



WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF  
**NATURAL  
RESOURCES**  
WASHINGTON  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

## GEOLOGIC UNITS



Qs	Quaternary sediments, dominantly nonglacial; includes alluvium and volcaniclastic, glacial outburst flood, eolian, landslide, and coastal deposits
Qg	Quaternary sediments, dominantly glacial drift; includes alluvium

## Sedimentary Rocks

UTs	Upper Tertiary (Pliocene-Miocene)
LTs	Lower Tertiary (Oligocene-Paleocene)
Ms	Mesozoic
MPs	Mesozoic-Paleozoic
Pz	Paleozoic
pCs	Precambrian

### Volcanic Rocks

Qv	Quaternary
Qp	Quaternary-Pliocene
uTv	Upper Tertiary (Pliocene-Miocene)
uTv <sub>c</sub>	Columbia River Basalt Group
lTv	Lower Tertiary (Oligocene-Paleocene)
Mz	Mesozoic

## **Intrusive Igneous Rocks**

Ti	Tertiary
Me	Mesozoic
Pl	Paleozoic

## Metamorphic Rocks

pTm	Pre-Tertiary
pKm	Pre-Cretaceous
Pm	Paleozoic
pCm	Precambrian

**Note:** Some pre-Tertiary sedimentary and volcanic rock units include low-grade metamorphic rocks. Ages assigned to metamorphic rocks are protolith ages.

<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/geology>  
<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/geologyportal>



# THE GEOLOGY OF WASHINGTON STATE

Washington consists of a diverse collection of rocks that tells an amazing geologic history. The deepest rock in Washington, called "basement", consists mostly of terranes accreted to North America over the last 200 million years. These basement terranes are overlain by a variety of sedimentary and volcanic rocks that add detail to the history.

At the eastern edge of Washington State are exposures of **Paleozoic North America**. These rocks are overlain by metamorphosed sedimentary rocks dated around 1.46 billion years ago (unit **pCm**). These are the oldest rocks that have surface exposures in the state. Overlying the oldest rocks are metamorphosed sedimentary and volcanic rocks, dated around 700 million years (unit **pCs**).

For much of the Paleozoic (540 to 250 million years ago), the western coast of North America was tectonically inactive and bordered an ancient ocean. Some Paleozoic rocks in northeast Washington, including quartzite and conglomerate (unit **Rs**), indicate river, coastal, and ocean environments.

By 250 million years ago, the first of several subduction zones formed along the western edge of Washington.

The onset of subduction brought the first of what would be many arrivals of exotic terranes. The first accreted terrane included a collection of already accreted volcanic islands, collectively known as the **Intermontane Superterrane**. The collision of this terrane around 170 million years ago caused metamorphism and magmatism throughout the region.

Following the arrival of the first superterrane, the western edge of Washington hosted the prehistoric ocean, the Methow ocean. Marine sand and mud built upon the ocean floor (unit **Mzs**), later to be thrust eastward with the arrival of another accreted terrane.

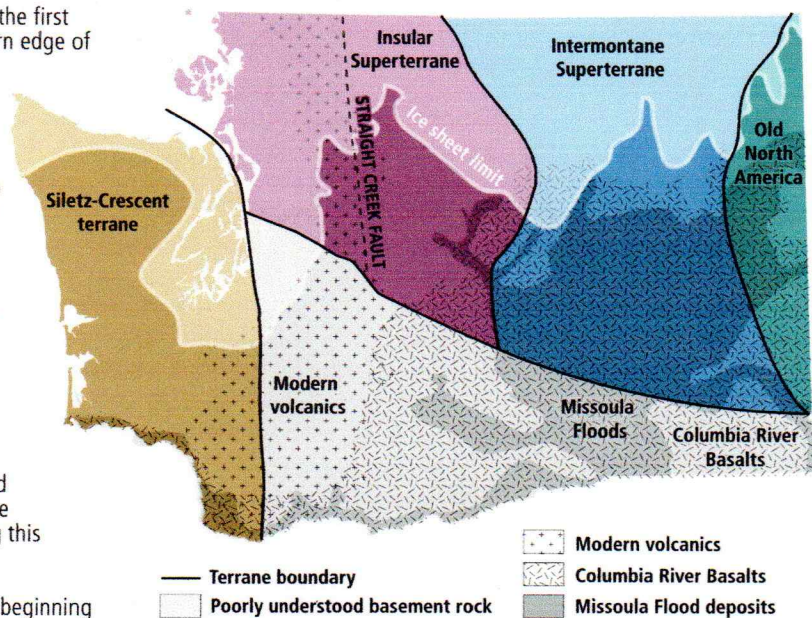
The complex patchwork that is the **Insular Superterrane** arrived throughout the Mesozoic, between 250 and 60 million years ago. Intermittent volcanic arcs contributed plutons that intruded the accreted terranes during this time.

Tectonic rearrangement beginning around 60 million years ago exerted a northward push that created extensive north-south strike-slip faulting through the middle of the North Cascades. Right-lateral motion along these faults, notably the Straight Creek fault, resulted in approximately 90 km of displacement. At the same time, extension created and exposed metamorphic core complexes in the Okanogan Highlands (unit **pTm**) and the metamorphic and intrusive igneous rocks of the North Cascades terranes (unit **pKm**). About 50 million years ago, the final major addition to Washington had arrived. The **Siletz-Crescent terrane** (unit **ITv**) was an exceptionally large chunk of basaltic islands and ocean floor. When it collided with North America, subduction temporarily ceased.

By 40 million years ago, subduction resumed west of Siletzia, resulting in another volcanic arc and uplifting rocks of the Cascade Range. By 17 million years ago, the Yellowstone Hot Spot caused the eruption of the Columbia River Basalt Group, the youngest continental flood basalt eruption on Earth. These eruptions ended by 6 million years ago, and they covered vast areas of southeastern Washington, Oregon, and Idaho (unit **uTvc**). During these eruptions, continental rifting in the Basin and Range and northward drift of much of California caused clockwise rotation and deformation of the Pacific Northwest, creating the Yakima fold and thrust belt. Rotation about a pole near the northeast corner of Oregon is still ongoing.

This rotation likely contributed to the onset of the modern Cascade arc ~10 million years ago. Volcanism and uplift of the mountain range introduced stratovolcanoes that are still active today (unit **Qv**). The mostly basaltic Boring Volcanic Field was also active beginning about 2.7 million years ago.

Pleistocene cooling brought broad continental ice sheets across the northern half of the state (unit **Qg**). Repeated glacial advances and retreats carved the modern landscape, including the Puget Sound and surrounding lowlands. Massive glacial lakes were dammed by ice and episodically breached during this time, releasing the enormous Missoula Floods that spread across eastern Washington to the western coast, traversing the Columbia River.





