a) When did modern humans appear?

b) How does this compare to when life began on the planet?

Major Divisions of Geologic Time
(boundaries in millions of years before present)

Era	Period	Event	
Cenozoic	Quaternary	modern humans	1.8
	Tertiary	abundant mammals	65
Mesozoic	Cretaceous	flowering plants; dinosaur and ammonoid extinctions	145
	Jurassic	first birds and mammals; abundant dinosaurs	213
	Triassic	abundant coniferous trees	248
Paleozoic	Permian	extinction of trilobites and other marine animals	286
	Pennsylvanian	fern forests; abundant insects; first reptiles	325
	Mississippian	sharks; large primitive trees	360
	Devonian	amphibians and ammonoids	410
	Silurian	early plants and animals on land	440
	Ordovician	first fish	505
	Cambrian	abundant marine invertebrates; trilobites dominant	544
Proterozoic		primitive aquatic plants	2500
Archean		oldest fossils: bacteria and algae	

2. To get a better sense of this kind of time scale, your group is going to think of time as if it were distance.

   In a suitable place (a corridor or the schoolyard), mark a starting point with chalk. Next, each person should walk 10 normal paces, mark the distance with chalk, and put his or her name beside this point.

Check for any hazards before pacing off your steps.