


# Habitable Planets

$n_e$  Number of planets, per planetary system that are suitable for life

$$n_e = n_p \times f_s$$


planetary      stellar

$n_p = n_e$  for stars like Sun

$f_s$  = fraction of stars with suitable properties

$n_p, n_e$  could be greater than 1

$$f_s \leq 1$$

## Key requirement: Liquid for solvent

H<sub>2</sub>O 273 - 373 K at Earth pressure

up to 647 K at higher pressures

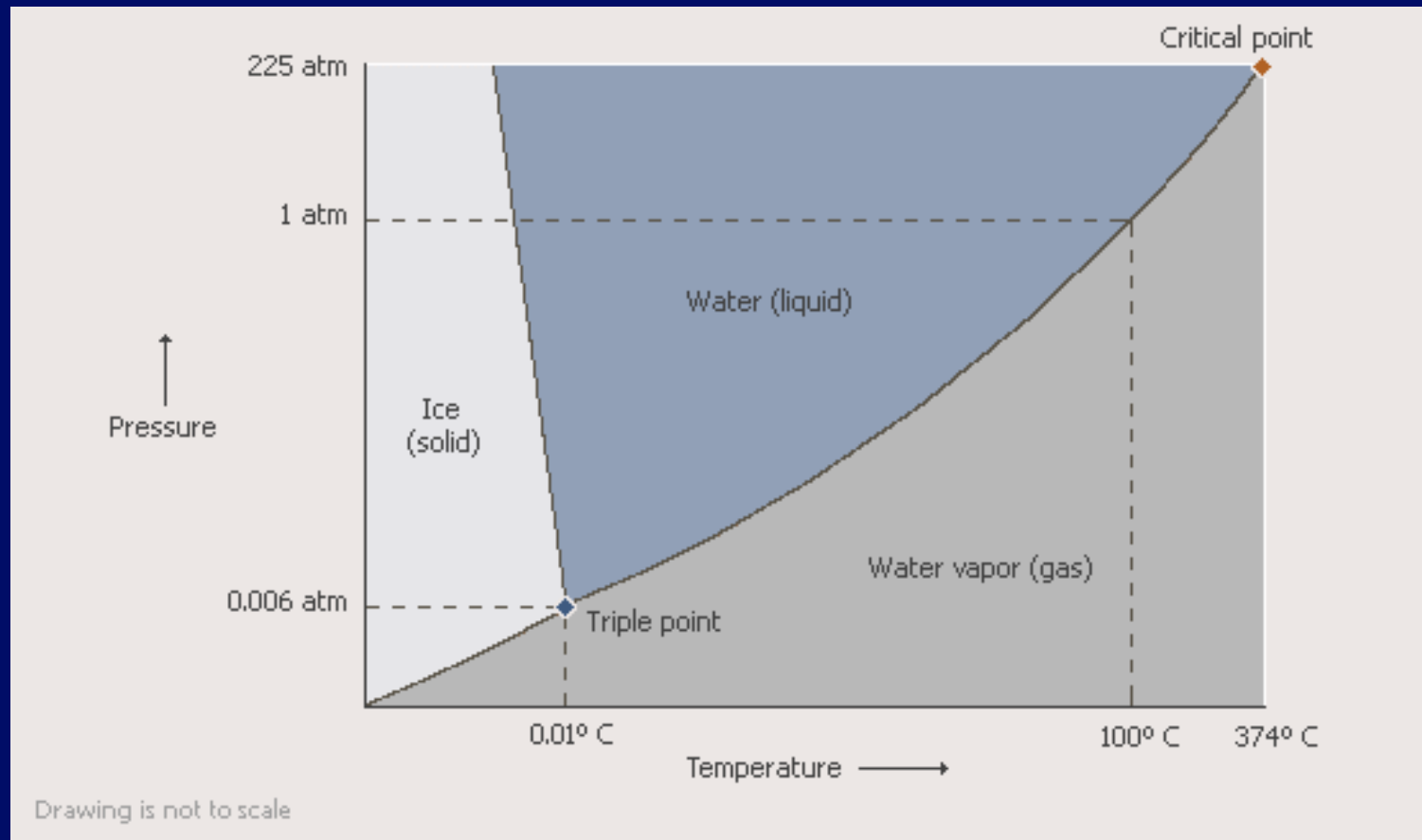
smaller range at lower pressure

CH<sub>4</sub> (methane) 91-109 at Earth pressure

NH<sub>3</sub> (ammonia) 195 - 240 K at Earth pressure

Pressure depends on Gravity, and therefore the size of planet

# Water Phase Diagram




# What sets the temperature?

In space, absorption and emission of electromagnetic radiation (light)

For a blackbody (absorbs all light falling on it, emits light proportional to fourth power of temperature):