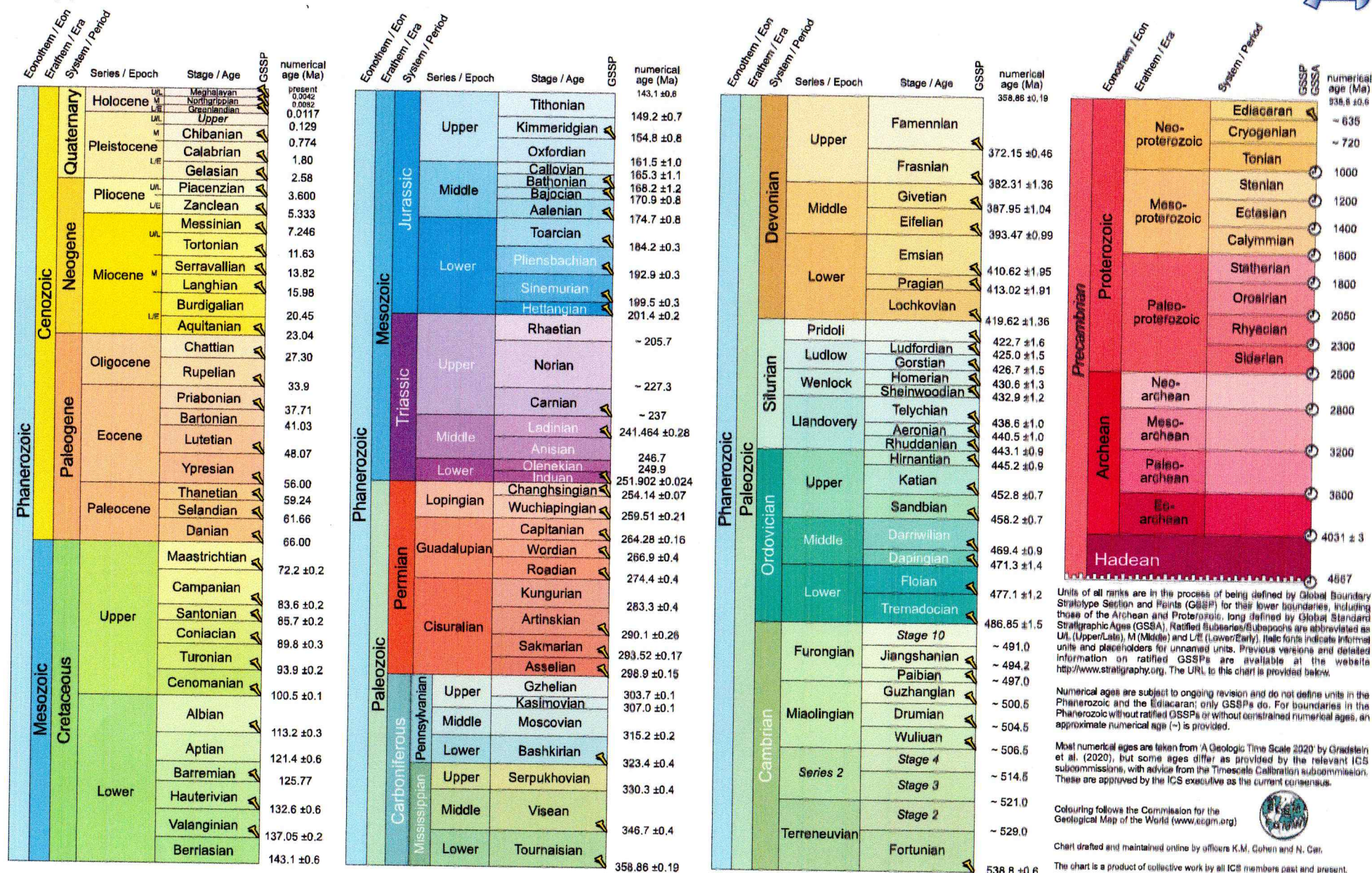


# INTERNATIONAL CHRONOSTRATIGRAPHIC CHART

www.stratigraphy.org

International Commission on Stratigraphy

v 2024/12



Units of all ranks are in the process of being defined by Global Boundary Stratotype Section and Points (GSSPs) for their lower boundaries, including those of the Archean and Proterozoic, long defined by Global Standard Stratigraphic Ages (GSSAs). Ratified Subseries/Epochs are abbreviated as U/L (Upper/Late), M (Middle) and L/E (Lower/Early). Italic fonts indicate informal units and placeholders for unnamed units. Previous versions and detailed information on ratified GSSPs are available at the website <http://www.stratigraphy.org>. The URL to this chart is provided below.

Numerical ages are subject to ongoing revision and do not define units in the Phanerozoic and the Ediacaran; only GSSPs do. For boundaries in the Phanerozoic without ratified GSSPs or without constrained numerical ages, an approximate numerical age (~) is provided.

Most numerical ages are taken from 'A Geologic Time Scale 2020' by Gradstein et al. (2020), but some ages differ as provided by the relevant ICS subcommissions, with advice from the Timescale Calibration subcommission. These are approved by the ICS executive as the current consensus.

Colouring follows the Commission for the Geological Map of the World (www.cgmw.org)

Chart drafted and maintained online by officers K.M. Cohen and N. Cai.

The chart is a product of collective work by all ICS members past and present.

(c) International Commission on Stratigraphy, December 2024

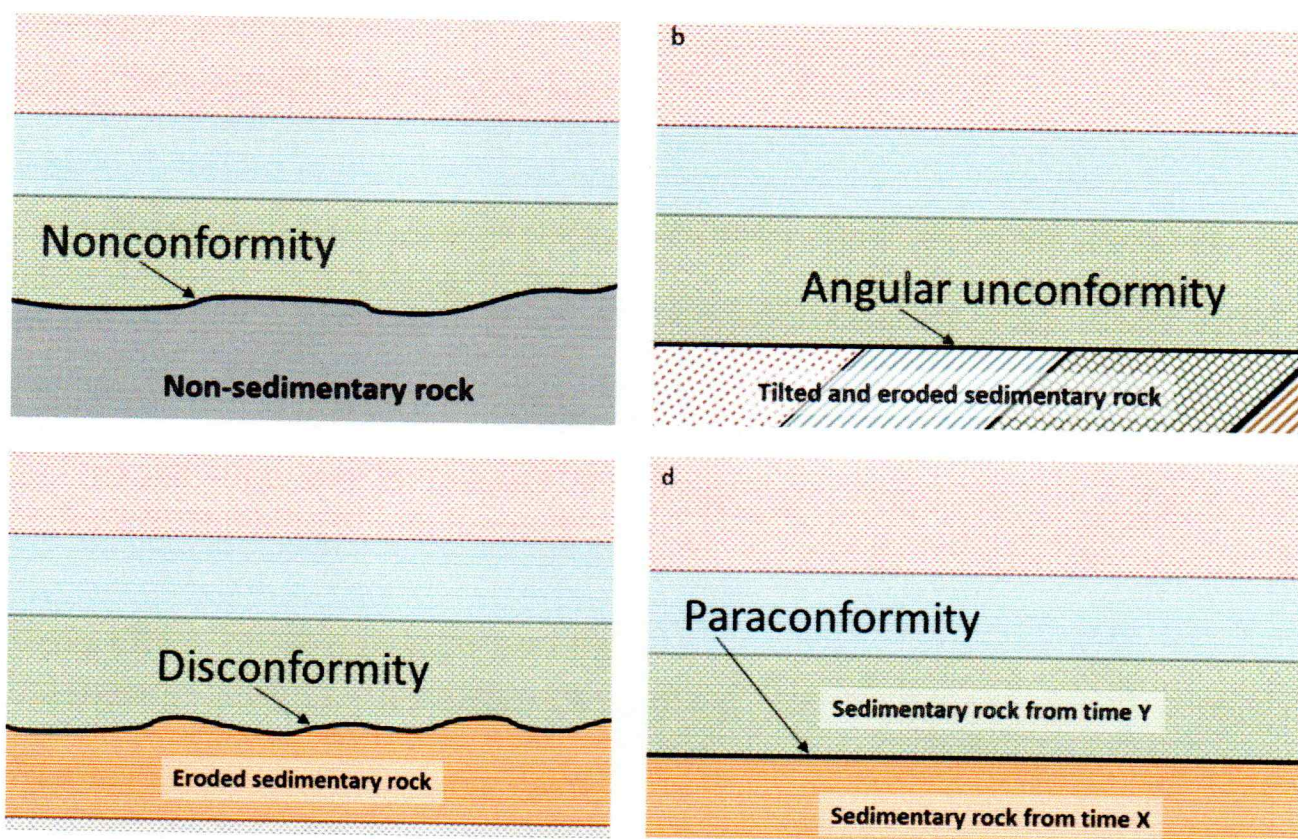
URL: [http://www.stratigraphy.org/ICSchart/ChronostratChart\(2024-12\).pdf](http://www.stratigraphy.org/ICSchart/ChronostratChart(2024-12).pdf)

