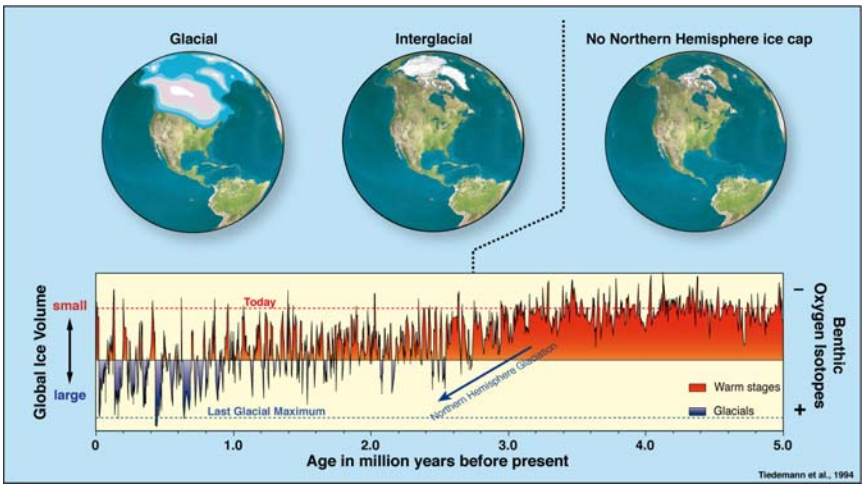
Climates of the Past
AOSC 433/633 & CHEM 433/633

Ross Salawitch

Class Web Site: http://www.atmos.umd.edu/~rjs/class/spr2013



http://www.awi.de/en/research/research_divisions/geosciences/marine_geology_and_paleontology

Lecture 4

5 February 2013

Climates of the Past

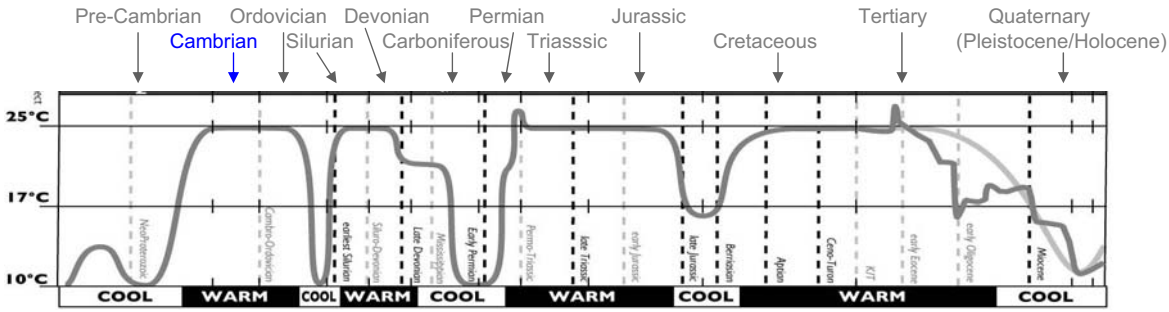
Goals for today:

1) Techniques for quantifying past climate

2) Remarkable changes in past climate

3) Challenge in applying past climate sensitivity to future climate

The details of this "challenge" are quantitative and come at end of lecture. We generally do not like to place quantitative material at the end of a lecture … please bear with us today as this arrangement seems the best way to organize this lecture



http://www.scotese.com

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Phanerozoic	Cenozoic	Quaternary	1.6
		Tertiary	66
	Mesozoic	Cretaceous	138
		Jurassic	205
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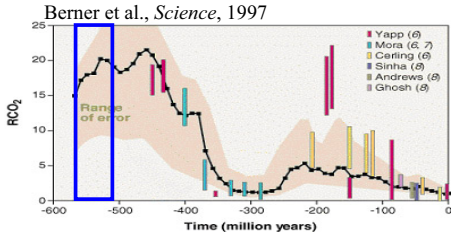
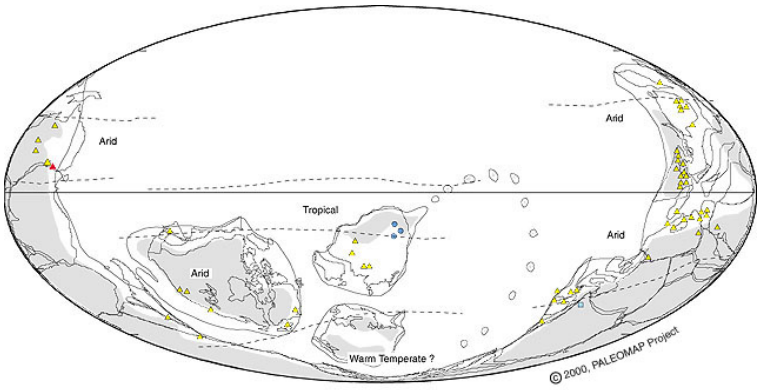
Pre-Archean			

Berner et al., *Science*, 1997

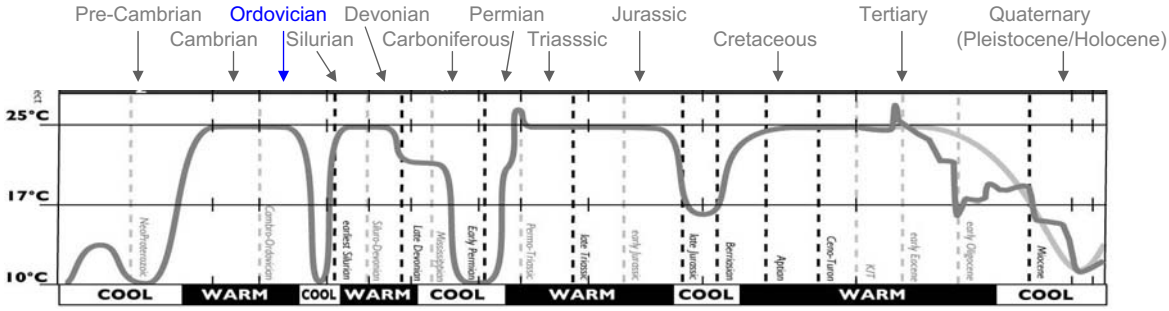


Early Cambrian Climate (540 million years ago)



The climate of the Cambrian is not well known.
It was probably not very hot, nor very cold.
There is no evidence of ice at the poles.

Source: http://www.scotese.com/ecambcli.htm



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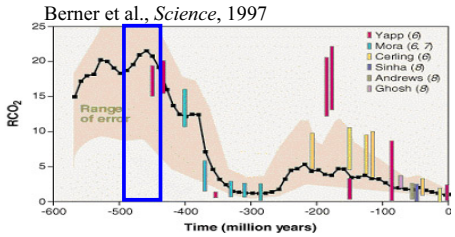
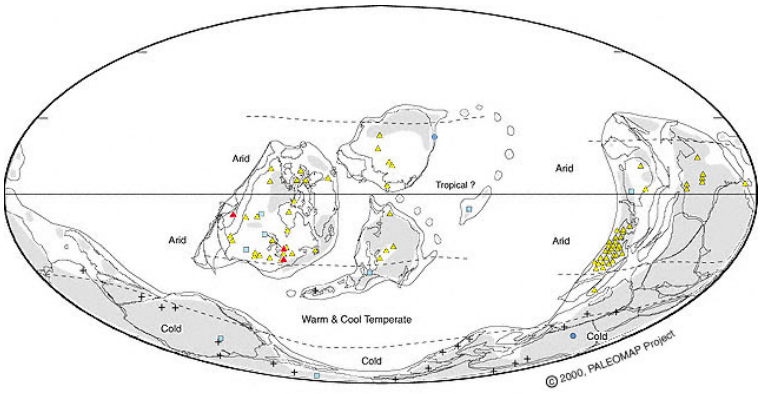
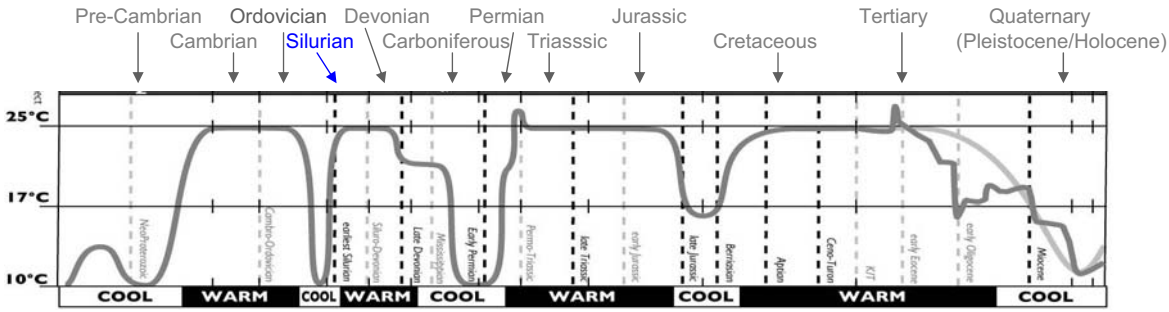


Early Ordovician Climate (480 million years ago)



Mild climates probably covered most of the globe.
The continents were flooded by the oceans creating warm, broad tropical seaways.

