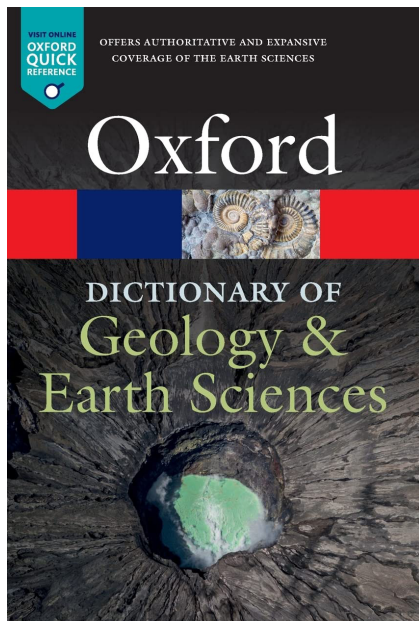


**A Dictionary of Geology and Earth Sciences** (5th Edition), by Michael Allaby, 2020. Oxford University Press Academic UK, 720 pages, eBook price £14.99, ISBN: 9780198839033



The first question is: Are dictionaries still the important tools to understand our world? Are they still useful? Many of us may say that nowadays any word can be easy googled, just typing it in the internet browser. But still there are some professional words, which are difficult to find this way. Moreover, it is simply nice and practical to have all professional words in one place and still, many of us prefer just to have a book.

Browsing through the last, fifth edition of Dictionary of Geology and Earth Sciences issued by Oxford University Press I was really surprised that I can find so many entries and that there are so many of them I do not know. The structure of this electronic version is really simple and very easy to navigate. The content is well organized, entries are well written, informative and mostly well explained, and what is the most important they are easy understandable. The dictionary as a whole gathers together a huge amount of information concerning the geology and Earth sciences, and this is the most attractive to have them all in one place! Contrary to former paperback editions, which nicely look on the shelf in our home libraries, the electronic version is much easier to navigate.

To find the searched word you can simply type it, but you may also navigate by letters. Moreover, in this electronic edition you can get more information clicking in additional links, which transfer you to additional and more professional websites. This is really great opportunity! Most entries are well and adequately explained but there are also some mistakes. This is probably because the definitions were taken from other dictionaries or encyclopaedias and were not updated or corrected by specialists. There is no place in this short review to indicate most of them but as I am palaeontologist, I found e.g., entry 'Rugosa' – a group of Palaeozoic corals, which is described: *A Palaeozoic order of solitary and colonial corals which appears in the Ordovician and becomes extinct in the Permian. The corallum contains radial plates (septa) and horizontal plates (tabulae), and sometimes oblique plates (dissepiments). The septa developed in insertion cycles of four and many species retain a degree of bilateral symmetry. Solitary rugosans seem to have preferred soft substrates since they had no means of cementation and colonial forms seem to have relied for stability on the weight of the skeleton.* My comments: first, the corallum is a skeleton of the whole colony, hence it should be here used the term corallite – a skeleton of the single polyp, which indeed contains septa, tabulae and dissepiments; second it is not true that solitary rugose corals preferred soft substrates, most of corals are fixosessile i.e., they preferred to be attached to hard parts of the bottom.

The dictionary has also the 'Appendices', which some of them, however, could be more informative e.g., the geologic timescale should have colours of the units, and maybe the link to the newest geological timescale charts on the webpage: [stratigraphy.org](http://stratigraphy.org).

Since the first paperback edition published in 1990 as 'A Dictionary of Earth Sciences' the number of entries was markedly increased, especially concerning geology and satellite methods. As the author explained: *'inevitably, the dictionary has grown a little longer. That is the way of dictionaries. New terms emerge, but old ones take a long time to die and disappear from the vocabulary'*.

Of course, the dictionary is mostly aimed at geologists, undergraduate and also graduate students of geology or related disciplines, but can be also useful to people interested in Earth Sciences. In my opinion, apart from some flaws (nothing is perfect!) this dictionary is the best one among all, not numerous dictionaries dealing with geology and/or Earth sciences. Summarizing, I can recommend the dictionary especially to the students preparing

to the exams of various geological subjects, especially when they want to go deeper into some more specific topics, which are relatively well explained and, in most cases, cover all problems concerning geology.

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