To cite: Cohen, K.M., Finney, S.C., Gibbard, P.L., & Fan, J.-X. (2013) updated) The ICS International Chronostratigraphic Chart, Episodes 36: 199-204



**Table 8.1 The characteristics of the four types of unconformities**

Unconformity Type	Description
Nonconformity	A boundary between non-sedimentary rocks (below) and sedimentary rocks (above)
Angular unconformity	A boundary between two sequences of sedimentary rocks where the underlying ones have been tilted (or folded) and eroded prior to the deposition of the younger ones (as in Figure 8.2.4)
Disconformity	A boundary between two sequences of sedimentary rocks where the underlying ones have been eroded (but not tilted) prior to the deposition of the younger ones (as in Figure 8.2.2)
Paraconformity	A time gap in a sequence of sedimentary rocks that does not show up as an angular unconformity or a disconformity



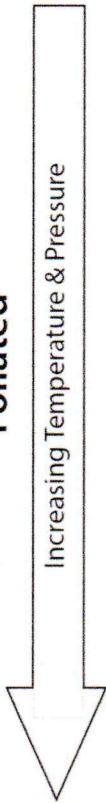






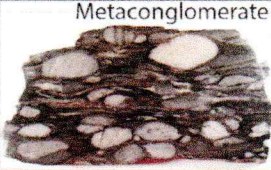
**Figure 8.2.5** The four types of unconformities: (a) a nonconformity between older non-sedimentary rock and sedimentary rock, (b) an angular unconformity, (c) a disconformity between layers of sedimentary rock, where the older rock has been eroded but not tilted, and (d) a paraconformity where there is a long period (typically millions of years) of non-deposition between two parallel layers.

#### Media Attributions

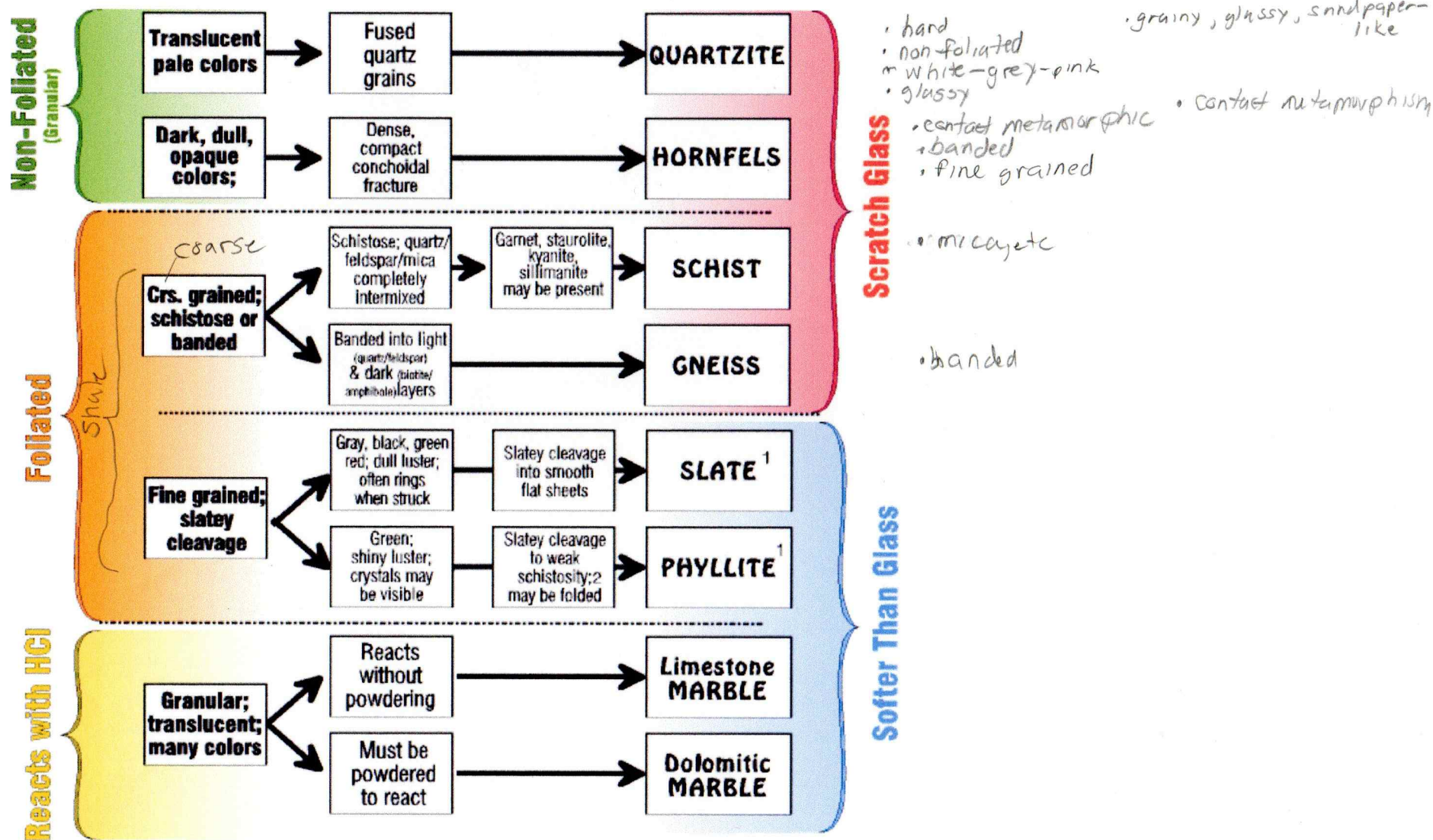
- Figures 8.2.1ab, 8.2.2, 8.2.3, 8.2.4, 8.2.5: © Steven Earle. CC BY.



