

Gondwana

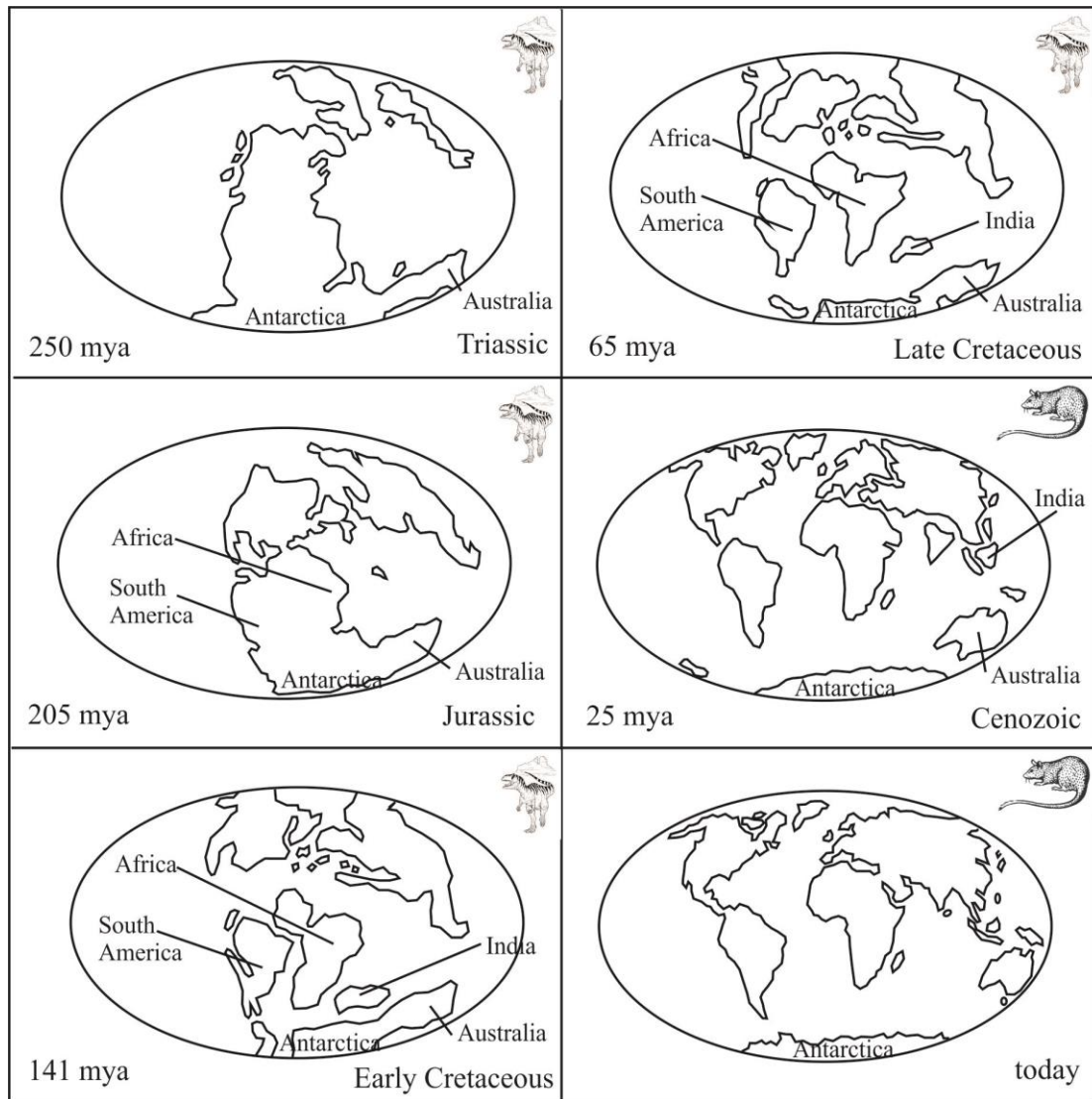


The sedimentary rocks exposed along the Bass Coast of Victoria have been dated at around 120 million years old, during the Early Cretaceous Period. The sedimentary rocks along the Otway Coast are slightly younger at around 112 million years. At this time the continents of Australia and Antarctica were still connected and represented the last remnants of the Great Southern Land - **Gondwana**.

This activity encourages the reader to think about existence of Gondwana and the time line involved as the continents drifted apart. You would also use the data on the maps to visualise how this drift occurred and how this drift influenced the plants and animals that exist on continents today.

Procedure:

1. Cut out individual sections and paste them in a line down the left hand side of the page in order from the earliest to the most recent time.
2. Colour in the obvious continents on each map using the same colour for individual continents eg colour Africa - red, Australia - green , Antarctica - yellow , etc. Colour the sea blue.
3. Next to each map describe briefly which continents are connected and which continents have separated.
4. Has Australia always been in the same place? Explain.
5. The Dinosaur Dreaming fossils have been dated as 120 million years old. Describe how Australia would have been situated in relation to the other continents during this period.
6. South America and North America were not always joined. When they did join how might this have influenced the animals living in both areas?
7. How do you think fossil records might be used to tell that some continents now separate were once joined together?



Adapted from Dinosaurs of Darkness Education Kit 2001.
Courtesy of Monash Science Centre, Monash University.