



SECTION 12.2

THE GEOLOGIC TIME SCALE Study Guide

KEY CONCEPT

The geologic time scale divides Earth's history based on major past events.

VOCABULARY

index fossil	era	epoch
geologic time scale	period	

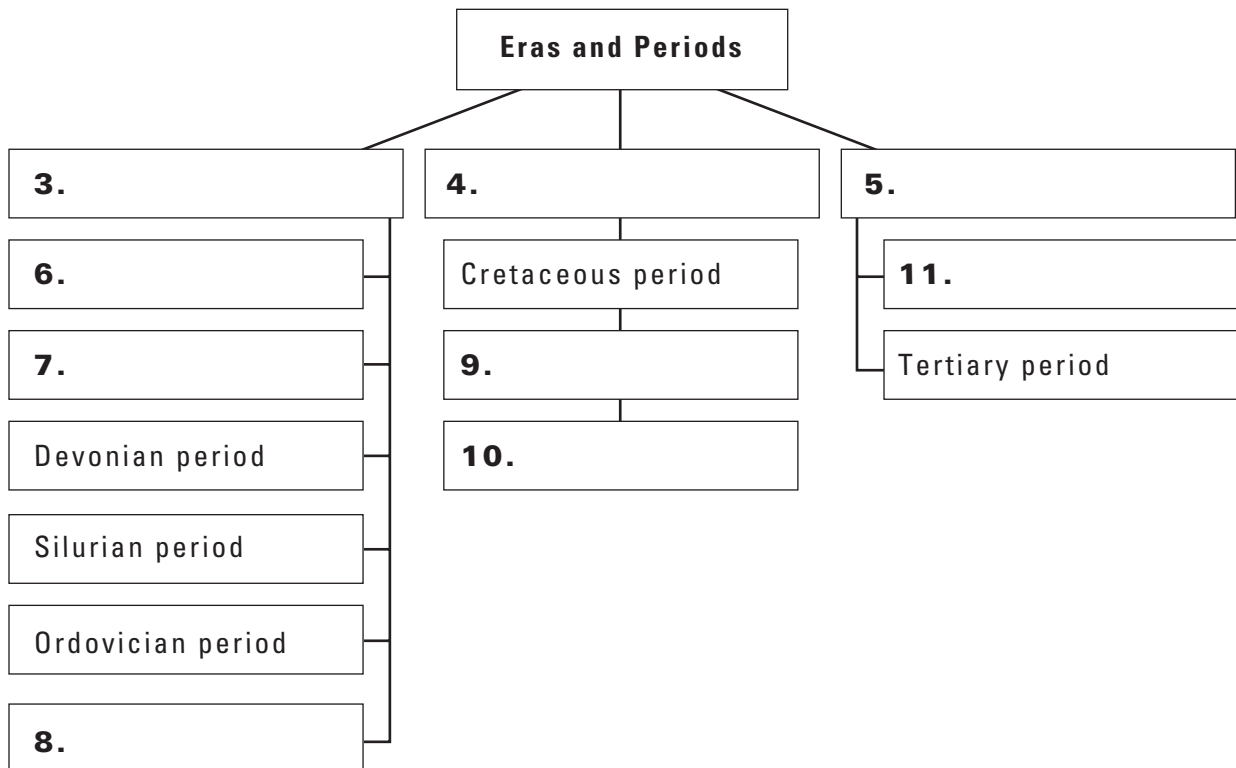
MAIN IDEA: Index fossils are another tool to determine the age of rock layers.

- How are index fossils used to determine the age of fossils or rock layers?

- What four characteristics are best for an index fossil to have?

MAIN IDEA: The geologic time scale organizes Earth's history.

Look at Figure 12.6 to fill in the following classification tree.



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Section 12.2 STUDY GUIDE CONTINUED

Vocabulary Check

era	period	epoch
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Fill in the blanks below using the terms in the box. You may use some terms more than others.

- _____ **12.** The smallest unit of geologic time
- _____ **13.** Associated with rock systems
- _____ **14.** Consists of two or more periods
- _____ **15.** Lasts tens to hundreds of millions of years
- _____ **16.** Lasts several million years
- _____ **17.** Lasts tens of millions of years
- _____ **18.** Most commonly used units of geologic time
- _____ **19.** Examples include the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic
- _____ **20.** Examples include the Cambrian, Jurassic, and Quaternary
- _____ **21.** The smallest unit of geologic time

The names of eras come from early ideas about life forms preserved as fossils. Provide the meaning of the following names of eras:

- 22.** Paleozoic _____
- 23.** Mesozoic _____
- 24.** Cenozoic _____
- 25.** How is the geologic time scale a representation of the history of Earth?
- _____
- _____