## Lab 6: Metamorphic Rocks

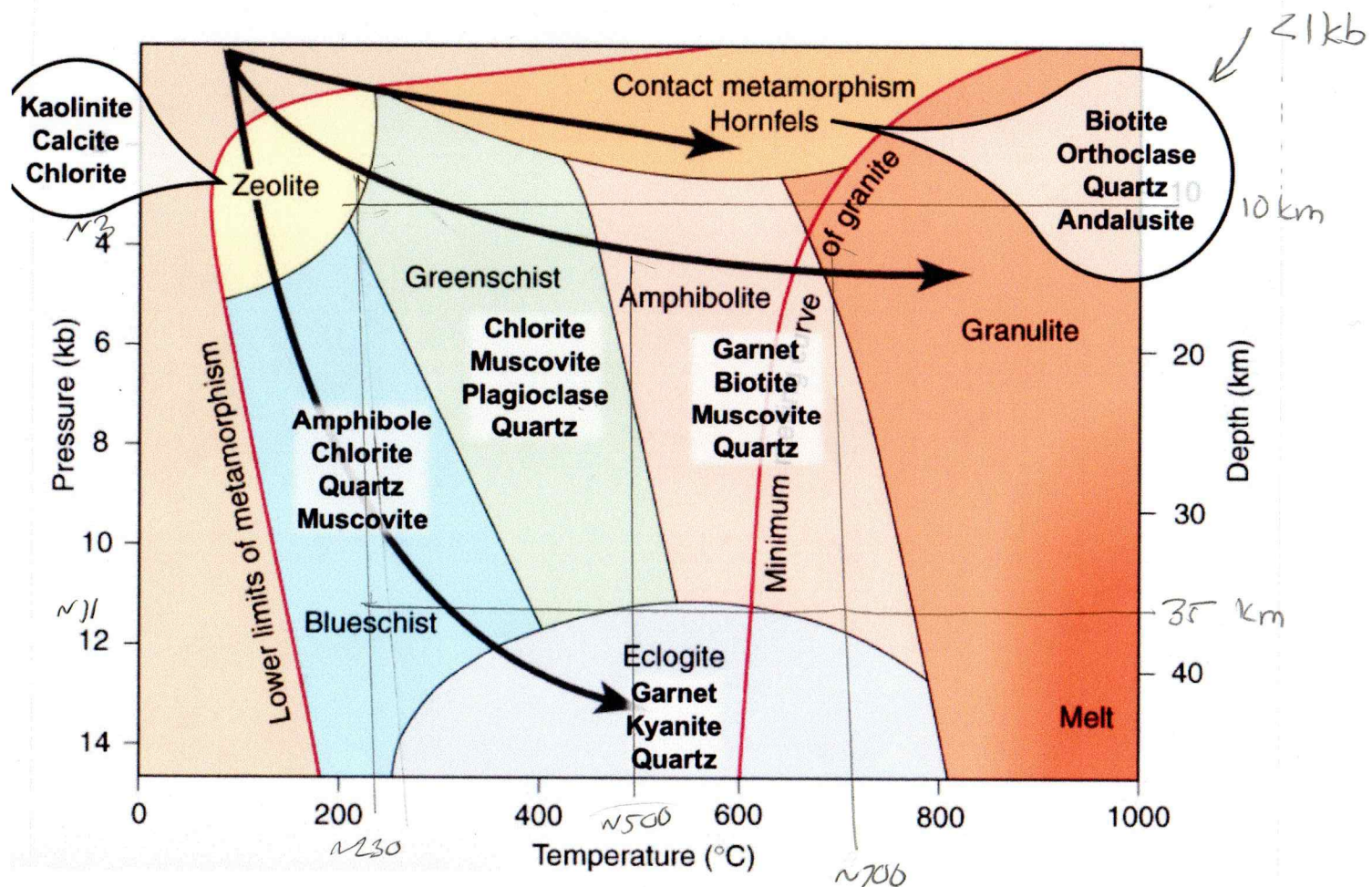
Texture	Composition	Characteristics	Protolith	Metamorphic Rock Name
<b>Foliated</b> 	<b>Mineral Alignment</b>          <b>Banding</b>	Clay Minerals	Shale	Slate 
		Fine-grained rock with a shiny surface from microscopic mica crystals. Similar to shale, but with a satin luster and may have wrinkled cleavage.	Shale	Phyllite 
		Contains visible, shiny, platy mica crystals; may have other minerals, such as quartz, garnet and amphibole. Has schistose pattern of foliation.	Shale	Schist 
		Contains alternating bands of light- and dark-colored minerals, called gneissic banding	Shale or Igneous Rock	Gneiss 
<b>Non-foliated</b>	Quartz	Equigranular grains of quartz, which has a hardness of 7.	Sandstone or Siltstone	Quartzite 
	Calcite and/or Dolomite	Equigranular grains of calcite, which has a hardness of 3. Reacts with HCl.	Limestone	Marble 
	Various minerals in clasts and matrix	Coarse-grained rock wherein pebbles may be distorted or stretched.	Conglomerate	Metaconglomerate 





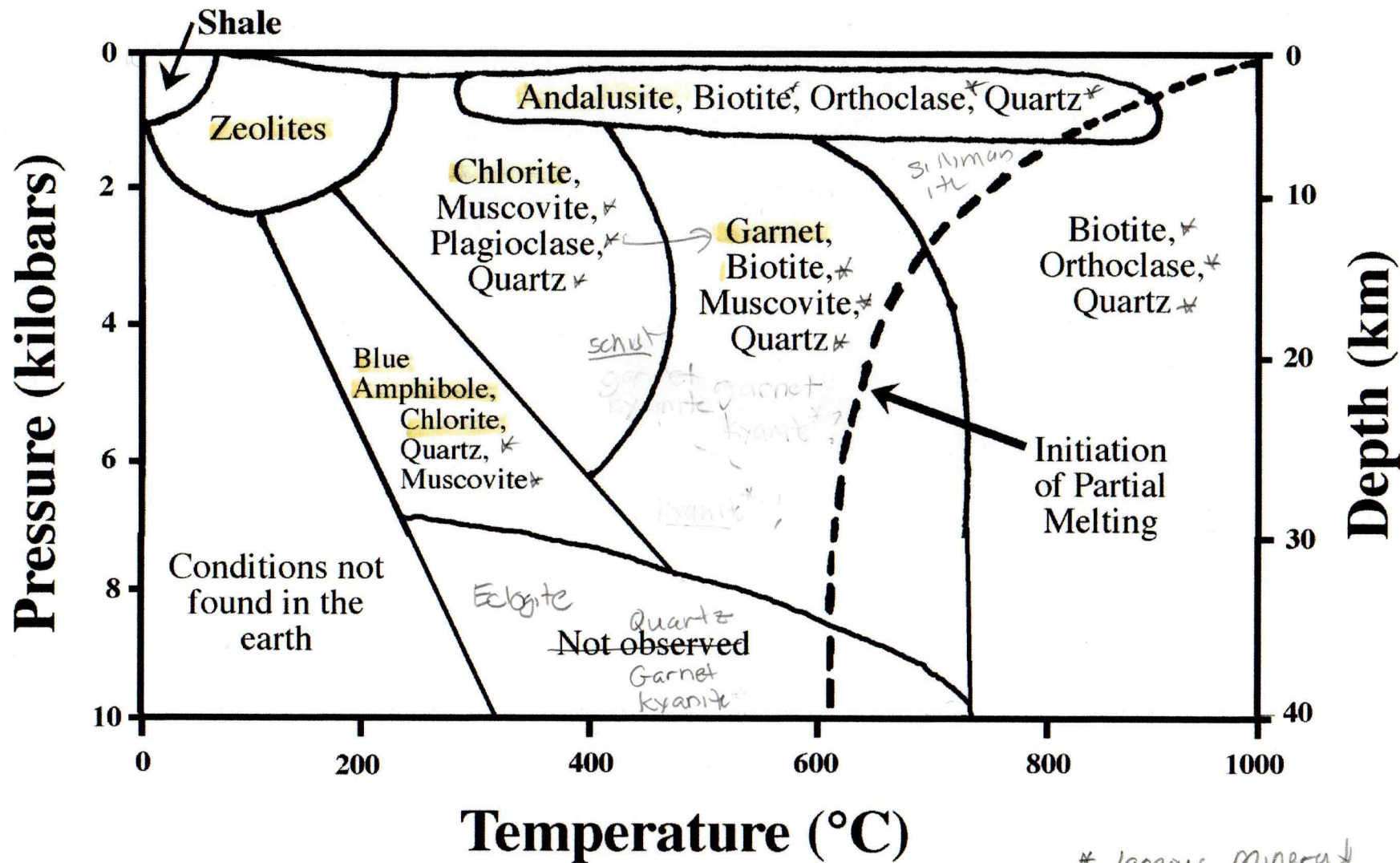
<sup>1</sup> (Shale), slate, and phyllite complete intergrade with each other. Distinctions may be difficult.





