SECTION: LOOKING AT FOSSILS

1. B
2. C
3. D
4. A
5. B
6. C
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. C
11. A
12. C
13. B
14. B
15. C
16. D

SECTION: TIME MARCHES ON

1. C
2. C
3. B
4. D
5. B
6. A
7. D
8. C
9. B
10. C
11. D
12. A
13. C
14. C
15. A
16. C
17. B
18. D
19. B

Vocabulary & Section Summary

SECTION: EARTH'S STORY AND THOSE WHO FIRST LISTENED

1. uniformitarianism: a principle that states that geologic processes that occurred in the past can be explained by current geologic processes
2. catastrophism: a principle that states that geologic change occurs suddenly
3. paleontology: the scientific study of fossils

SECTION: RELATIVE DATING: WHICH CAME FIRST?

1. relative dating: any method of determining whether an event or object is older or younger than other events or objects
2. superposition: a principle that states that younger rocks lie above older rocks if the layers have not been disturbed
3. geologic column: an arrangement of rock layers in which the oldest rocks are at the bottom
4. unconformity: a break in the geologic record created when rock layers are eroded or when sediment is not deposited for a long period of time

SECTION: ABSOLUTE DATING: A MEASURE OF TIME

1. absolute dating: any method that measures the age of an object or event in years
2. isotope: an atom that has the same number of protons (or the same atomic number) as other atoms of the same element do but that has a different number of neutrons (and thus a different atomic mass)
3. radioactive decay: the process in which a radioactive isotope tends to break down into a stable isotope of the same or another element
4. radiometric dating: a method of determining the age of an object by estimating the relative percentages of a radioactive (parent) isotope and a stable (daughter) isotope
5. half-life: the time required for half of a sample of a radioactive substance to undergo radioactive decay

SECTION: LOOKING AT FOSSILS

1. fossil: the trace or remains of an organism that lived long ago, most commonly preserved in sedimentary rock.
2. trace fossil: a fossilized mark that is formed in soft sediment by the movement of an animal
3. mold: a mark or cavity made in a sedimentary surface by a shell or other body part
4. cast: a type of fossil that forms when sediments fill in the cavity left by a decomposed organism
5. index fossil: a fossil that is found in the rock layers of only one geologic age and that is used to establish the age of the rock layers

SECTION: TIME MARCHES ON

1. geologic time scale: the standard method used to divide the Earth's long natural history into manageable parts
2. eon: the largest division of geologic time
3. era: a unit of geologic time that includes two or more periods
4. period: a unit of geologic time into which eras are divided

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