



Introduction to Paleobiology and the Fossil Record

By Michael Benton, David A. T. Harper



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This book presents a comprehensive overview of the science of the history of life. Paleobiologists bring many analytical tools to bear in interpreting the fossil record and the book introduces the latest techniques, from multivariate investigations of biogeography and biostratigraphy to engineering analysis of dinosaur skulls, and from homeobox genes to cladistics.

All the well-known fossil groups are included, including microfossils and invertebrates, but an important feature is the thorough coverage of plants, vertebrates and trace fossils together with discussion of the origins of both life and the metazoans. All key related subjects are introduced, such as systematics, ecology, evolution and development, stratigraphy and their roles in understanding where life came from and how it evolved and diversified.

Unique features of the book are the numerous case studies from current research that lead students to the primary literature, analytical and mathematical explanations and tools, together with associated problem sets and practical schedules for instructors and students.

“..any serious student of geology who does not pick this book off the shelf will be putting themselves at a huge disadvantage. The material may be complex, but the text is extremely accessible and well organized, and the book ought to be essential reading for palaeontologists at undergraduate, postgraduate and more advanced levels—both in Britain as well as in North America.” Falcon-Lang, H., *Proc. Geol. Assoc.* 2010

“...this is an excellent introduction to palaeontology in general. It is well structured, accessibly written and pleasantly informativeI would recommend this as a standard reference text to all my students without hesitation.” David Norman *Geol Mag* 2010

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Editorial Review

Review

"The sheer scope of the book is a marvel. The easily accessible English which has been employed by the authors makes this book a sure-fire hit for anyone with a basic grasp of palaeontology and who needs to acquire an authoritative overview of the seemingly disparate parts of the subject. Introduction to Paleobiology and the Fossil Records is therefore perfect for undergraduate and postgraduate students of palaeontology; however, it will also endear it to anybody with a palaeontological background or interest. It is an outstanding contribution and in my opinion a must for all." (*Geological Journal*, August 2010)

"This book provides an excellent introduction to the study of paleobiology for advanced students in paleontology, evolutionary biology, and related fields." (*CHOICE*, February 2009)

"...any serious student of geology who does not pick this book off the shelf will be putting themselves at a huge disadvantage. The material may be complex, but the text is extremely accessible and well organized, and the book ought to be essential reading for palaeontologists at undergraduate, postgraduate and more advanced levels both in Britain as well as in North America." (*Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, 2010)

"...this is an excellent introduction to palaeontology in general. It is well structured, accessibly written and pleasantly informativeI would recommend this as a standard reference text to all my students without hesitation." (*Geological Magazine*, 2010)

"This is the best paleontology textbook on the market today. It is a sure bet to set young students on the right path, and provides the 'long' answer to the question 'What should I study?'" (*The Quarterly Review of Biology*, March 2010)

"This undergraduate level college textbook presents a comprehensive overview into the science of paleobiology, and the many analytical tools and latest techniques used to interpret the fossil record." (*The Birdbooker Report*, February 2009)

"This book gives a competent, comprehensive and easy readable overview of all aspects of palaeontology and palaeobiology, which can be highly recommend to all, who are interested in the record of life from the beginning." (*Geological Survey of Austria*, December 2008)

From the Back Cover

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evolution and development, stratigraphy and their roles in understanding where life came from and how it evolved and diversified.

Unique features of the book are the numerous case studies from current research that lead students to the primary literature, analytical and mathematical explanations and tools, together with associated problem sets and practical schedules for instructors and students.

This book will be essential reading for undergraduates studying paleontology or Paleobiology in earth or biological science degree courses worldwide.

About the Author

Michael J. Benton is Professor of Vertebrate Palaeontology at the University of Bristol. He is interested particularly in early reptiles, Triassic dinosaurs and macroevolution, and has published 50 books and 160 scientific articles.

David Harper is a leading expert on fossil brachiopods and numerical methods in palaeontology. He is Professor of Palaeontology in the University of Copenhagen, where he is currently Head of Geology in the Natural History Museum of Denmark. He has published over 10 books and monographs, including a couple of influential textbooks, as well as over 250 scientific articles and, together with Øyvind Hammer, the widely-used software package PAST. His time is divided between collection management, exhibition work, research and some teaching.

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