Lab 6-3 Metamorphism of Shale

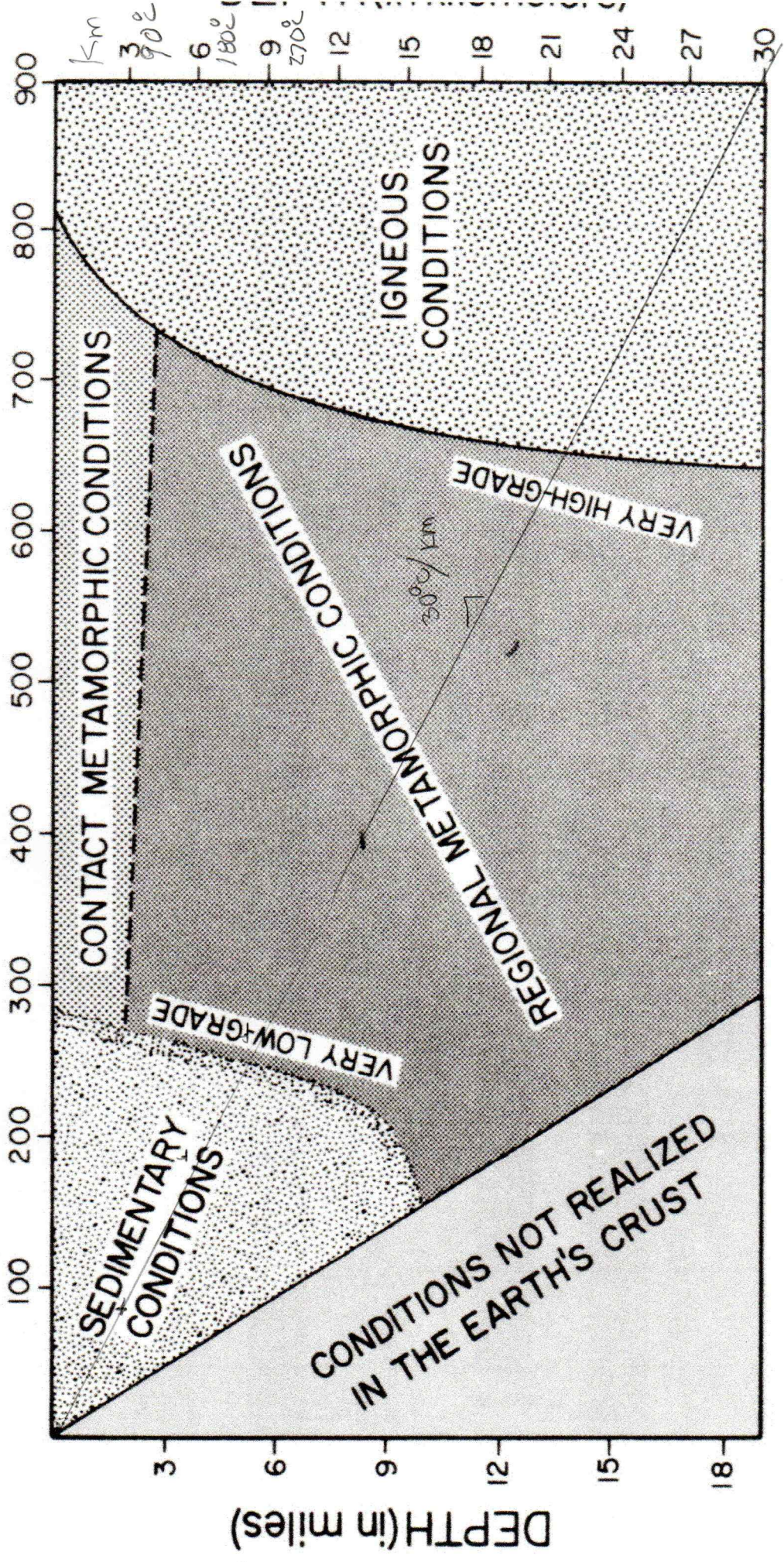




\* Igneous minerals  
 Orthoclase is K- or Potassium  
 Feldspar  
 Plagioclase is Ca-Na Feldspar



TEMPERATURE (in °C)





Inorganic Clastic Sedimentary Rocks						
Texture	Grain size	Composition	Comments	Rock name	Map symbol	Picture
Clastic (fragmental)	Pebbles, cobbles, and/or boulders in a matrix of sand, silt and/or clay	Mostly quartz, feldspar, and clay minerals; may contain fragments of other rocks and minerals	Rounded fragments <i>concordant fractures</i>	Conglomerate		
			Angular fragments	Breccia		
	Sand (0.063 to 2 mm)		Fine to coarse in a variety of colors	Sandstone		
	Silt (0.039 to 0.063 mm)		Very fine grained, massive, usually dark	Siltstone		
	Clay (<0.0039 mm)		Compact, brittle, usually dark	Shale		
Chemically and/or Organically Formed Sedimentary Rocks						
Texture	Grain size	Composition	Comments	Rock name	Map symbol	Picture
Crystalline	Fine to coarse grains	Quartz	Chemical precipitates and evaporites <i>conchoidal</i>	Chert		
		Halite		Rock salt		
		Gypsum		Rock gypsum		
		<i>CaMg(CO3)2</i> Dolomite		Dolostone*		
Crystalline or bioclastic	Microscopic to very coarse	Calcite <i>CaCO3</i>	Biologic precipitates or cemented shell fragments	Chalk Limestone* <i>(oceans)</i>		
Bioclastic	Clay (< 0.0039 mm)	Carbon	Black, compacted plant remains ( <i>band</i> )	Coal		
Bioclastic	Clay (< 0.0039 mm)	Clay and kerogen	Dark, may have oily smell or burn ( <i>sea</i> )	Oil shale		

Other types of sandstone are arkose and graywacke. Varieties of limestone include chalk, coquina, micrite, travertine, oolite, tufa, and fossiliferous limestone.

