

Dating the Fossil Record

You have received nine rock samples from a paleontologist in California. Your job is to arrange the samples in order from oldest to youngest according to their fossil content and to determine their relative ages using the process of relative dating. Results from absolute dating methods will not be available from a laboratory for several weeks, and the paleontologist needs the information immediately. You know from previous work that the rocks of Sample 2 are the oldest.

MATERIALS

- set of nine cards representing rock samples
- pencil and paper
- colored markers
- poster board (61 cm²)

Procedure: Part 1

1. Arrange the fossil cards from oldest to youngest. Begin with Sample 2 because you know this sample is the oldest. You may need to try several different arrangements to get the cards in order. *Hint: After an organism becomes extinct, it does not reappear in younger rocks.*

Sample 1 	Sample 2 	Sample 3
Sample 4 	Sample 5 	Sample 6
Sample 7 	Sample 8 	Sample 9