Source: http://www.scotese.com/eordclim.htm



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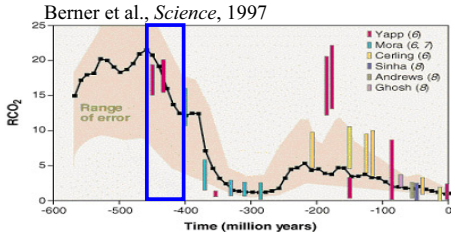
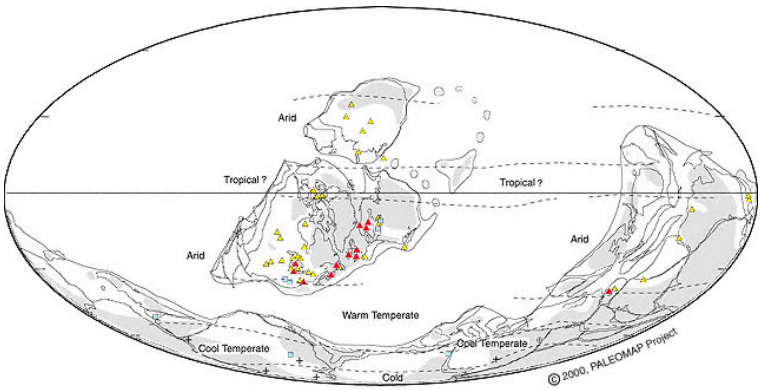
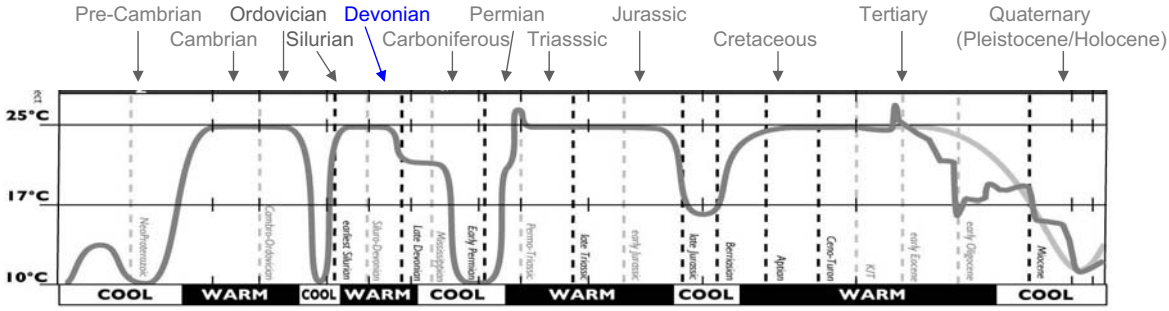


Silurian Climate
(420 million years ago)



Coral reefs thrived in the clear sunny skies of the southern Arid Belt. Lingering glacial conditions prevailed near the South Pole.

Source: http://www.scotese.com/silclim.htm



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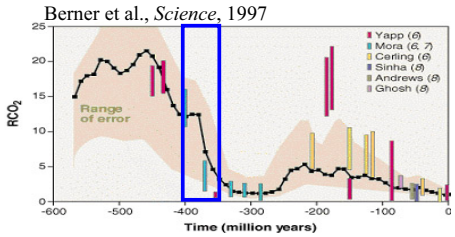
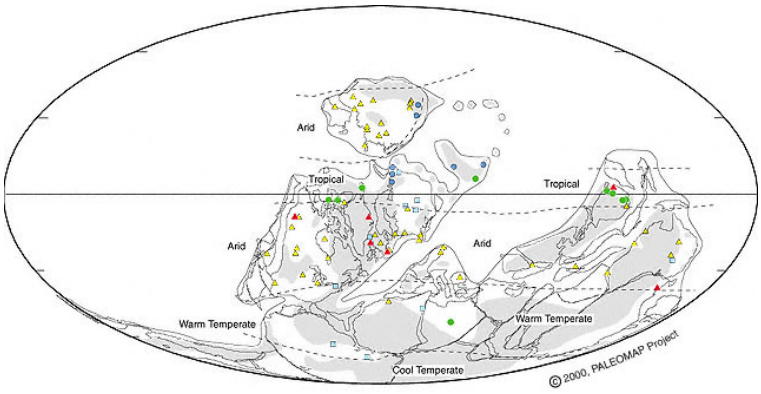
Berner et al., *Science*, 1997

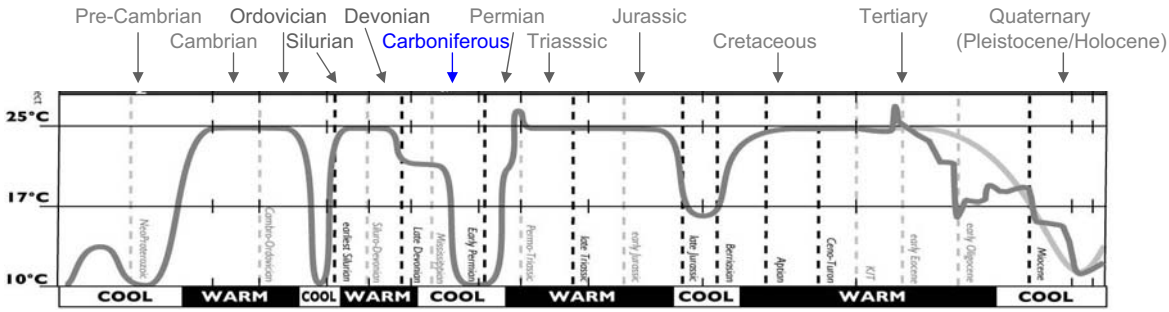


Middle Devonian Climate
(380 million years ago)



The Equator ran through today's Arctic Canada. Coal began to accumulate as land plants flourished in the equatorial rainy belt. Warm shallow seas covered much of today's North America & Siberia.

Source: http://www.scotese.com/mdevclim.htm



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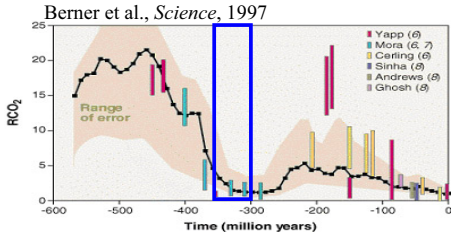
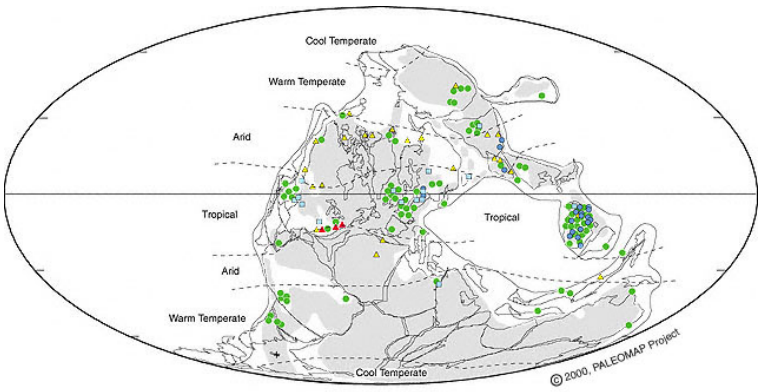
Berner et al., *Science*, 1997

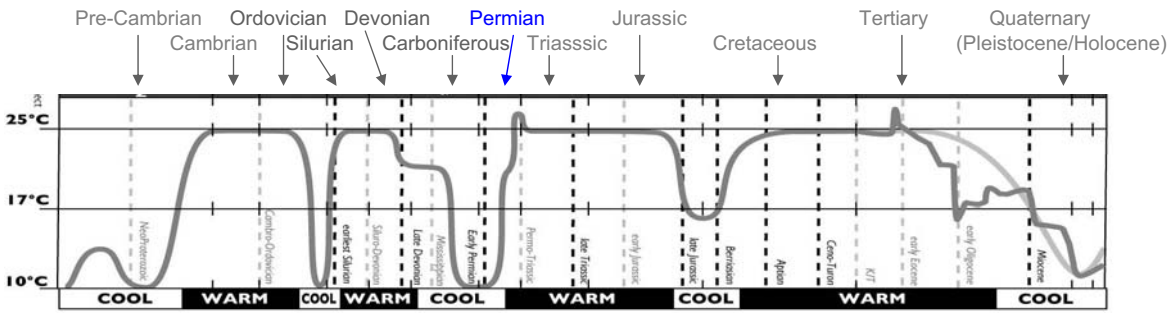


Carboniferous Climate (350 million years ago)



Rainforests covered the tropical regions of Pangea, which was bounded to the north and south by deserts.
An ***ice cap*** began to form on the South Pole.

