

Breaking News Script – Evolution of Life on Earth

NEWSCASTER

[Image 1]

Hello. My name is _____ and this is a very brief history of life on Earth.

ANNOUNCER

4500 MILLION YEARS AGO!

NEWSCASTER

[Image 2]

The Earth was formed from a big cloud of dust and rocks. Meteorites smashed into it, volcanoes erupted and there was no life.

ANNOUNCER

3500 MILLION YEARS AGO!

NEWSCASTER

By about 3500 million years ago, a mere 1000 million year jump, first signs of life appeared! The first known living beings were microscopic, single-celled organisms, too small to see with the naked eye. These microscopic organisms were the only known life on earth for yet another 1000 million more years, and they only lived in the oceans.

[Image 3]

ANOUNCEMENT

2500 MILLION YEARS AGO!

NEWSCASTER

At around 2.5 billion years ago we have something very important happening... Oxygen! Some of the single-celled organisms had started to release oxygen into the air changing the Earth's atmosphere! From this point forward, most living things on Earth depended on oxygen to survive.

ANOUNCEMENT:

1500 MILLION YEARS AGO!

NEWSCASTER

And so by 1500 million years ago, these microorganisms have split into three distinct groups, the ancestors of plants, fungi and animals.

[Image 4,5,6]

ANNOUNCEMENT:
900 MILLION YEARS AGO!

NEWSCASTER

By about 900 million years ago, single cells had teamed up to form multicellular life which lead to bigger organisms with things like mouths, limbs and sense organs.

[Image 7]

ANNOUNCER
555- 530 MILLIION YEARS AGO!

NEWSCASTER

It was around this time, the fossil record shows us an explosion of life! Animals had evolved hard shells so we see a lot more of them in the fossil record. Life still only existed in the oceans! The first Arthropods emerged with hard shells on the outside of the body, related to today's crabs, insects and spiders! [Image 8]. Another important group were the early fish. They didn't look today's fish but they started to develop backbones and the features that are still found in today's fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals (all of which are descended from these early fish!) [Image 9].

Life still only existed in the oceans.

ANNOUNCER
475 MILLION YEARS AGO!
GIVE OR TAKE A FEW YEARS!

NEWSCASTER

Even with all that oxygen around, it wasn't until roughly 475 million years ago that basic land plants started appearing. By this time a few animals had started to visit land occasionally, but the plants were here to stay! [Image 10].

ANNOUNCER
375 MILLION YEARS AGO!

NEWSCASTER

Lots of life in the ocean transitioned to life on land. The earliest life included insects followed by the early tetrapods, four-legged animals with bony skeletons, evolved from those early fish whose descendants became, forms of amphibians and later, reptiles, birds and mammals [Image 11].

ANNOUNCER
320 - 250 MILLION YEARS AGO!

NEWSCASTER

During this time, life on land was ruled by a group of mammal-ancestors called the Pelycosaur, followed by the Therapsids [Image 12].

ANNOUNCER
250 MILLION YEARS AGO!

...Permian-Triassic extinction event! The biggest mass extinction in the history of Earth occurs, wiping out almost all living things! [Image 13]

ANNOUNCER
225 MILLION YEARS AGO!

NEWSCASTER
You had life in the sea, and on land there were some bugs, some giant ferns, everything was quiet enough. Then, 230 million years ago, things got really interesting. A new type of life began to become dominant. In the wake of this huge extinction, a new group of animals took over. Dinosaurs ruled the land and their reptile relatives ruled the oceans and the skies! A few therapsids survived too, their descendants becoming the first mammals about 220 million years ago. [Image 14]

ANNOUNCER
CRETACEOUS-PALEOGENE EXTINCTION EVENT
NEWSCASTER

The dinosaurs ruled for about 165 million years... Then about 65 million years ago they nearly all went extinct in another huge mass extinction. There are still some dinosaur descendants around today including all birds [Image 15]

ANNOUNCER
20 MILLION YEARS AGO TO NOW!

NEWSCASTER
Mammals survived the meteorite that nearly wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. From early, shrew-like ancestors, mammals of all shapes and sizes evolved and spread all over the earth in water on land and in the sky. Mammals survived the meteorite that nearly wiped out the dinosaurs along with $\frac{3}{4}$ of all life. Human beings are mammals, but it wouldn't be until around 20 million years ago that mammals evolved that looked a bit like us. Around about 200,000 years ago, the modern humans, known as *Homo sapiens* appeared [Image 16].

This has been _____ with an update on the first 4.5 billion years of life on Earth.