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Energy in} & = & \text{Energy out} \\ (\propto L/d^2) & & (\propto T^4) \end{array}$$



A diagram showing a star labeled  $L_*$  on the left and a planet labeled  $T$  inside a circle on the right. A horizontal line connects them, with the distance  $d$  written below the line.

$$\Rightarrow T \propto \left( \frac{L}{d^2} \right)^{1/4}$$

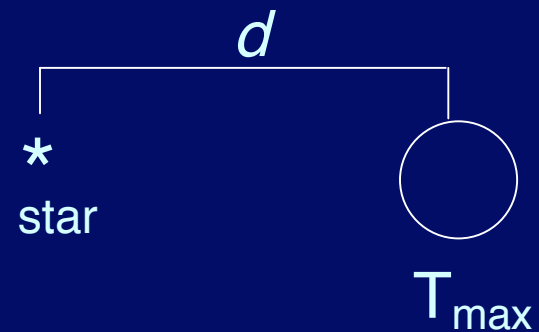
$$\propto d^{-1/2}$$

$$\propto \frac{1}{\sqrt{d}}$$

4 × as far from star,  $T$  is half as high

# Planet Temperatures

1st approximation: A blackbody at a distance  $d$  from a star of luminosity  $L$



Maximum temperature

$$T = 394 \text{ K} \left( \frac{L}{d^2} \right)^{1/4}$$

$$\frac{L}{d} \text{ in } \frac{L_{\odot}}{\text{AU}}$$

2nd approximation: A fraction of the light is reflected (not absorbed)

Call this fraction the albedo (A)