Source: http://www.scotese.com/serpukcl.htm



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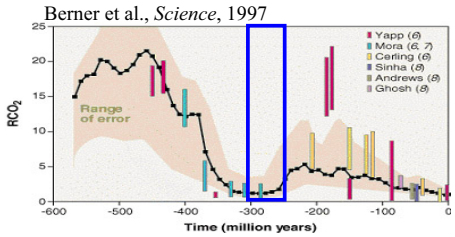
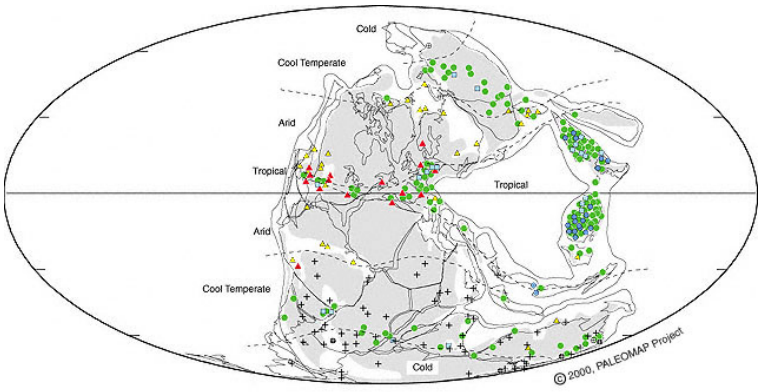
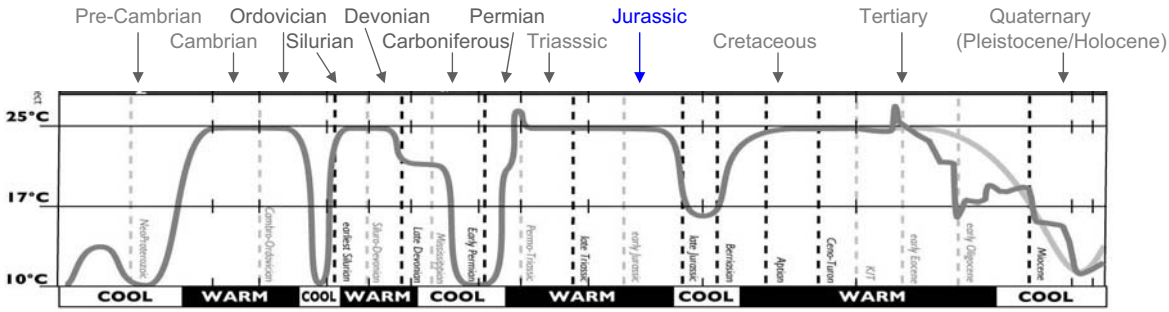


Early Permian Climate (280 million years ago)



Much of the SH was covered by ice as glaciers pushed equator ward.
Coal was produced in Equatorial & Temperate rainforests during warmer "Interglacial" periods.

Source: http://www.scotese.com/epermcli.htm



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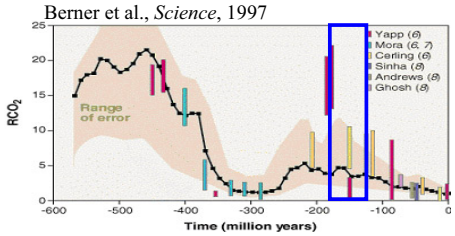
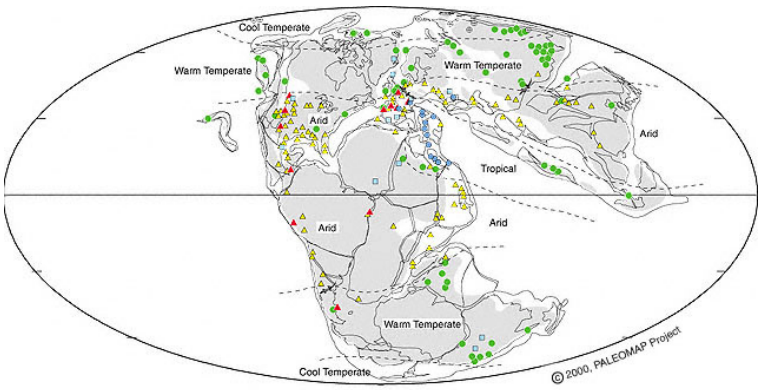
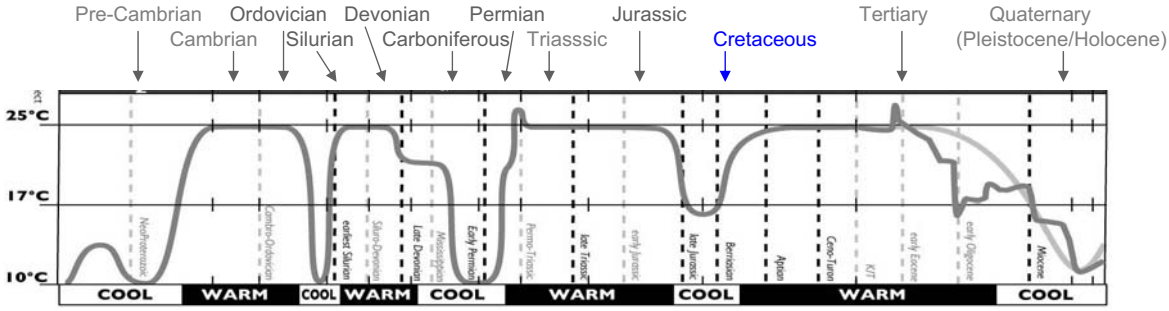


Late Jurassic Climate (150 million years ago)



Global climate began to change due to breakup of Pangea. The interior of Pangea became moister and seasonal snow & ice frosted the polar regions

Source: http://www.scotese.com/ljurclim.htm



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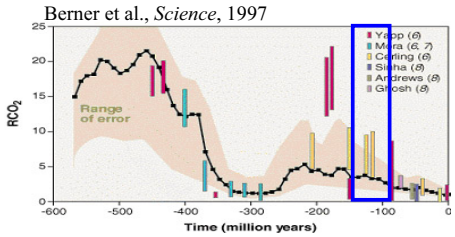
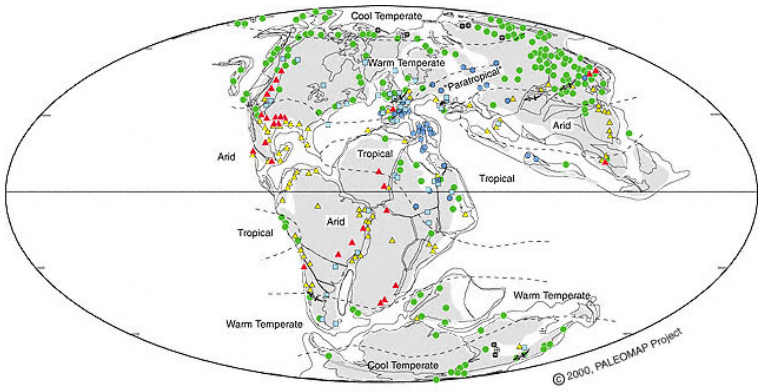
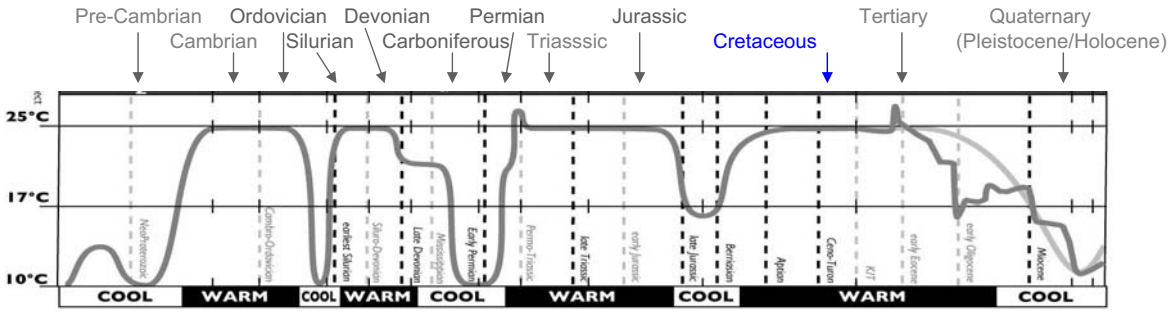


Early Cretaceous Climate (120 million years ago)



Climate was a mild "Ice House" world. Snow and ice were present during winter and cool temperate forests covered polar regions.

Source: http://www.scotese.com/ecretcli.htm



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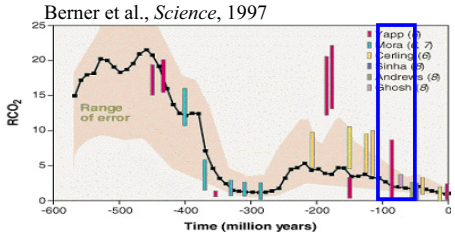
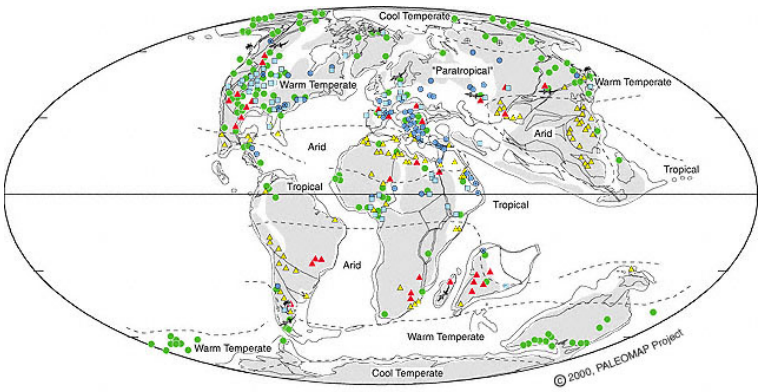
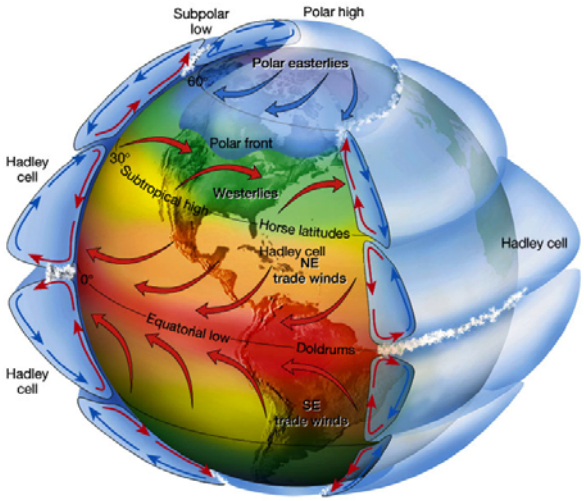


