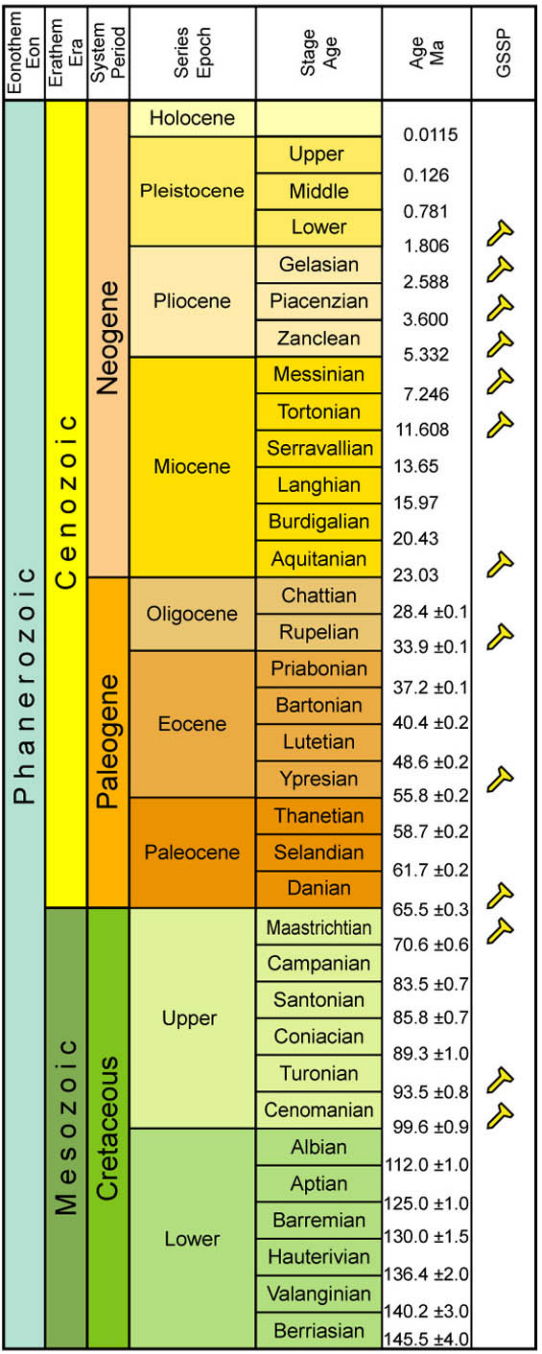
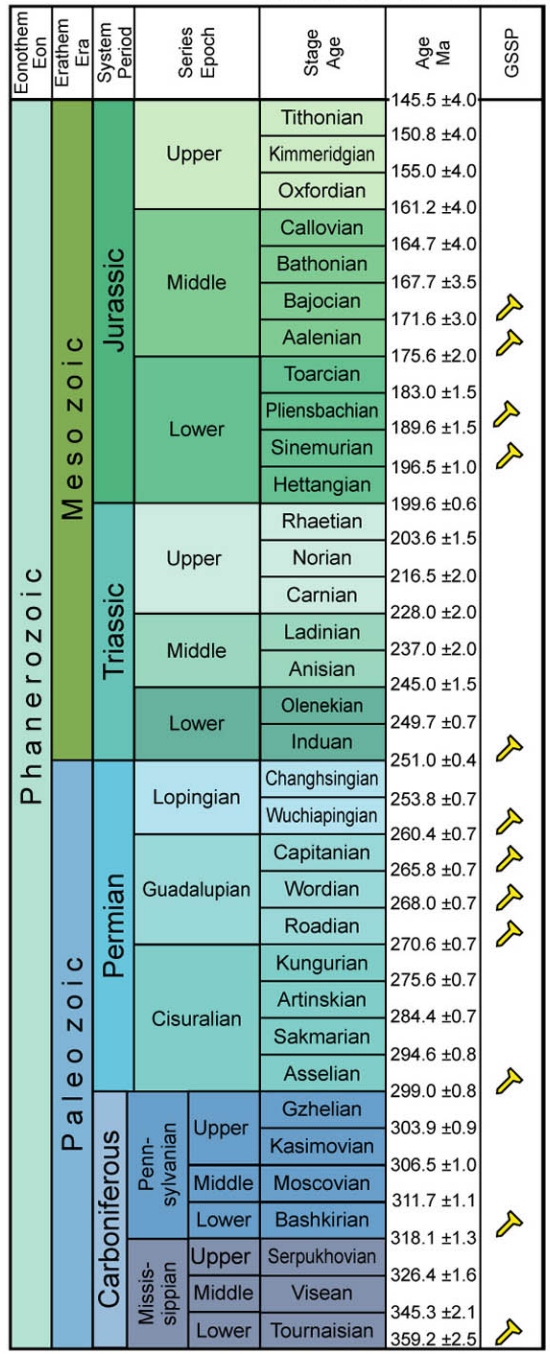
INTERNATIONAL STRATIGRAPHIC CHART

