absolute dating	determining the age in years for a rock or fossil e.g. by use of radiometric dating
adaptive radiation	the development of a number of new species from one ancestral species
banded iron formations (BIFs)	banded chemical sedimentary rocks consisting of alternating iron-rich and silica-rich layers; a major source of iron ore
carbonisation	the process of converting a carbon-containing material to carbon by removal of other components
cast	to give a shape to a substance by pouring liquid or plastic into a mould and letting it harden without pressure

chemosynthesis	the process that produces organic compounds from inorganic compounds using chemical energy
chromosomal mutation	mutation involving changes in the number or structure of the chromosomes
cyanobacteria	a group of photosynthetic micro-organisms classified as either plants or bacteria because they possess characteristics of both plants and bacteria
environment	an organism's physical and biological surroundings; the conditions under which an organism lives
eon	one of four divisions of the geological time scale: Phanerozoic, Proterozoic, Archaean and Hadean

evolution	the biological changes that have taken place as life changed from simpler to more complex organisms
fossil	the remains of a once living thing, or direct evidence of its presence (e.g. tracks), as preserved in rocks
gene or point mutation	mutation involving a change in the chemical structure of the DNA which makes up the genes on the chromosome
geographical isolation	a term that refers to a population of animals, plants, or other organisms that are separated from exchanging genetic material with other organisms of the same species
half-life	the time it takes for half a sample of radioactive atoms to decay

isotope	any two or more atoms of a chemical element with the same atomic number and nearly identical chemical behaviour but with differing atomic mass
kingdom	the five major groups into which living things are divided e.g. plants, animals, fungi, monera and protista
law of superposition	the idea that, in a sequence of sedimentary rocks or lava flows, each layer is younger than the one beneath it and older than the one above it
lithosphere	solid mantle and crust of the Earth
megafauna	extinct but giant versions of many reptiles and mammals well known today