Late Cretaceous Climate (70 million years ago)



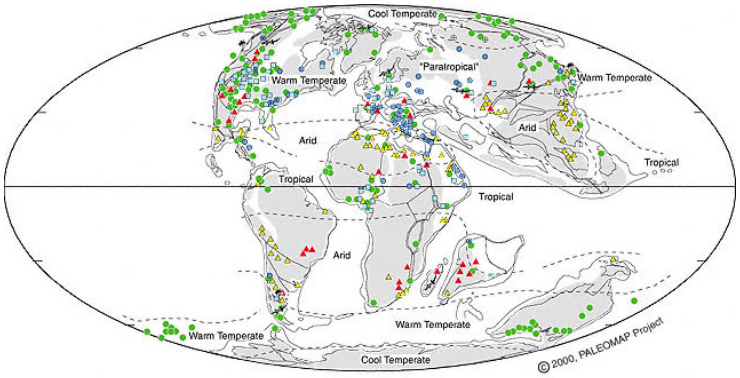
Global climate was much warmer than today. No ice existed at the Poles. Dinosaurs migrated between Temperate Zones as the seasons changed.

Source: http://www.scotese.com/lcretcli.htm



Lecture #3, Last Slide

Late Cretaceous Climate (70 million years ago)



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Oxygen Isotopes and the Quaternary Climate Record

Oxygen has three stable isotopes ^{16}O, ^{17}O, and ^{18}O

	Electrons	Protons	Neutrons	Abundance
^{16}O	8	8	8	99.76 %
^{17}O	8	8	9	00.04 %
^{18}O	8	8	10	00.20 %

^{17}O has such a low abundance that we shall focus on ^{16}O and ^{18}O

Chemical and biological reactions involving ^{18}O require more energy than reactions involving ^{16}O due to increased atomic mass

This "isotope effect" can be used as a proxy to infer past temperature!

Oxygen Isotopes and the Quaternary Climate Record

Scientists measured the ratio of ^{18}O to ^{16}O in a sample (sea water, shells, etc.) and compare to a "standard value"

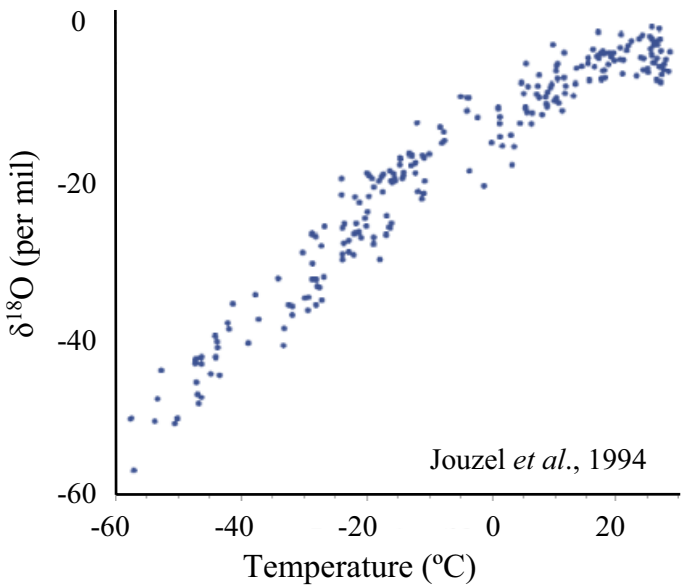
$$\delta^{18}\text{O (per mil)} = \left(\frac{\left(\frac{^{18}\text{O}}{^{16}\text{O}}\right)_{Sample} - \left(\frac{^{18}\text{O}}{^{16}\text{O}}\right)_{Standard}}{\left(\frac{^{18}\text{O}}{^{16}\text{O}}\right)_{Standard}} \right) \times 10^3$$

Standard often referred to as SMOW: Standard Mean Ocean Water

If $\delta^{18}O$ is negative, the sample is "depleted" with respect to current conditions.

If positive, the sample is "enriched".

How might $\delta^{18}O$ become enriched or depleted?

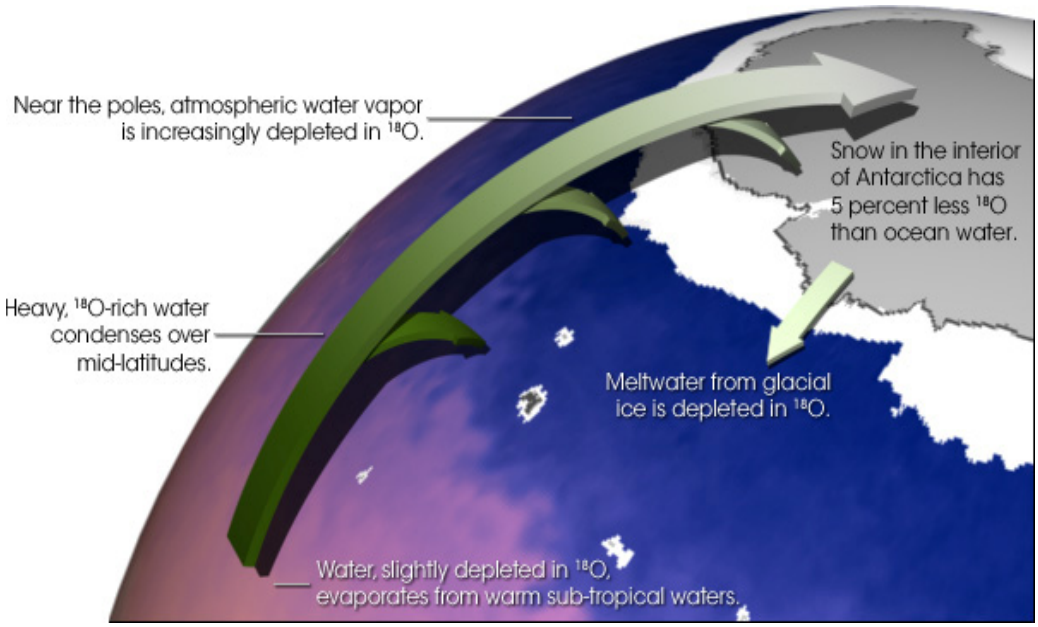


As temperatures drops, the $\delta^{18}O$ of precipitation decreases.

Why does this occur?

As an air mass travels poleward, $H_2{}^{18}O$ rains out more readily than $H_2{}^{16}O$

When the air mass reaches the pole, its water can have up to ~5% less ^{18}O than SMOW.

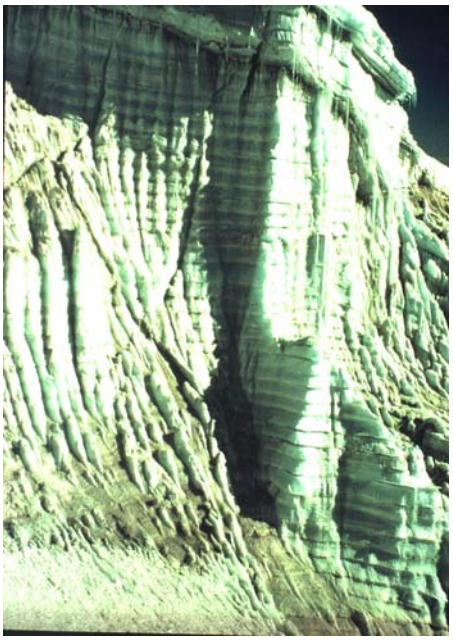


http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Study/Paleoclimatology_OxygenBalance/oxygen_balance.html

Deuterium (heavy hydrogen) behaves in a way quite similar to ^{18}O (heavy oxygen) !

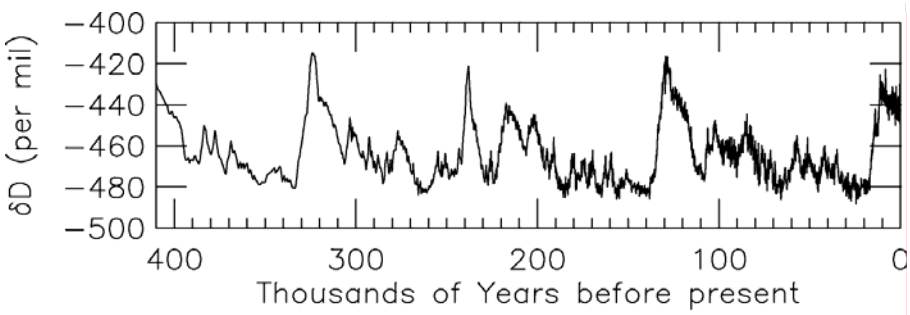
Isotopes in Ice Cores: Late Quaternary

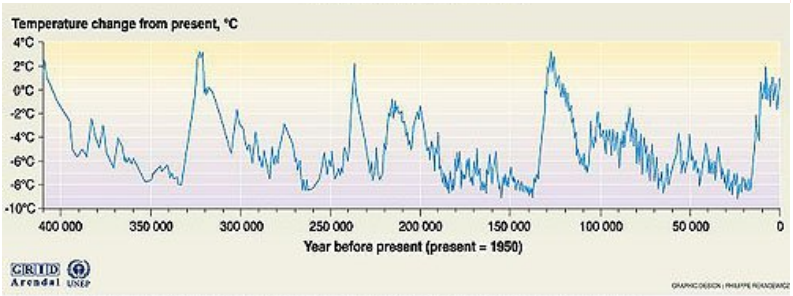
- As the air reaches the pole, ambient water precipitate (*i.e.*, it snows!)
- Over many years, layers of snow accumulate, forming an ice sheet. The water in this ice sheet contains a record of climate ***at the time the snow was deposited***
- By drilling, extracting, and measuring the $\delta^{18}O$ & δD (deuterium/hydrogen ratio) of ice, scientists are able to estimate past ***global temperature & ice volume***
- In reconstructing climate during the quaternary (last 1.6 million years), scientists also look at:
  - CO_2, CH_4, and N_2O of trapped air
  - $\delta^{18}O$ of trapped O_2 in trapped air
  - $\delta^{13}C$ of CO_2 in trapped air
  - Particulate matter and a wide range of ions