$$T = 394 \text{ K} \left[ \frac{(1-A) L}{d^2} \right]^{1/4}$$

e.g. Moon  $A = 0.07$

$$L = 1 L_{\odot}$$

$$T_{\max} = 387$$

correct to few %

But Earth :  $A = 0.39 \Rightarrow T_{\max} = 342 \text{ K}$  predicted

$$T_{\max} \leq 313 \text{ K}$$



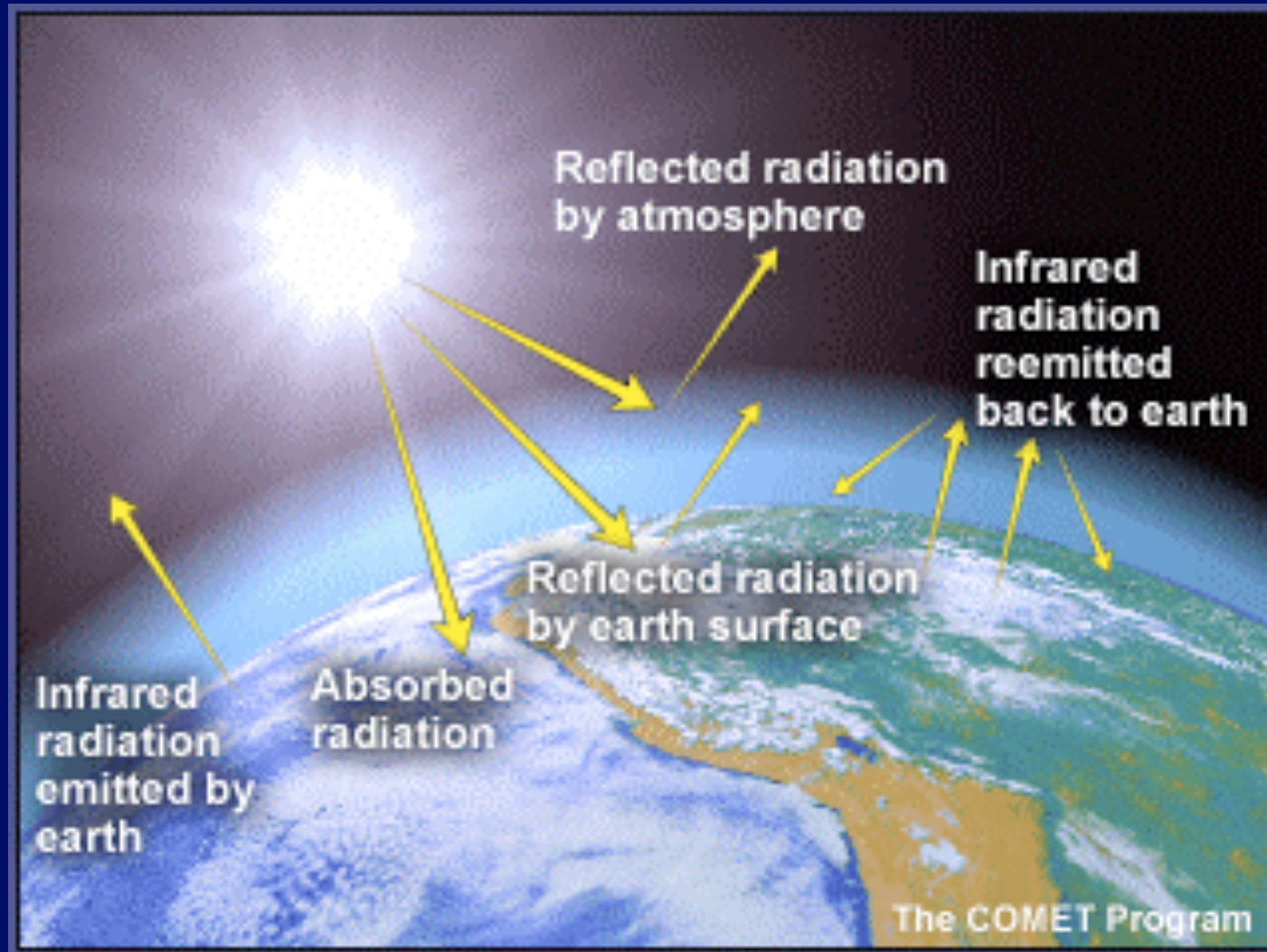
3rd approximation:

Account for rapid rotation -  $T_{\max}$  less  
 $T_{\min}$  more  
close to  $T_{\text{avg}}$

$$T_{\text{avg}} = 279 \text{ K} \left[ \frac{(1-A) L}{d^2} \right]^{1/4}$$

Earth:  $A = 0.39 \Rightarrow T_{\text{avg}} = 246\text{K}$   
Actual  $T_{\text{avg}} = 288\text{K}$

