

“The framework interpretation.” It is perfectly fine to interpret the six days of creation as a symbolic way of expressing the doctrine that God created all things and gave them order and beauty. Under this interpretation, the author of Genesis used the first three days to show that God created three “domains” and the fourth, fifth, and sixth days to show that God created inhabitants for each of these domains.

First Triad			Second Triad
Day 1	Day and night (1:3-5).	Sun for the day, moon and stars for the night (1:14).	Day 4
Day 2	The sky and the sea (1:7-8).	Birds for the sky and fish for the sea (1:20).	Day 5
Day 3	Dry land (1:9) and vegetation (1:11)	Beasts and men to walk on the land (1:25-26) and eat the vegetation (1:29-30)	Day 6

From this perspective, the “days” aren’t the focus but the arrangement of the domains to their inhabitants, and the days only serve as an image to help us see order in this. It’s not the daily sequence that we should focus on so much as the part of creation spoken of under each day, so that we see that they are made to complement and complete each other. If the author intended the days and the sequence to be symbolic, to serve the purpose of pointing to the orderliness in each thing being created for its respective domain, then there is nothing in this text that is incompatible with modern cosmology or the theory of evolution.

“The day-age hypothesis.” Under this interpretation, the “days” of Genesis 1 are meant to refer to “ages” of indefinite lengths, and they include each other with significant overlap. Its supporters note that Genesis 1:14-18 says that the stars, sun and moon were created on day four, “to separate the light from the darkness,” yet it was on day one that God “separated the light from the darkness” -- Genesis 1:4-5. Thus the “day-ages” overlapped each other significantly, they say. If Genesis 1 allows for long ages of formation and overlap in the sequence of formation, then there is nothing in it that is incompatible with modern cosmology or the theory of evolution.

“Advanced-earth creationism.” Advanced-earth creationists see the creation of the world and interpret it literally, but say that it included a built-in degree of advancement, so that it appears to be older than it is. Geological strata, fossils of prehistoric animals, and starlight that is billions of years old all came as part of the package, they say, so that man could investigate the earth and make discoveries that would prove beneficial in the scientific age. Advanced-earth creationists note that the plants created in Gen. 1:11-12 were already advanced in form, with the seeds of the next generation already prepared for planting. The rest of the world, they say, was like that: it came with age built-in, and that is what science discovers in its experiments.