Vostok Ice Core

- Reconstructed temperature clearly based on measurement of the deuterium content of ice
- $\delta^{18}O$ shows tremendous variations in global ice volume
- Charts show last four ice ages, punctuated by relatively brief inter-glacials



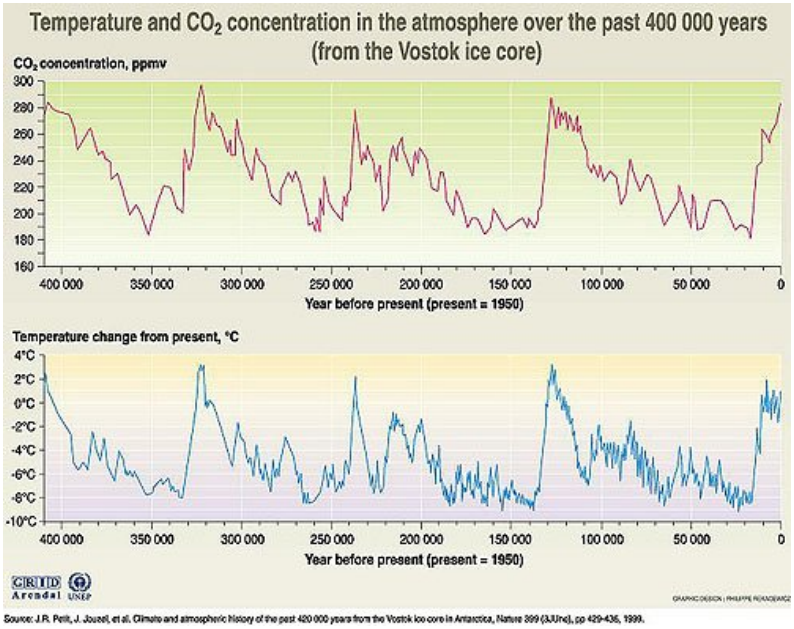


Source: J.R. Petit, J. Jouzel, et al. Climate and atmospheric history of the past 420 000 years from the Vostok ice core in Antarctica, Nature 399 (3JUne), pp 429-436, 1999.

http://www.astrosurf.com/luxorion/bioastro-vie-glaces2.htm

Vostok Ice Core

- CO_2 (air trapped in ice bubbles) and inferred temperature are very highly correlated
- Why might CO_2 have dropped during glacial times?



http://www.astrosurf.com/luxorion/bioastro-vie-glaces2.htm

Quaternery Climate Record

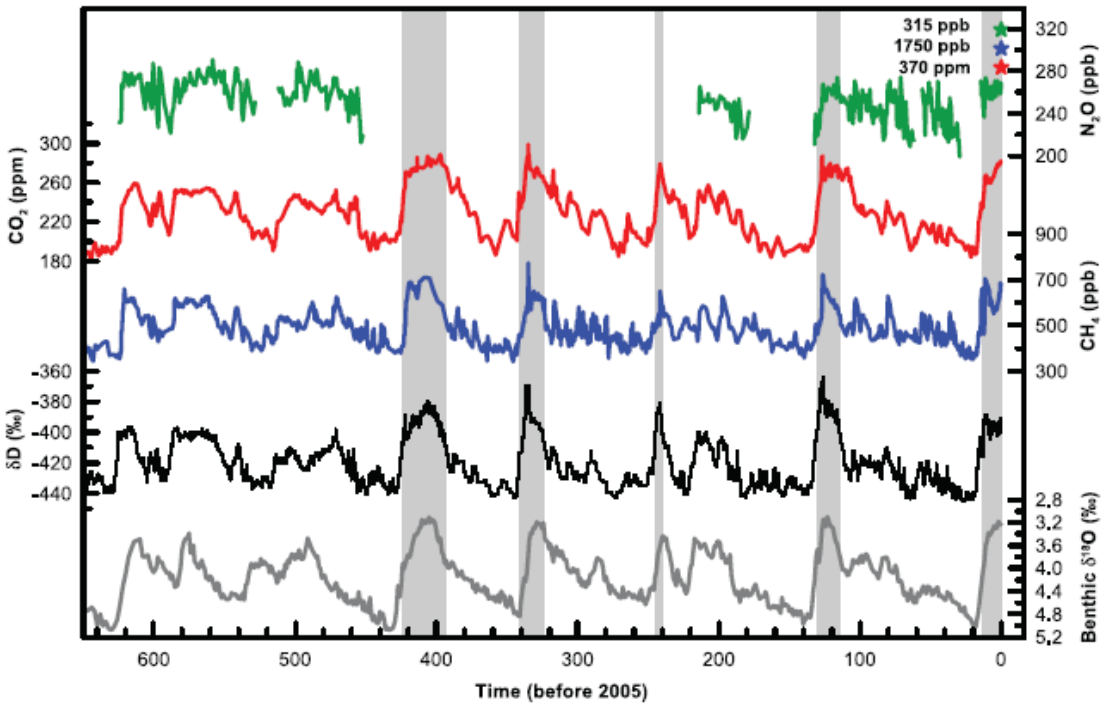
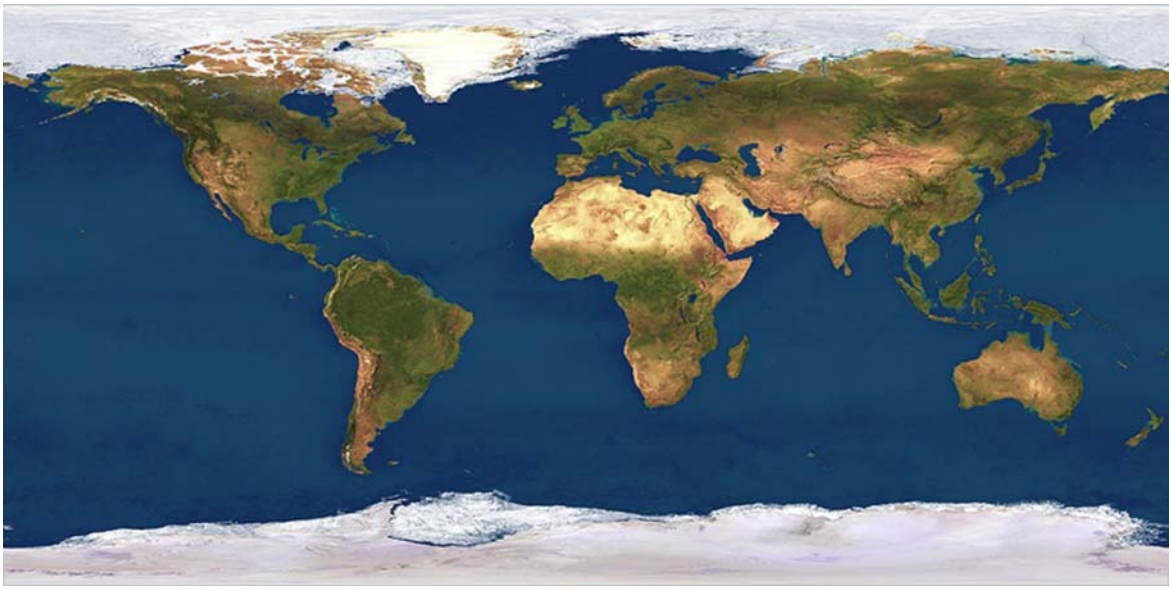


