

Quaternary Period -- implying "fourth derivation," from the outdated four-division system. Divided into two epochs:

Pleistocene Epoch ("much recent") -- Geological conditions: repeated glaciation; four ice ages, with glaciation confined to northern North America and Europe, with sympathetic mountain glaciation well to the south; increased humidity in former arid regions, climatic zones; continued volcanic activity. Plant life: great extinction of plant species. Animal life: extinction of great mammals; great reduction in number of remaining larger mammals, except in portions of Asia and Africa; characteristic mammals of North America include elephas (elephant), the mastodon, a giant stag-moose, a number of true horses, smilodon (last of the saber-toothed tigers), and megalonyx (giant ground sloth).

Recent Epoch (formerly called Holocene) -- Geological conditions: end of last ice age; climate warmer. Plant life: decline of woody plants, rise of herbaceous ones. Animal life: species now found in the same country; domestic animals; Age of Man.

Archeological divisions (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Age of Metals) begin with the ending of the Pliocene and extend to the present age.

STANDARD GEOLOGIC RELATIVE TIME SCALE				
TIME SCALE (Years BP)	ERAS	PERIODS	EPOCHS	FOSSIL RECORD OF THE APPEARANCE OF NEW FORMS OF LIFE

			Recent	No new basic forms
10,000		Quaternary	Pleistocene	Most modern families, genera, and species present, first men
2,000,000				

12,000,000			Pliocene	All types of carnivores, many types of horses and browsing mammals
26,000,000			Miocene	First mastodons, giant ground sloths, primitive dogs, horses, antelopes
36,000,000		Tertiary	Oligocene	First true carnivores, first cats (saber-toothed), first apes
54,000,000			Eocene	First rodents, first rhinoceroses, first monkeys
65,000,000			Paleocene	First hoofed mammals, first eating mammals, first lemuroids
