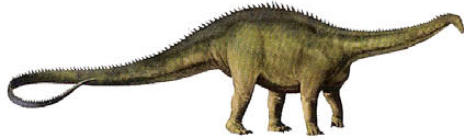


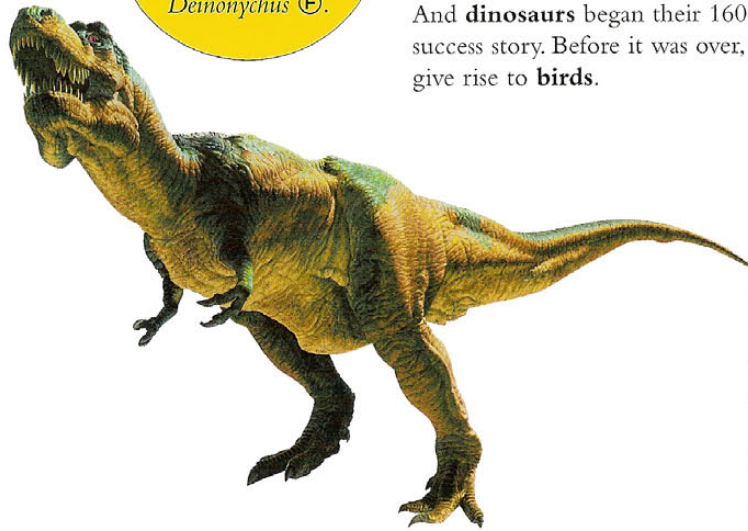
Dawn of the Dinosaurs

Mesozoic Era

(Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous Periods)
248–65 million years ago



On the poster front, see if you can identify Jurassic *Brachiosaurus* (E) and Cretaceous *Deinonychus* (F).



The greatest mass extinction in Earth's history changed life forever.

From a few survivors, life arose that was so new and different that scientists recognize the beginning of a new era: the **Mesozoic Era**.

This 183-million-year age spans the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous periods. During this time, mammals appeared. **Flowering plants** bloomed. Reptiles **took to the air** and **plunged into the seas**.

And **dinosaurs** began their 160-million-year success story. Before it was over, they would give rise to **birds**.



On the poster front, see if you can identify Tertiary creatures *Dinictis* (G) and *Hyaenadon* (H).



Age of Mammals

Tertiary Period

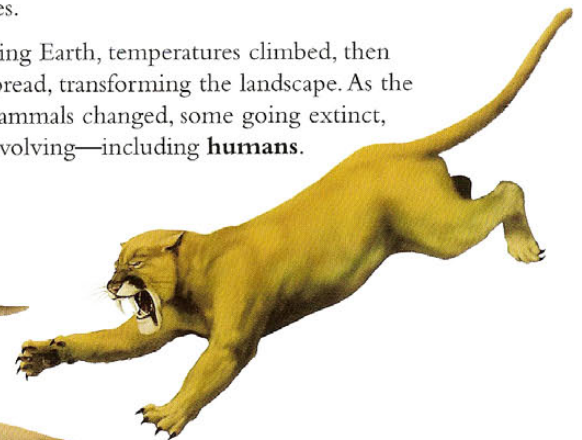
(Paleocene, Eocene, Oligocene, Miocene, and Pliocene Epochs) 65–1.8 million years ago

Mass extinction had devastated life on Earth. All dinosaurs except birds had disappeared.

The Mesozoic Era had ended, and the Cenozoic Era—the **age of mammals**—had begun.

During the first part of the Cenozoic Era, the Tertiary Period, mammals began to develop new features and reach new sizes.

On an ever-changing Earth, temperatures climbed, then fell. **Grasslands** spread, transforming the landscape. As the planet changed, mammals changed, some going extinct, new ones always evolving—including **humans**.



Age of Ice

Quaternary Period

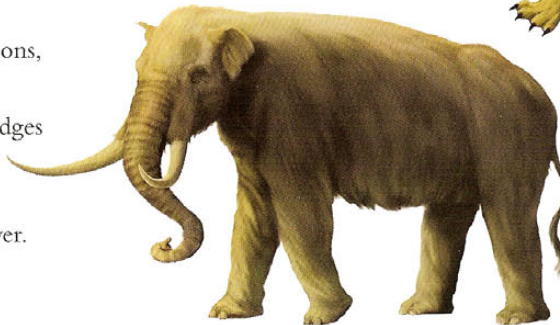
(Pleistocene and Holocene Epochs)
1.8 million years ago – Today

By two million years ago, Earth had entered an intense ice age that continues today.

Bigger, better-insulated bodies do well in colder conditions, and many mammals had evolved to be massive.

These mammals spread across the globe as new land bridges connected continents.

Our own species moved among them, affecting other species in ways that would soon change the planet forever. **Life on Earth was starting to look like life today.**



On the poster front, see if you can identify Quaternary creatures *Arctodus* (I) and *Panthera* (J).



The **Field**
Museum

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