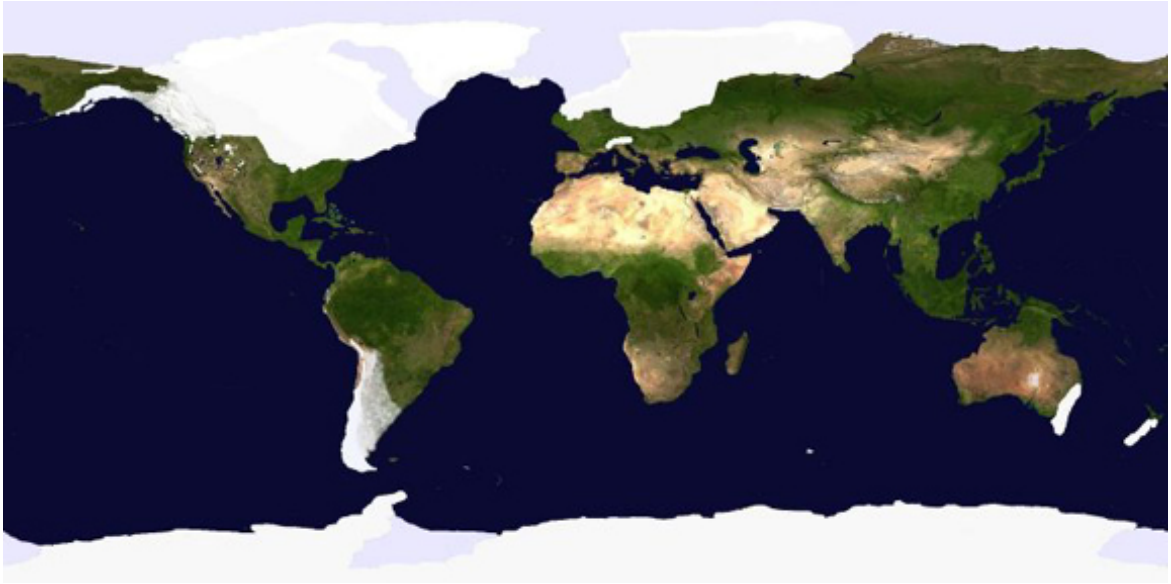
Figure 6.3, IPCC 2007

Present Day



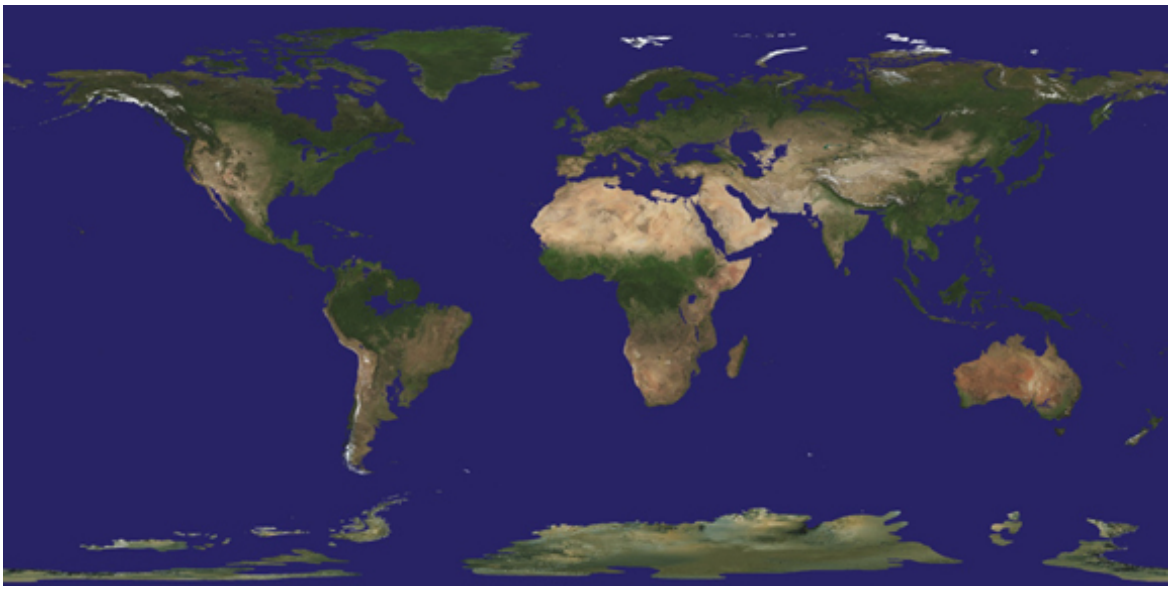
http://www.planetaryvisions.com/release2007-1/satmap.jpg

Glacial Maximum



http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/spaceart/cylmaps.html

No Polar Ice



http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/spaceart/cylmaps.html

Fairly Late Appreciation that Earth Undergoes Ice Ages

On 24 July 1837, at the annual meeting of the Swiss Society of Natural Sciences, Louis Agassiz (1807–1873) startled his learned associates by presenting a paper dealing not, as expected, with the fossil fishes found in far-off Brazil, but with the scratched and faceted boulders that dotted the Jura mountains around Neuchâtel itself. Agassiz argues that these erratic boulders … chunks of rock appearing in locations far removed from their areas of origin … could only be interpreted as evidence of past glaciation.

This began a dispute – one of the most violent in the history of geology – that was to rage for more than a quarter century and would end with the universal acceptance of the ice-age theory.

Although this concept did not begin with Agassiz, he served to bring the glacial theory out of scientific obscurity and into the public eye.

Ice Ages, Imbrie and Imbrie, Harvard Univ Press, 1979.

Portrait of Louis Agassiz
at the Unteraar Glacier

http://www.museum-neuchatel.ch/new/images/dynamic/pages/12/agassiz.jpg

Fourier analysis reveals Earth's climate is changing in a periodic fashion

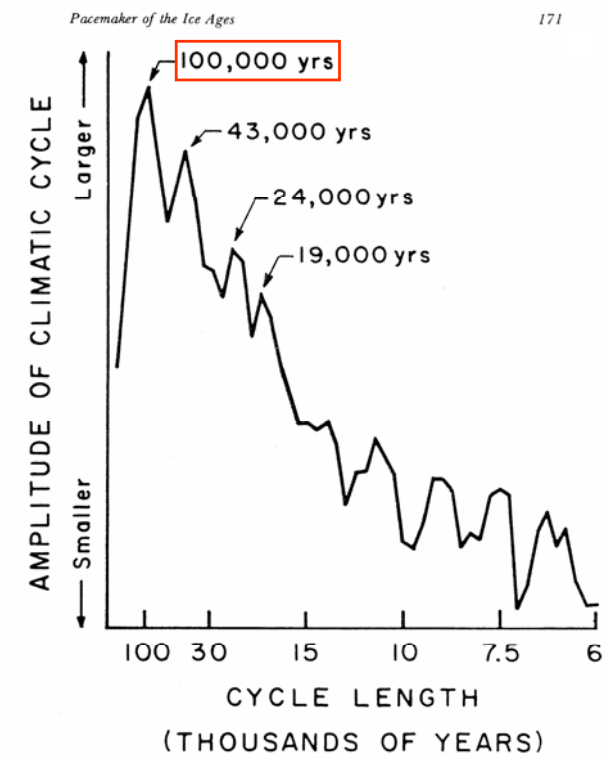
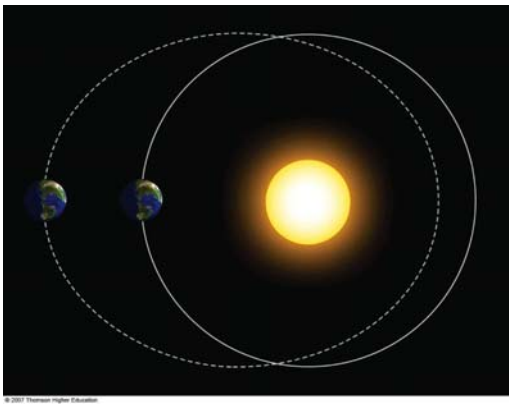


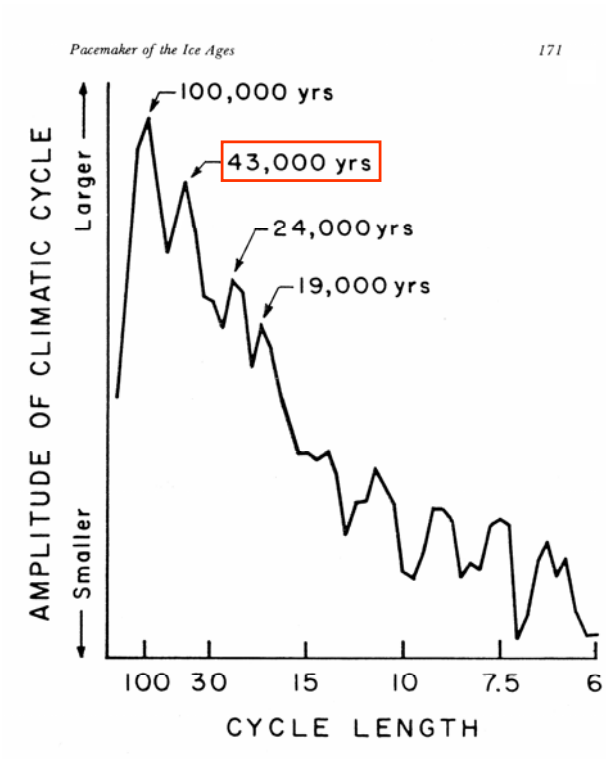
Figure 42. Spectrum of climatic variation over the past half-million years. This graph—showing the relative importance of different climatic cycles in the isotopic record of two Indian Ocean cores—confirmed many predictions of the Milankovitch theory. (Data from J.D. Hays et al., 1976.)

Ice Ages, Imbrie and Imbrie, Harvard Univ Pres, 1979

100,000 year cycle due to changes in the eccentricity of Earth's orbit, mainly due to gravitational pull of Jupiter and Saturn.