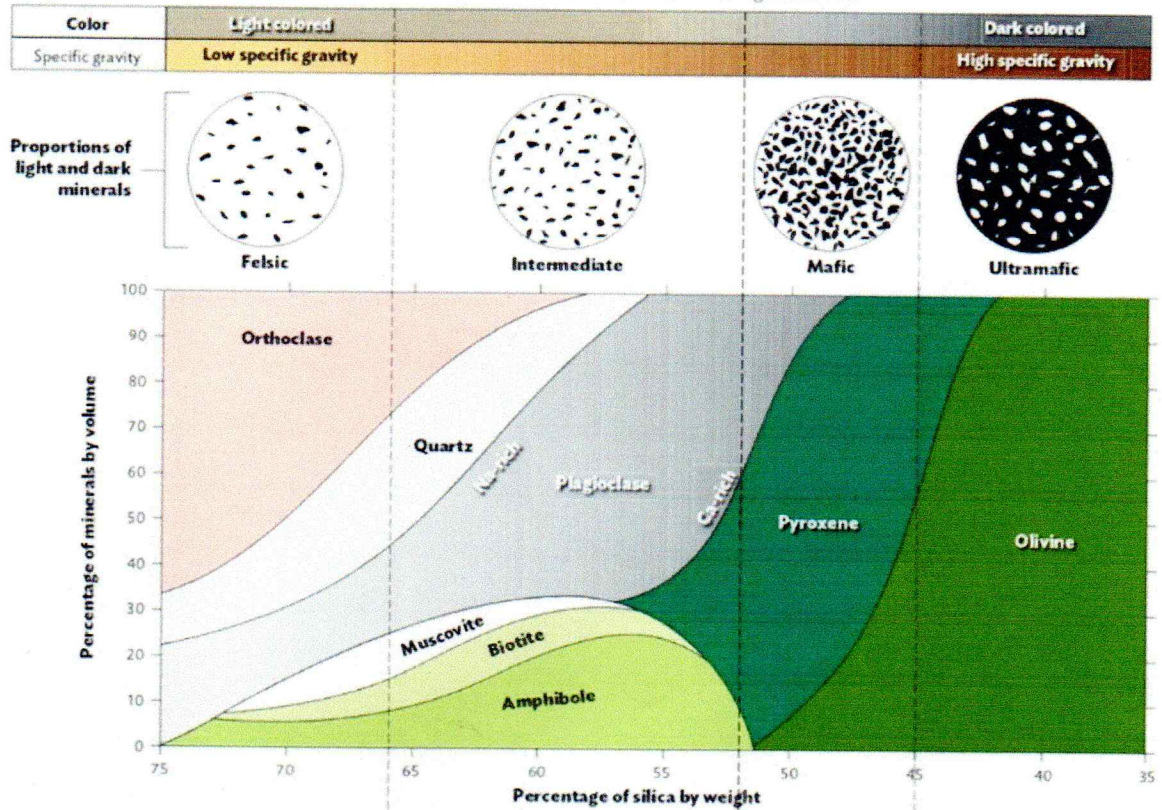
\* These react with dilute acid.



## Lab 5: Sedimentary Rocks

### Classification of igneous rocks.

(a) Abundances of minerals in felsic, intermediate, mafic, and ultramafic igneous rocks.



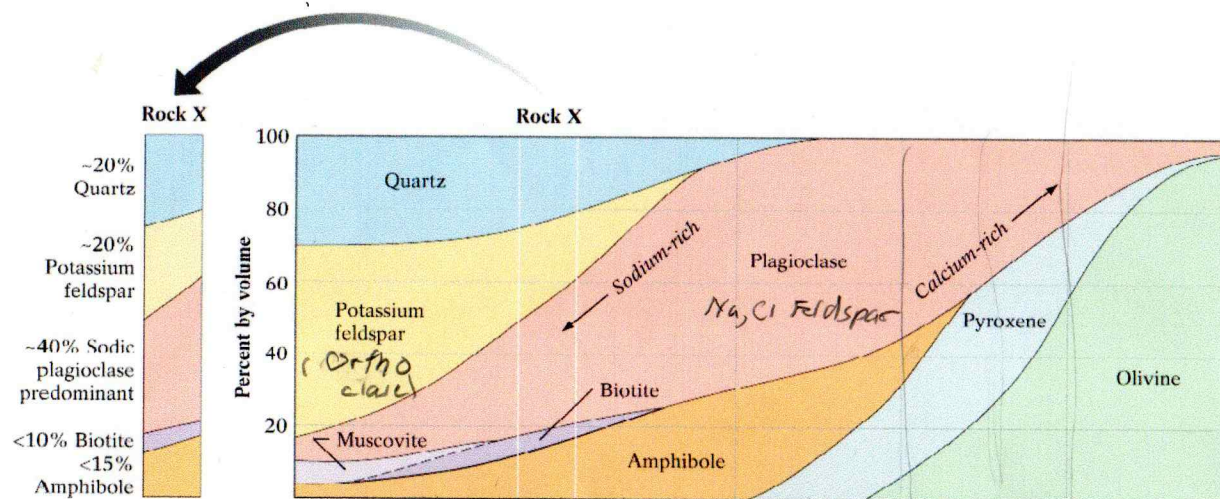
(b) Choose a column based on the abundance of minerals, and select the rock name based on the appropriate texture.

Silica (SiO <sub>2</sub> ) content		High silica content			Low silica content		
Texture	Pegmatitic		Granitic pegmatite		Mafic pegmatite		
	Coarse-grained (phaneritic)		Granite	Diorite	Gabbro	Dunite (olivine only) Pyroxenite (pyroxene) Peridotite (olivine + pyroxene)	
	Fine-grained (aphanitic)		Rhyolite	Andesite	Basalt	Rocks with these textures and compositions are very rare.	
	Porphyritic		Porphyritic granite or* Porphyritic rhyolite	Porphyritic diorite or* Porphyritic andesite	Porphyritic gabbro or* Porphyritic basalt		
	Glassy		Obsidian				Tachylite
	Porous		Pumice				Scoria/Vesicular basalt
	Fragmental	Fine	Rhyolite tuff	Andesite tuff	Basalt tuff		
		Coarse	Volcanic breccia				

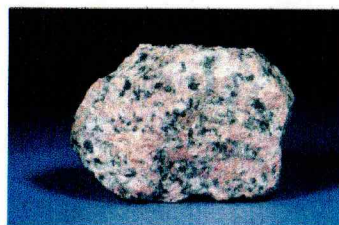
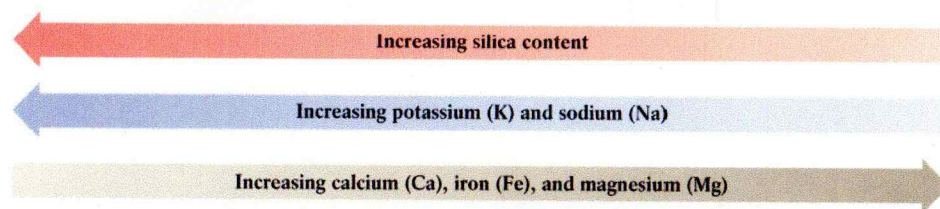
\*Porphyritic rocks are named for the size of the groundmass grains. For example, a felsic porphyry in which the groundmass grains are coarse is called *granite porphyry*. If the groundmass grains are small, it is called a *rhyolite porphyry*.

