and snakes appeared.

70 million years ago
Dinosaurs became extinct. Whales and dolphins appeared.

57 million years ago
Mammals began spreading through the world.

56 million years ago
Grasses appeared.

53 million years ago
First appearance of horse-like mammals.

45 million years ago
First appearance of rodents.

30 million years ago
First apes appeared on the plains of Africa.

15 million years ago
First appearance of hominids. Rainforests at Riversleigh in northern Australia appeared.

10 million years ago

5 million years ago

2 million years ago
First modern humans appeared. Last four ice ages began.

1 million years ago

now

This line has told you briefly about the development of the Earth. It doesn't stop here though. As the Earth carries on, so will this line. What do you think will be on it in another million years' time?