Fourier analysis reveals Earth's climate is changing in a periodic fashion



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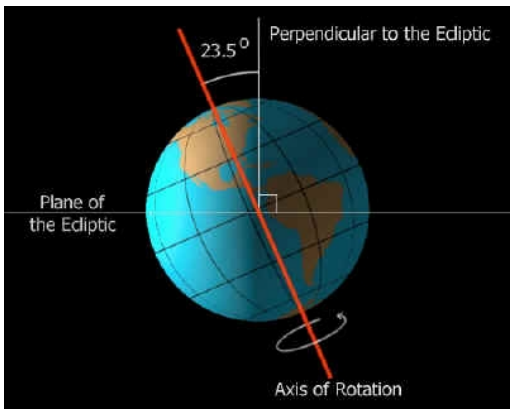
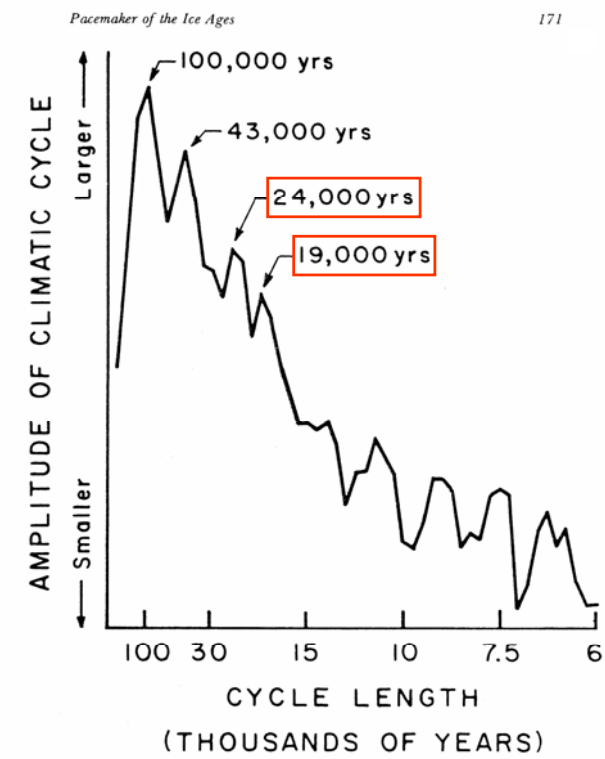
Ice Ages, Imbrie and Imbrie, Harvard Univ Pres, 1979

43,000 year cycle due to changes in tilt of Earth's axis (obliquity).



Fourier analysis reveals Earth's climate is changing in a periodic fashion



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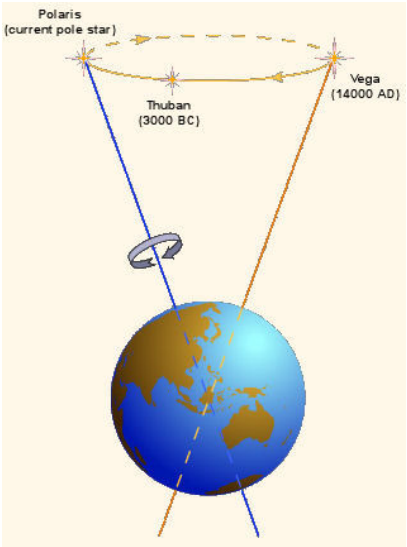
Ice Ages, Imbrie and Imbrie, Harvard Univ Pres, 1979

24,000 and **19,000 year cycles** due to Earth "wobbling" on its axis.



Glacial Periods MUCH Dustier than Interglacials

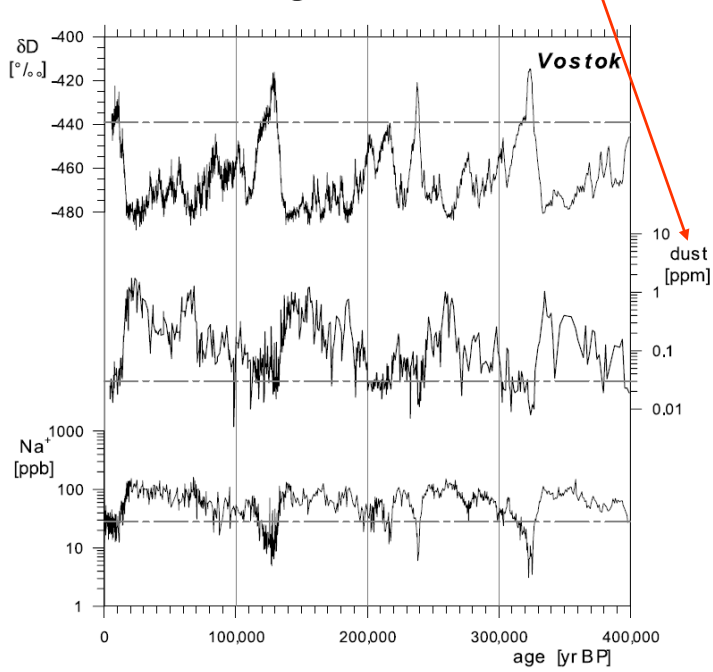


Figure 3. Temporal evolution of δD representing changes in the average local condensation temperature during snow formation, the particulate dust, and the sea-salt component Na^+ over the last four glacial cycles as recorded in the East Antarctic Vostok ice core [*Petit et al.*, 1999]. Dashed-dotted lines indicate the mean Holocene level from 0 to 10,000 years B.P.

Fischer *et al.*, Reviews of Geophysics, 2007

Time to get quantitative:
how do changes in radiative forcing affect temperature?

Let's relate a change in temperature to a change in radiative forcing:

$$\Delta T = \lambda \, \Delta F$$

λ is the climate sensitivity factor in units of $\frac{K}{W/m^2}$

For an ideal blackbody: $F = \sigma \, T^4$

$$\frac{dF}{dT} = 4 \, \sigma \, T^3$$

Above equation can be re-arranged to yield:

$$\Delta T \approx \frac{1}{4 \, \sigma \, T^3} \, \Delta F$$

So: $$\lambda = \frac{1}{4 \, \sigma \, T^3}$$

If we plug in value of Boltzmann's constant and global mean T at which Earth radiates to space, we find $\lambda_{BB} \approx 0.3$ K / (W m^{-2})

Here: BB refers to Black Body

Time to get quantitative:
how do changes in radiative forcing affect temperature?

Let's relate a change in temperature to a change in radiative forcing:

$$\Delta T = \lambda \, \Delta F$$

λ is the climate sensitivity factor in units of $\frac{K}{W/m^2}$

For an ideal blackbody: $F = \sigma \, T^4$

$$\frac{dF}{dT} = 4 \, \sigma \, T^3$$

We write:

$\lambda_{ACTUAL} = \lambda_{BB} \, (1 + f_{H2O})$

where f_{H2O} is the H_2O feedback

Here, $f_{H2O} \approx 0.87$

Above equation can be re-arranged to yield:

$$\Delta T \approx \frac{1}{4 \, \sigma \, T^3} \, \Delta F$$

So: $$\lambda = \frac{1}{4 \, \sigma \, T^3}$$

Another estimate of the response of T to ΔF can be found using a climate model representing that as the atmosphere warms, it can hold more H_2O:

$\lambda_{ACTUAL} \approx 0.56 \pm 0.06$ K / (W m^{-2})

Page 630, IPCC (2007)

Time to get quantitative:
how do changes in radiative forcing affect temperature?

Hence: $$\Delta T \approx 0.56 \frac{K}{W/m^2} \Delta F$$

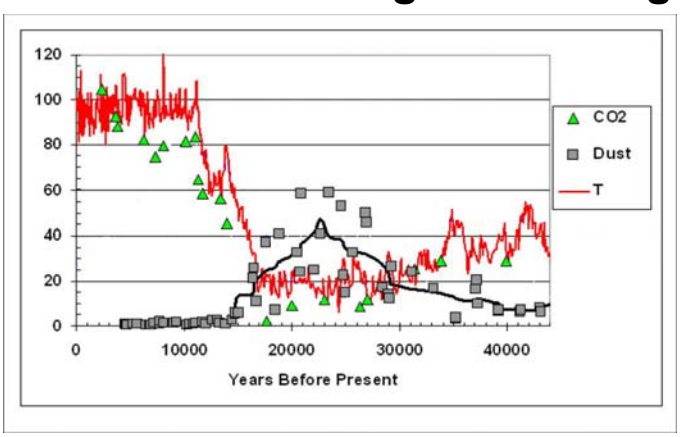
How much does ΔF change when CO_2 changes?

As we will explore in more detail later in class (14 Feb 2013):

$$\Delta F \approx 5.35\ W/m^2 \ln\left(\frac{CO_2^{Final}}{CO_2^{Initial}}\right)$$

Changes in ΔF can be caused by changes in chemical composition (GHGs), albedo, aerosol loading, as well as solar output

Glacial to interglacial changes in T, CO_2 and dust



Vostok ice core data for ***changes*** in temperature (units of 0.1 K), CO_2 (ppmv), and dust aerosols (linear scale normalized to unity for Holocene) Black line shows 5 point running mean of dust.