## Appendix B-1 Igneous Rock Identification Chart





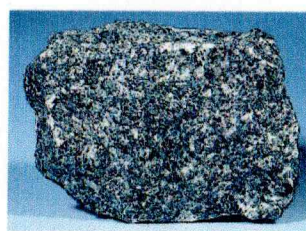
Phaneritic rock	Granite	<i>Granite Diorite</i>	Diorite	Gabbro	Peridotite
Aphanitic rock	Rhyolite	<i>Dacite</i>	Andesite	Basalt	Komatiite
Composition type	Felsic		Intermediate	Mafic	Ultramafic



Granite



Diorite

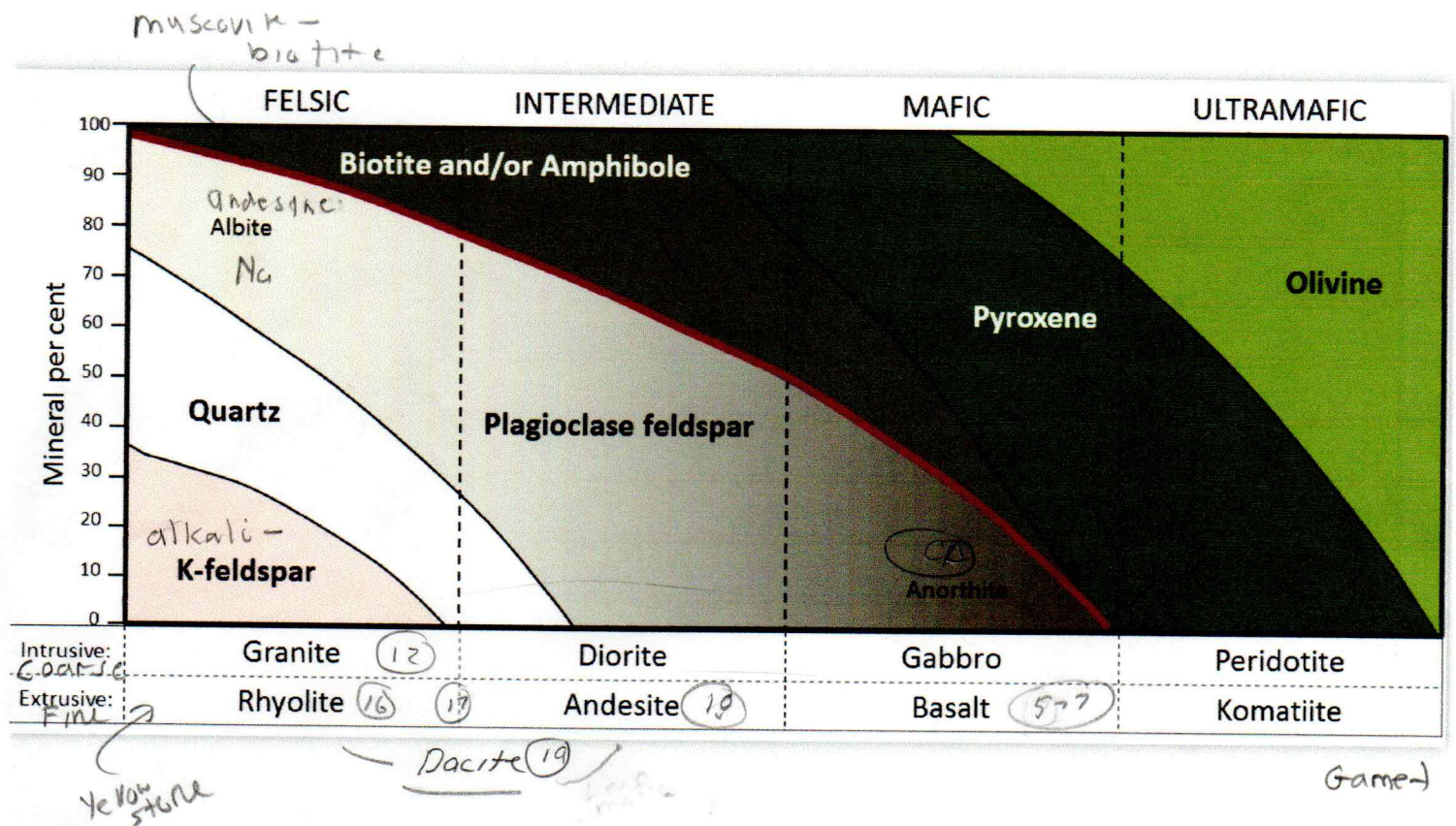


Gabbro



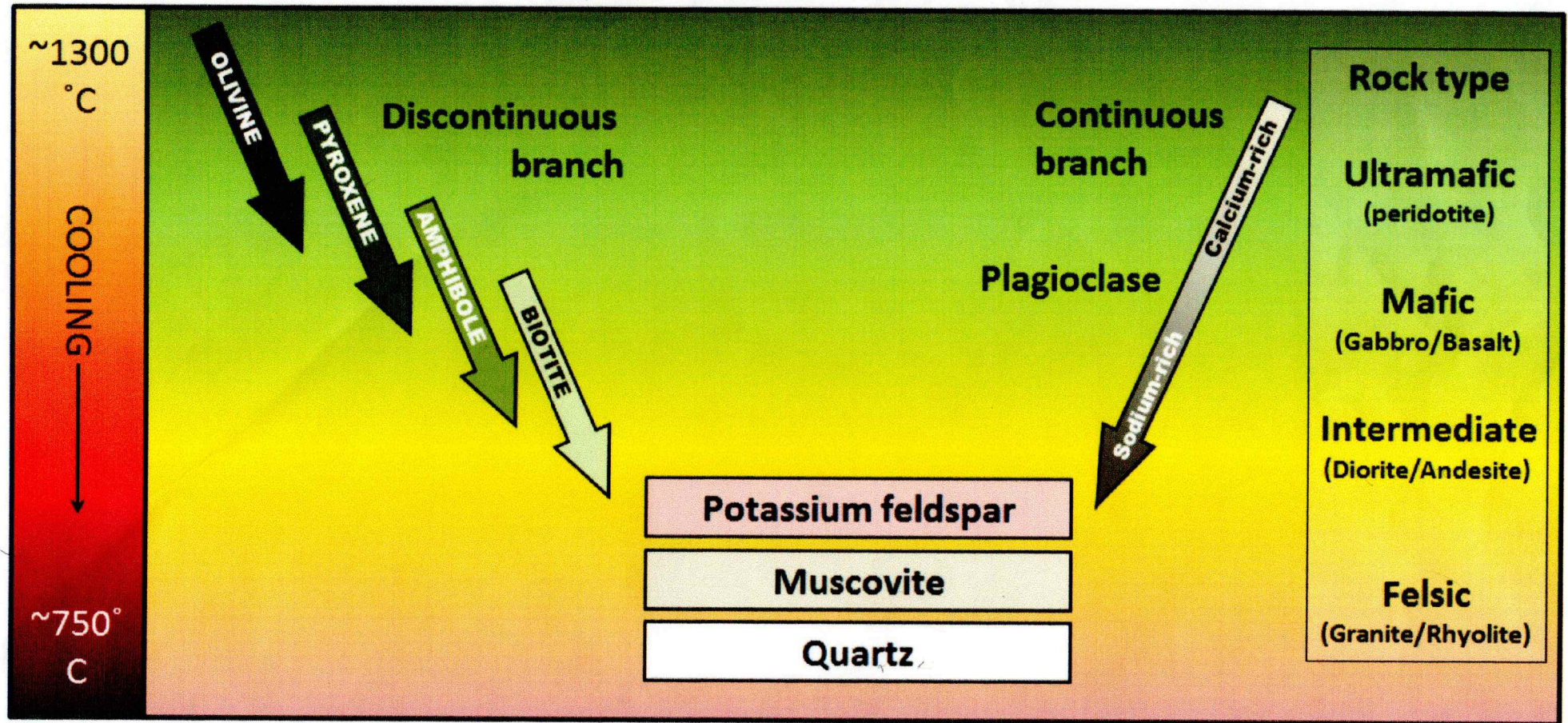
Peridotite







# Bowen's Reaction Series




	Si concentr.	T <sub>melt</sub>	Fe/Mg
melt phase	more	lower	less
solid phase	less	high	more



