13.7 ± 0.2bn years ago: Universe, which includes time and space, begins with the Big Bang.

300 000 years after the Big Bang: Hydrogen nuclei capture electrons, forming the first atoms.

600m years after the Big Bang: Formation of first galaxies.

5bn years ago (8.7bn years after the Big Bang): Formation of the Sun.

4.5bn years ago: Formation of the Earth and other planets – start of geologic timescale.

3.5bn years ago: First signs of single-celled life on Earth.

600 to 500m years ago: Multicellular life evolves.

2.5 to 2m years ago: Appearance of the genus Homo.

About 150 000 years ago: Appearance of Homo sapiens.

12 to 10 thousand years ago (the Holocene epoch): Homo sapiens invent agriculture; start of human civilization.