Chylek and Lohmann, *GRL*, 2008

Chylek and Lohmann (2008) assume:

a) ***global*** avg ΔT, glacial to interglacial, was 4.65 K *

b) $\Delta F_{CO2} = 2.4\ W\ m^{-2}$, $\Delta F_{CH4+N2o} = 0.27\ W\ m^{-2}$, $\Delta F_{ALBEDO} = 3.5\ W\ m^{-2}$, & $\Delta F_{AEROSOLS} = 3.3\ W\ m^{-2}$

From this they deduce λ_{ACTUAL} **= 0.49 K / W m^{-2}**

Since 0.49 K / W m^{-2} < 0.56 K / W m^{-2}, one would conclude that either the H_2O feedback is smaller than found in IPCC climate models and/or changes in clouds serve as a negative feedback

*** Global ΔT is about half that recorded at Vostok, as noted on page 68 of the Holton reading**

Glacial to interglacial changes in T, CO_2 and dust

Chylek and Lohmann (2008) are trying to calculate the sensitivity of climate to various forcings, ***with and without the consideration of aerosols***

	ΔF with aerosols(W/m²)
CO_2	2.40
CH_4+N_2O	0.27
Albedo	3.50
Aerosols	3.30

$$\Delta T = \lambda_{\text{Considering Aerosols}} (\Delta F_{CO2} + \Delta F_{CH4+N2O} + \Delta F_{ALBEDO} + \Delta F_{AEROSOLS})$$

$$\lambda_{\text{Considering Aerosols}} = \frac{\Delta T}{\Delta F_{CO2} + \Delta F_{CH4+N2O} + \Delta F_{ALBEDO} + \Delta F_{AEROSOLS}} = \frac{4.65\ \text{K}}{9.47\ \text{W m}^{-2}} =$$

$$= 0.49\ \text{K / W m}^{-2}$$

If $\lambda_{\text{Considering Aerosols}} = \lambda_{BB}(1+f)$ and $\lambda_{BB} = 0.3\ \text{K / W m}^{-2}$,

then $f = 0.63$

Glacial to interglacial changes in T, CO_2 and dust

Chylek and Lohmann (2008) are trying to calculate the sensitivity of climate to various forcings, ***with and without the consideration of aerosols***

	ΔF with aerosols(W/m²)	ΔF without aerosols (W/m²)
CO_2	2.40	2.40
CH_4+N_2O	0.27	0.27
Albedo	3.50	3.50
Aerosols	3.30	0.

$$\Delta T = \lambda_{\text{No Aerosols}} (\Delta F_{CO2} + \Delta F_{CH4+N2O} + \Delta F_{ALBEDO})$$

$$\lambda_{\text{No Aerosols}} = \frac{\Delta T}{\Delta F_{CO2} + \Delta F_{CH4+N2O} + \Delta F_{ALBEDO}} = \frac{4.65\ \text{K}}{6.17\ \text{W m}^{-2}} =$$

$$= 0.75\ \text{K / W m}^{-2}$$

If $\lambda_{\text{No Aerosols}} = \lambda_{BB}(1+f)$ and $\lambda_{BB} = 0.3\ \text{K / W m}^{-2}$,

then $f = 1.5$

Let's apply these two climate sensitivities to *future* temperature

Both future scenarios assume:

a) CO_2 doubles: i.e., $\Delta F_{CO2} = 5.36 \ln(2)$ W/m^2 or = 3.7 W/m^2
b) surface radiative forcing of $CH_4 + N_2O$ will be 40% of CO_2 (future mimics past)

Scenario #1: Weak Feedback found considering aerosol radiative forcing in paleo data & no future change in Earth's albedo

Scenario #2: Strong Feedback found assuming no aerosol radiative forcing in paleo data & additional surface radiative forcing of 3.4 W/m^2 due to decline in Earth's albedo (i.e., the positive ice-albedo feedback will occur)

	Scenario #1 ΔF (W m^{-2})	Scenario #2 ΔF (W m^{-2})
CO_2	3.7	3.7
$CH_4 + N_2O$	1.5	1.5
Albedo	0.0	3.4
Total ΔF	5.2	8.6
$\Delta T \Rightarrow$		

Take away messages:

1. ***Climate sensitivity* inferred from ice core record depends on how aerosols are handled**
2. ***Future climate* will be quite sensitive to:**
   - **the efficacy of atmospheric feedbacks (H_2O, clouds)**
   - **the radiative forcing of aerosols (not considered in our simple future scenario)**
   - **how surface albedo changes**

Final Thought

There is much more "recent climate history", such as:

a) Younger Dryas cooling event at end of last ice age
b) Medieval climate maximum
c) the Little Ice Age (1650 to 1850)

that is deserving of our attention. A few slides on these topics are included in the Extra Material that follows (you will not be tested on the material in these 3 slides)

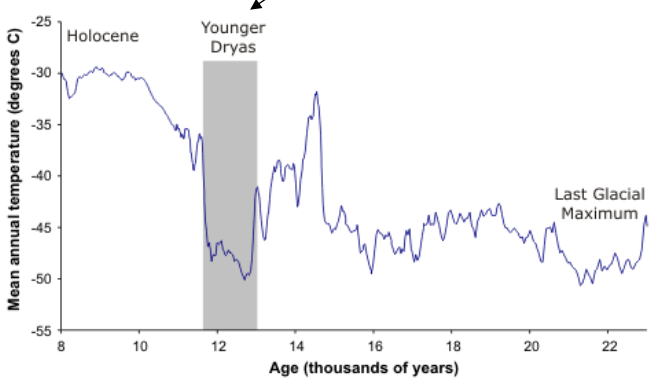
Problem Set #1 is due at start of class on Tuesday, February 12 (one week from today)

If you have questions, please stop by our offices (Ross: CSS 2403; Tim: CSS 2411; Allison: Jull 2108) during either our office hours or normal working hours. You're also welcome to email us to set up a time to meet

Extra Slide 1

Younger Dryas (about 12,000 years ago)

Around 12,000 years ago, mean annual temperatures abruptly dropped to levels similar to those during the last glacial maximum



Most scientists believe the cool conditions of the Youger Dryas resulted from a flood of fresh water into the North Atlantic that shut down ocean's thermohaline circulation.

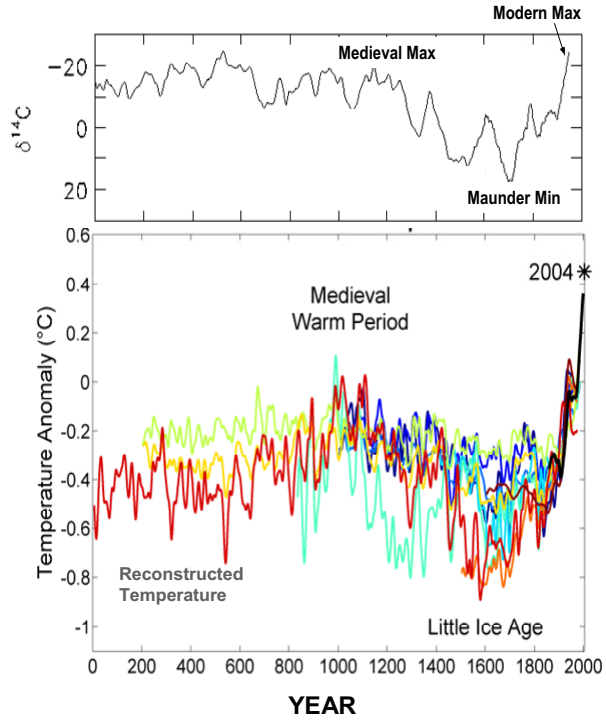
The flood of fresh water was due to discharge from glacial lakes, formed by the melt water of retreating glaciers.

Some geologists (Firestone *et al., PNAS*, 2007) believe that the Younger Dryas was compounded by a terrestrial impact.

http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/paleo/abrupt/data4.html

Extra Slide 2

Medieval Warm Period (MWP) ~800 to 1300 AD



$\delta^{14}C$ (radiocarbon) is a proxy that can be used to estimate past solar activity.

Carbon-14 is produced when cosmic rays hit nitrogen (^{14}N), inducing a decay that transforms this molecule to Carbon-14 (half life of ~5,730 yrs).

Increased solar activity results in a reduction of cosmic rays reaching Earth's atmosphere, reducing production of carbon-14, because cosmic rays are blocked by the outward sweep of magnetic fields of the solar wind.

Measurements of ^{14}C suggest primary cause of warm conditions during MWP was rise in solar activity

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_variation

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_Warm_Period

Extra Slide 3

Little Ice Age (~1350 to 1900)

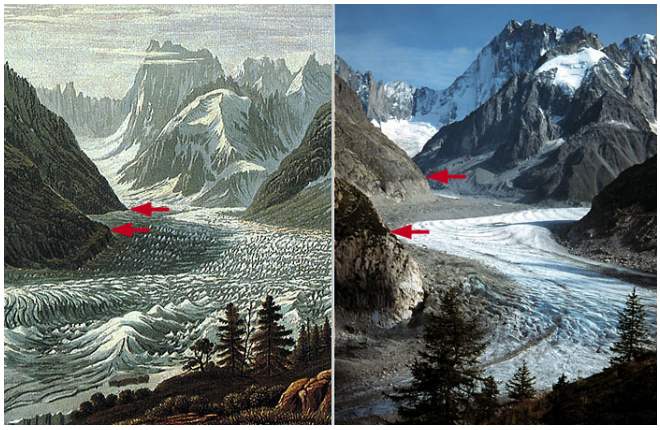
Major rivers (Thames) & waterways (NY harbor) frequently froze.

Crops and livestock failed.

Cities flooded.

Glaciers expanded.

Why did this happen?



http://www.swisseduc.ch/glaciers/glossary/little-ice-age-two-en.html

1. Little ice age was an extended period of quiet solar activity:
   coldest time period is associated with the Maunder Minimum
   (time of very low sunspot activity ⇒ reduced solar irradiance).
2. Several large volcanic eruptions during this period; resulting aerosol loading led to a reduction in amount solar radiation reaching the surface.
3. Increase in albedo associated with the colder temperatures (colder T results in more ice) led to even more cooling.