# Relative stabilities

**Table 7.2** Relative Stabilities of Common Minerals Under Weathering

Stability of Minerals	Rate of Weathering
MOST STABLE	Slowest
Iron oxides (hematite)	
Aluminum hydroxides (gibbsite)	
Quartz	
Clay minerals	
Muscovite mica	
Potassium feldspar (orthoclase)	
Biotite mica	
Sodium-rich feldspar (albite)	
Amphiboles	
Pyroxene	
Calcium-rich feldspar (anorthite)	
Olivine	
Calcite	
Halite	
LEAST STABLE	Fastest

## Important factors

**-Chemical stability**

**-Solubility**

**-Rate of dissolution**

Note that the rate of weathering of silicate minerals (stability of a mineral at the earth surface conditions) is inversely related to the temperature at which it forms (i.e., olivine is the least stable and quartz is the most stable)

Where do iron oxides and aluminum hydroxides form?



# Appendix A-3. Dark Colored Non-metallic Mineral Identification Chart

Luster & Color	Relative Hardness	Hardness	Cleavage	Color (Streak)	Specific Gravity	Other Properties	Name
Non-Metallic Dark Colored	Harder than Glass	9.0	No	brown (variable)	4.0	six-sided prismatic crystals	CORUNDUM
		7.0	Yes-d	brown	3.8	vitreous to dull luster; prismatic to cross-shaped crystals	STAUROLITE
		7.0	No	red or brown	3.5-4.3	twelve-sided crystals common; vitreous luster	GARNET
		7.0	No	variable	2.7	vitreous luster; conchoidal fracture; massive but also occurs as 6-sided crystals	QUARTZ
		6.5-7.0	No	olive green	3.3-4.4	vitreous luster; granular	OLIVINE
	Similar to Glass	6.0	Yes	gray to white	2.6-2.8	vitreous luster; 2 cleavages at 90°; striations common on cleavage faces	PLAGIOCLASE
		5.0-6.0	Yes-d	dark green to black	3.3	vitreous to dull luster; 2 poor cleavages at 90°	PYROXENE
		5.0-6.0	Yes	dark green to black	3.3	vitreous luster; splintery appearance; 2 perfect cleavages at 120° and 60°	AMPHIBOLE
		5.0-6.0	No	reddish-brown to black	5.0	red-brown streak; dull luster; massive	HEMATITE
		5.0	Yes-d	green, brown, blue, black	3.2	vitreous luster; six-sided crystals common	APATITE (iron ore)
	Softer than Glass	3.5-4.0	Yes-d	grass green	4.0	occurs as surface coatings, masses, or tiny crystals; green streak	MALACHITE
		2.5-3.0	Yes	brown to black	2.8-3.0	vitreous luster; perfect cleavage in 1 direction; forms flexible thin sheets	BIOTITE
		2.0-2.5	Yes-d	dark or light green	2.6-2.9	flexible crystal flakes; crystal aggregates common	CHLORITE

Note: Yes-d means cleavage is present but may be difficult to see.

(obsidian)



# Appendix A-2. Light Colored Non-metallic Mineral Identification Chart

Luster & Color	Relative Hardness	Hardness	Cleavage	Color	Specific Gravity	Other Properties	Name	
Non-Metallic Light Colored	Harder than Glass	3	7.0	Yes-d	pistachio green	3.3-3.6	surface coatings, or massive	EPIDOTE
		3	7.0	No	variable	2.7	vitreous luster; conchoidal fracture; massive but also occurs as 6-sided crystals	QUARTZ
	Similar to Glass	6.0	Yes	pinkish-orange (variable)	2.5	vitreous luster; banding; 2 cleavages at 90°	ORTHOCLASE (Potassium Feldspar)	
		6.0	Yes	white to gray	2.6-2.8	vitreous luster; 2 cleavages at 90°; striations common on cleavage faces	PLAGIOCLASE (Na & Ca Feldspar)	
		5.0-7.0	Yes-d	bluish-gray	3.5	vitreous luster; blade shaped crystals	KYANITE	
		3.5-4	Yes	white-grey	2.8	reacts w. HCl	DOLOMITE	
		4.0	Yes	clear, purple, yellow (variable)	3.2	vitreous luster; 4 perfect cleavages forming octahedrons	FLUORITE	
		3.0	Yes	white to clear (variable)	2.7	reacts with HCl; rhombic cleavage; 3 perfect cleavages not at 90°	CALCITE	
		2.5	Yes	clear to milky white	2.2	3 perfect cleavages at 90° (cubes); salty taste	HALITE (SALT)	
		2.0-2.5	Yes-d	white to tan	2.6	dull luster, powdery; earthy odor; white streak	KAOLINITE	
	Softer than Glass	2.0-2.5	Yes	clear to light yellow	2.5-3.0	vitreous luster; perfect cleavage in 1 dir.; forms flexible, transparent, thin sheets	MUSCOVITE	
		2.0	Yes	clear, white, yellow (variable)	2.3	vitreous to pearly luster; brittle flakes; perfect cleavage in 1 direction	GYPSUM	
		1.5-2.5	No	yellow	2.0	yellow streak; distinctive sulfurous odor	SULFUR	
		1.0	Yes-d	apple green to silvery white	2.7	pearly luster; greasy feel	TALC	

Note: Yes-d means cleavage is present but may be difficult to see.

DOLOMITE  
A on both light & dark  
sheet



## Appendix A-1

### Metallic Mineral Identification Chart

Luster	Streak	Hardness	Cleavage	Color	Specific Gravity	Other Properties	Name
Metallic	Dark Gray to Black	6.0-6.5	No	brass yellow	5.0	cubic crystals (with striations) common	<b>PYRITE</b>
		6.0	No	dark gray to black	5.2	strongly magnetic	<b>MAGNETITE</b>
		3.5-4.0	No	golden yellow	4.2	may tarnish to bronze or purple; massive	<b>CHALCOPYRITE</b>
		2.5	Yes	silvery gray	7.5	perfect cubic cleavage (3 planes at 90°)	<b>GALENA</b>
		1.0	Yes-d	gray to black	2.5	marks paper and fingers; greasy feel	<b>GRAPHITE</b>
	Red to Red-Brown	5.0-6.5	No	silver to gray to red	5.0	may be tiny glittering flakes	<b>HEMATITE</b>
	Yellow-Brown	3.5-4.0	Yes-d	yellow-brown to dark brown	4.0	submetallic to resinous luster; 6 cleavage planes	<b>SPHALERITE</b>
	Copper	2.5-3.0	No	copper to dark brown	8.9	malleable	<b>NATIVE COPPER</b>

Note: Yes-d means cleavage is present but may be difficult to see