

## The origins and maintenance of the Earth's atmosphere

The table shows the change in the composition of the Earth's atmosphere over the last 4500 million years.

Age of the Earth (millions of years)	CO <sub>2</sub> (%)	O <sub>2</sub> (%)	N <sub>2</sub> (%)
0	90	0	10
500	40	0	25
1000	21	0.5	40
1500	15	1	50
2000	10	5	60
2500	7	10	70
3000	5	18	75
3500	2	20	78
4000	1	21	78
4500 (today)	0.035	21	78

1. Draw a line graph of the data. Plot % (vertical axis) against millions of years (horizontal axis). Put all three gases on the same axes so that they can be compared easily.
2. Write a paragraph to describe the changes in the composition of the Earth's atmosphere.
3. Use your Revision Guide and your textbook to help you write a paragraph about why these changes happened.

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