

Cambrian Sea Facts Sheet

What do I need to know?

- The Cambrian Era started about **543 million years ago** (MYA) and lasted for about 53 million years, until **490 MYA**.
- The **Cambrian Explosion** was an **explosion of animal life**
- **All major animal-body plans (phyla) happened during the Cambrian Era in the sea.**
- The **first photosynthetic organisms** were the **stromatolites**.
- The **first vertebrates** were **pikaia**.
- The **first multicellular organisms** were **sponges**.
- We can tell these animals existed because of the **fossils** they left behind.
- Our fossil record is not good at identifying soft-bodied animals, because they decay over time. However, we know these animals exist because the **Burgess Shale** collapsed and preserved soft-bodied organisms until they were discovered by scientists.

Cambrian Sea Facts Sheet

What do I need to know?

- The Cambrian Era started about **543 million years ago** (MYA) and lasted for about 53 million years, until **490 MYA**.
- The **Cambrian Explosion** was an **explosion of animal life**
- **All major animal-body plans (phyla) happened during the Cambrian Era in the sea.**
- The **first photosynthetic organisms** were the **stromatolites**.
- The **first vertebrates** were **pikaia**.
- The **first multicellular organisms** were **sponges**.
- We can tell these animals existed because of the **fossils** they left behind.
- Our fossil record is not good at identifying soft-bodied animals, because they decay over time. However, we know these animals exist because the **Burgess Shale** collapsed and preserved soft-bodied organisms until they were discovered by scientists.