

protein, although there is no sharp distinction between these two terms.

Proteinoids Long chains of polypeptides formed by the linking together of amino acids.

Protoplasm A complex substance in the cell that exhibits those processes generally regarded as living.

Pulsating Universe Pertaining to the hypothesis that the Universe eternally oscillates between expansion (starting with a Big Bang) and contraction (resulting in a Big Crunch). Also called oscillating Universe.

Punctuated equilibrium A recent theory of stair-step evolutionary change which holds that life forms remain basically stable (in equilibrium) for long periods of time and that major changes evolve in relatively brief periods of time.

Pyrimidine Any of several single-ringed nitrogenous bases important in nucleotides; cytosine, thymine and uracil are examples.

Quantum theory A mathematical theory employed in physics to express the relationship between waves and particles of the same underlying entity. The particle associated with a given wave is its quantum.

Quarks In current thinking, quarks are considered one of two (leptons are the other) classes of indivisible particles that comprise the ultimate building blocks of matter. The proton and the neutron are comprised of quarks.

Radiocarbon dating The use of changes which occur naturally in carbon to determine the age of a fossil or other material; generally useful in estimating ages less than 50,000 years.

Racemization The curious process by which the optically left-handed amino acid molecules of living organism convert into optically right-handed molecules following death.

Radioactive heating Heating produced by the decay of radioactive isotopes.

Radioactive (radiometric) dating Determining age by measuring the proportions of parent and daughter isotopes of a radioactive element present in materials, based on knowing the decay rate of the isotopes.

Ramapithecus (Rama ape) An apelike creature that lived in Europe, Asia, and Africa more than eight million years ago.

Red beds Red-tinted sedimentary rocks, usually sandstones and shales. The red color is usually due to compounds of iron oxides.

Reproductive strategies A term used by evolutionists to refer to different methods of insuring offspring survival. Some animals produce numerous offspring and give them little or no care. Other animals produce only one offspring at a time and give it a great deal of care to insure its survival. These are obviously very different reproductive strategies.

Rift A valley or trough formed where two blocks or plates of the Earth's crust move apart.

Scientific creationist See Young Earth creationist.

Scientific method The process and principles regarded as necessary for scientific investigation. Involves proposing a hypothesis or conceptual model and its testing by observations and experiments to determine if it can be substantiated or falsified. The important distinction between the scientific method and other systems of arriving at truth (i.e., philosophy and religion) is that the scientific method requires measured observations and experiments that can be repeated with virtually identical results.

Sea-floor spreading The process wherein new ocean-floor, basaltic rock material rises from the Earth's mantle at the midocean ridges to fill the rift created as the oceanic plates move away from each other.

Sedimentary rock Consolidated generally layered deposits from the waters of streams, lakes or seas or from wind or ice.