

**Essay assignment.** Indicative length: 2000 (± 500) words, not including figure captions or references

Evaluation area	Excellent (70–75) Outstanding (76–85) Exemplary (86–100)						Good (60–64) Very good (65–69)						Sound (50–59)						Acceptable (40–49)						Insufficient (30–39) Unacceptable (<30)																																															
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b> (30%)	A: Discovery, synthesis and understanding of relevant literature																																																												A: Limited engagement beyond microsite's key literature											
	B: Clear understanding of how fossils can be applied to understand Earth history, including (C) limitations of the fossil record																																																																							
<b>Critical analysis</b> (40%)	F: Analysis of the literature underpinning each argument presented on microsite																																																												F: Substantial gaps in understanding content written on microsite											
	G: Evaluation of the strength of evidence and quality of underpinning research																																																												G: Reference to primary literature without evaluation											
	H: Implications of controversy placed in broader scientific context																																																												H: No indication why topic would interest non-specialists											
<b>Communication</b> (30%)	S: Development of convincing narrative																																																												S: Independent arguments do not build a coherent picture											
	T: Evidence connected to argument with clear logical flow																																																												T: Reader must work hard to understand how evidence relates to argument											
	U: Mature, engaging and lucid prose; meticulously copyedited																																																																							
<b>Overall grade</b>  / 100																																																																								