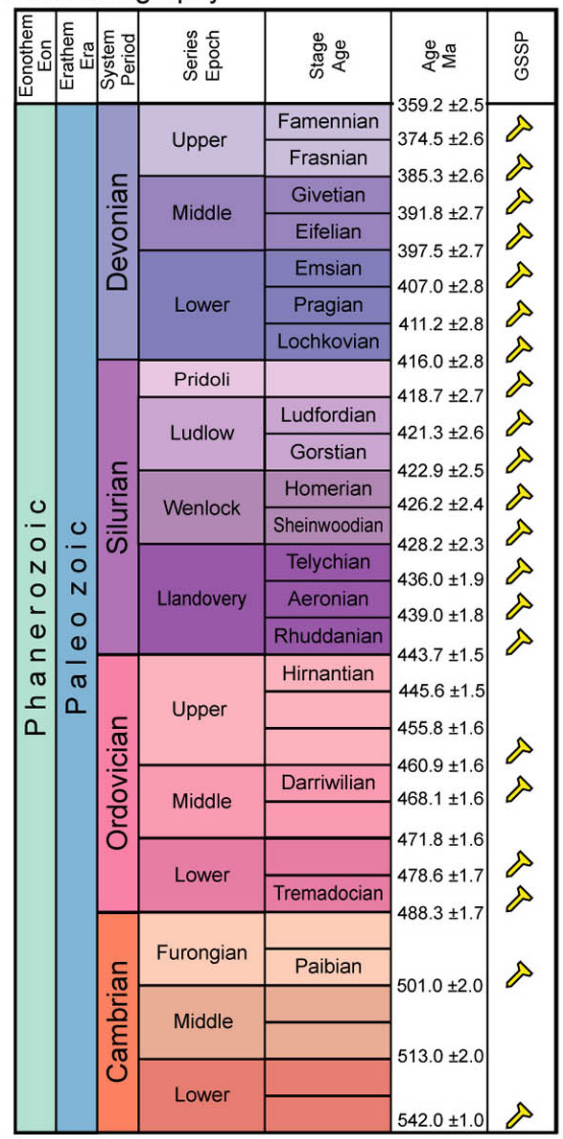
ICS

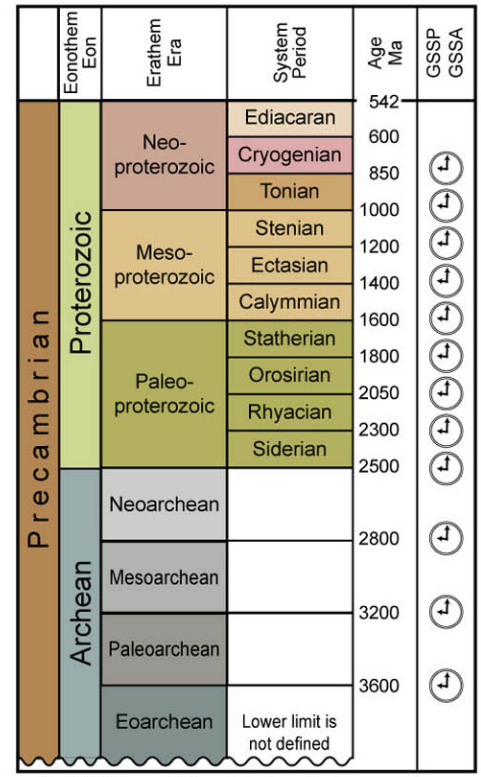
International Commission on Stratigraphy

IUGS









Subdivisions of the global geologic record are formally defined by their lower boundary. Each unit of the Phanerozoic interval (~542 Ma to Present) and the base of the Ediacaran is defined by a Global Standard Section and Point (GSSP) at its base, whereas the Precambrian Interval is formally subdivided by absolute age, Global Standard Stratigraphic Age (GSSA).

This chart gives an overview of the international chronostratigraphic units,their rank, their names and formal status. These units are approved by the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) and ratified by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS).

The Guidelines of ICS (Remane et al., 1996, Episodes, 19: 77-81) regulate the selection and definition of the international units of geologic time. Many GSSP's actually have a 'golden' spike ( ) and Stage and/or System name plaque mounted at the boundary level in the boundary stratotype section, whereas a GSSA is an abstract age without reference to a specific level in a rock section on Earth. Descriptions of each GSSP and GSSA are summarized in *Episodes*, 25: 204-208 (2002) and posted on the ICS website (www.stratigraphy.org).

Some stages within the Ordovician and Cambrian will be formally named upon international agreement on their GSSP limits. Most intra-stage boundaries (e.g., Middle and Upper Aptian) are not formally defined. Numerical ages of the unit boundaries in the Phanerozoic are subject to revision. Colors are according to the Commission for the Geological Map of the World (www.cgmw.org). The listed numerical ages are from 'A Geologic Time Scale 2004', by Gradstein, Ogg, Smith, et al. (2004; Cambridge University Press).

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