Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

**QUICK LAB** GUIDED Inquiry

# How Do We Know What Happened When?

When you think of it, every person's life story is a history of minor and major events. Some events, like the day you found a $5 dollar bill, are trivial and will soon be forgotten. Others, such as the family's trip to the mountains, are memories that will forever remain. In this lab, you will use your personal life history to create a timeline that highlights major events in your life.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Create a timeline highlighting major life events.
- Describe how fossils can be used to construct geologic timelines.

**MATERIALS**

For each student

- index cards
- string
- tape

## PROCEDURE

1. Put your name on the blank line in the top of the first column in the table below. In the Events column, enter 15–20 events that have occurred in your life. Don't do a lot of thinking, just include things that immediately come to mind.
2. In the Date column, enter the date or dates when these events happened.

**SIGNIFICANT LIFE EVENTS**

| Events in the life of _____ | Date when it happened | Events in the life of _____ | Date when it happened |
|---|---|---|---|
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3. Compare your list with your lab partner's list. Discuss the similarities and differences. Did you overlook any significant events?

_____

4. Write each event on a separate **index card.** Arrange the index cards in order from oldest to most recent and use **tape** to attach them to the **string.** You have created a timeline.

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*Quick Lab continued*

5. Are there any events in your personal timeline that are difficult to arrange in the order in which they happened? If yes, what are they, and why isn't it easy for them to be arranged that way?

_____

_____

6. Are there any events in your personal timeline that are simple to arrange in the proper order? If yes, what are they, and why is it easy for them to be sequenced?

_____

_____

7. What is the general difference between the events you identified in Questions 5 and 6?

_____

_____

8. Is there anything about certain events that makes them better than others at telling your life story? If so, what makes these events special?

_____

_____

9. Paleontologists are scientists who use fossil evidence to create a "story" about the history of life on Earth. Some fossils are found in many different rock layers. Other fossils occur only in certain rock layers. These fossils are called "index fossils." What makes index fossils so important to paleontologists?

_____

_____

10. How are index fossils like the special events in your own life history? What are the characteristics of special "index events" that can be used to describe a person's life?

_____

_____

Name: _____ Date: _____ Per: _____

# Index Fossils

Keyed to the relative time scale are examples of index fossils, the forms of life which existed during limited periods of geologic time and thus are used as guides to the age of the rocks in which they are preserved.