

Contents

Foreword

• 6 •

1. NOTHING TO SOMETHING

13.8 billion–450 million years ago

The beginning of the universe, life and everything

• 10 •

2. LAND AHOY!

470 mya–252 mya

Creatures wriggle out of the seas and forests cover the land

• 32 •

3. DINOSAURS

252 mya–5 mya

Terrible lizards and what comes after

• 50 •

4. HANDS FREE

5 mya–65,000 years ago

Some apes walk on two feet

• 72 •

5. YOU AND ME

200,000 years ago–5000 BCE

How a single species of humans, *Homo sapiens*, became the last on Earth

• 88 •

6. CIVILISATION BEGINS

5000–1500 BCE

Writing kicks off a new era

• 104 •

7. MEANWHILE, IN ASIA

3000–200 BCE

More powerful civilisations thrive

• 130 •

8. RISE AND FALL

1400 BCE–476 CE

Classical empires come and go

• 152 •

9. MEANWHILE, IN THE AMERICAS

1500 BCE–1530 CE

More empires rise and fall

• 176 •