

ENVR 202 – THE EVOLVING EARTH
ASSIGNMENT 2
BIOLOGIC AND GEOLOGIC EVIDENCE OF THE MESOZOIC AND EARLY TERTIARY

In this assignment you will have the opportunity to explore some of the primary literature that relates to the evidence that has been used to help us recreate the Mesozoic and early Tertiary biologic and geologic history of the Earth (between 245 Ma and 35 Ma). The assignment will give you experience in analyzing information from the primary literature, summarizing the results of research, and relating those results to the broader concepts we have addressed in class.

Instructions

You will be assigned to ONE of the FOUR research papers that we have selected from the literature. The individual paper that you have been assigned can be found posted as a PDF file under the Assignments folder icon. We will create FOUR groups using the Group Manager tool and assign students from the class to each group. Each group will be given a title that corresponds to the title of the paper that individuals in this group has been assigned to review. Please make sure you review the correct paper. **If you have any doubts about which paper you have been assigned please ask us.**

Read the paper that has been assigned to you and make an effort to understand the necessary background, the research questions, the analytical methods used to address those questions, and the results and implications arising from those analyses. This will clearly require you to read more than just the abstract and discussion, and may require you to read additional papers or other literature sources for clarification or information. Some of the methods and quantitative analyses are fairly complex and we do not expect you to understand all details but you will need to understand enough of what was done to answer the questions below.

Once you have read the paper, answer the following questions in paragraph form, with necessary reference to the primary literature and other sources of information.

1. Briefly summarize the main findings of the study. Do not just restate the abstract; put this in your own words. What, in your opinion, are the main strengths and weaknesses of the paper? In order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the paper you will need to read some of the other scientific literature that deals with your paper topic.
2. What kinds of evidence were used to conduct the analyses?
3. Do you think the analyses are appropriate and sufficient? What other kinds of evidence or analyses could be used to further investigate these questions? As with question 1, in order to answer this question you will need to explore some of the other scientific papers that deal with your paper topic.
4. How do the results and interpretations in this paper relate to the course material covered in lectures?

Your final paper should be no more than 1000 words (double-spaced, 12-pt font).

Remember to cite references in the text, where appropriate, and to give complete bibliographic references to all journal papers (including your chosen paper!), books, and other sources that are cited in your text. **Do not cite course notes as a reference.**

We have asked for your opinion in some of the questions. Your opinion counts, but you must justify your opinion. If you thought something in a paper was unclear or inadequate, tell us *what* and *why*.

Because more than one student will be assigned to each of these papers some of you may work together in finding information and discussing your answers. However, we expect each student to write their own answers in their own words. Your paper MUST be submitted electronically in a WORD format to Ainsley Merk on the myCourses site for ENVR 202. The document should be titled “ENVR 202 Assignment 2, Group number, First Name and Family Name. For example if I was submitting the paper I would label the document – ENVR 202, Assignment 2, Group 1, George McCourt.doc or .docx. Please do not submit .pdf files or any other format.

THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE ON March 21st AND IS WORTH 15% OF YOUR FINAL MARK.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS – Assignments that are handed in after the due date will be subject to a 10% per day late penalty.