## 4th approximation: Greenhouse effect



## Consequences of Greenhouse Effect:

Raises  $T_{\text{avg}}$  (Earth) by about 40K

Otherwise  $T_{\text{avg}} < T_{\text{freeze}}$

$\Rightarrow$  Frozen Planet

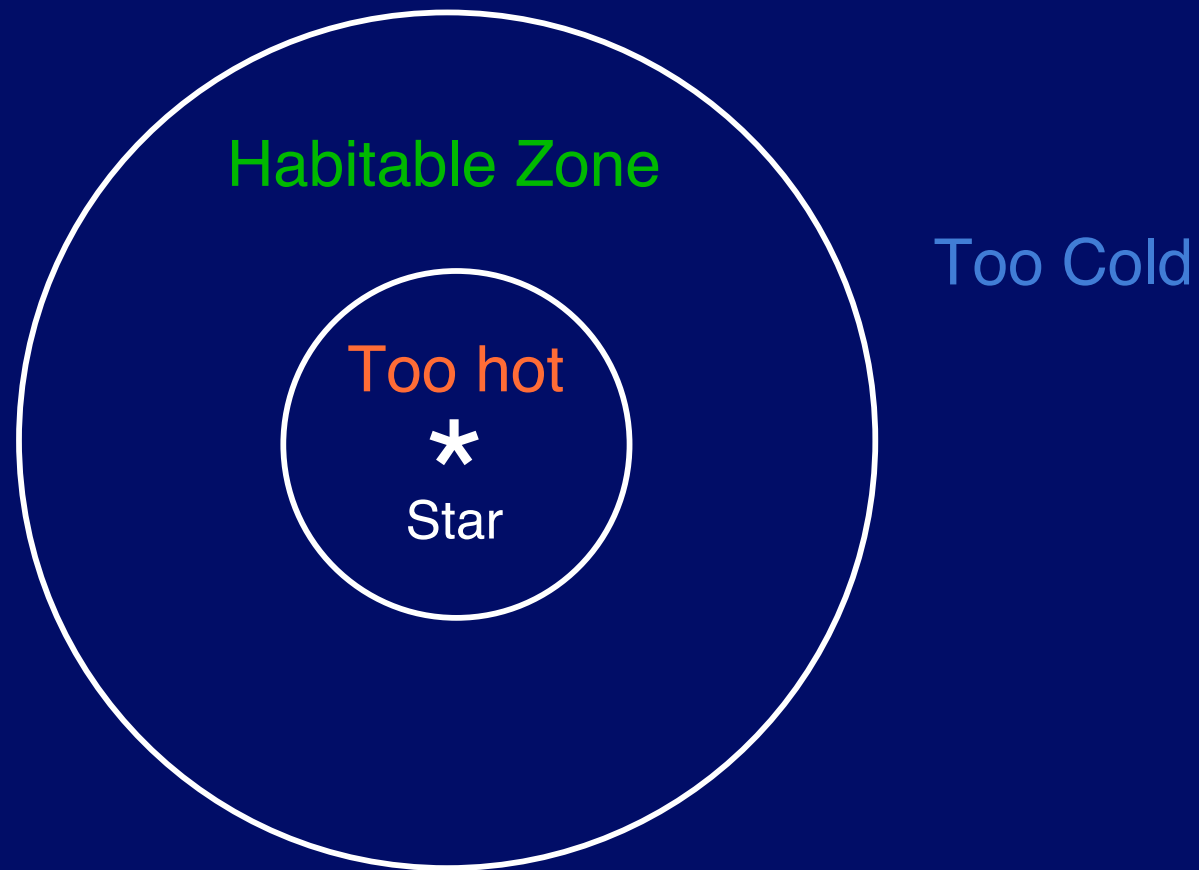
## Habitable Zone (HZ)

For fixed luminosity, Greenhouse Effect

a required temperature range

translates to a required

range of distances from star



But Greenhouse Effect could have a big impact on the size and location of HZ

## Continuously Habitable Zone (CHZ)

Need  $\sim 5 \times 10^9$  years for intelligent life?

But Sun's  $L$  increases slowly

$T_{\text{Earth}}$  constant to few degrees (mostly)  
(decreasing Greenhouse)

Generally, HZ moves out as  $L$  rises  
 $\Rightarrow$  CHZ smaller than HZ

Pessimist

## Computer Models

Hart

CHZ

0.95 - 1.01 AU

$$\Rightarrow n_p \lesssim 0.1$$

Middle of the Road

Negative feedback

thermostat

T

Rainfall

rock weathering



T

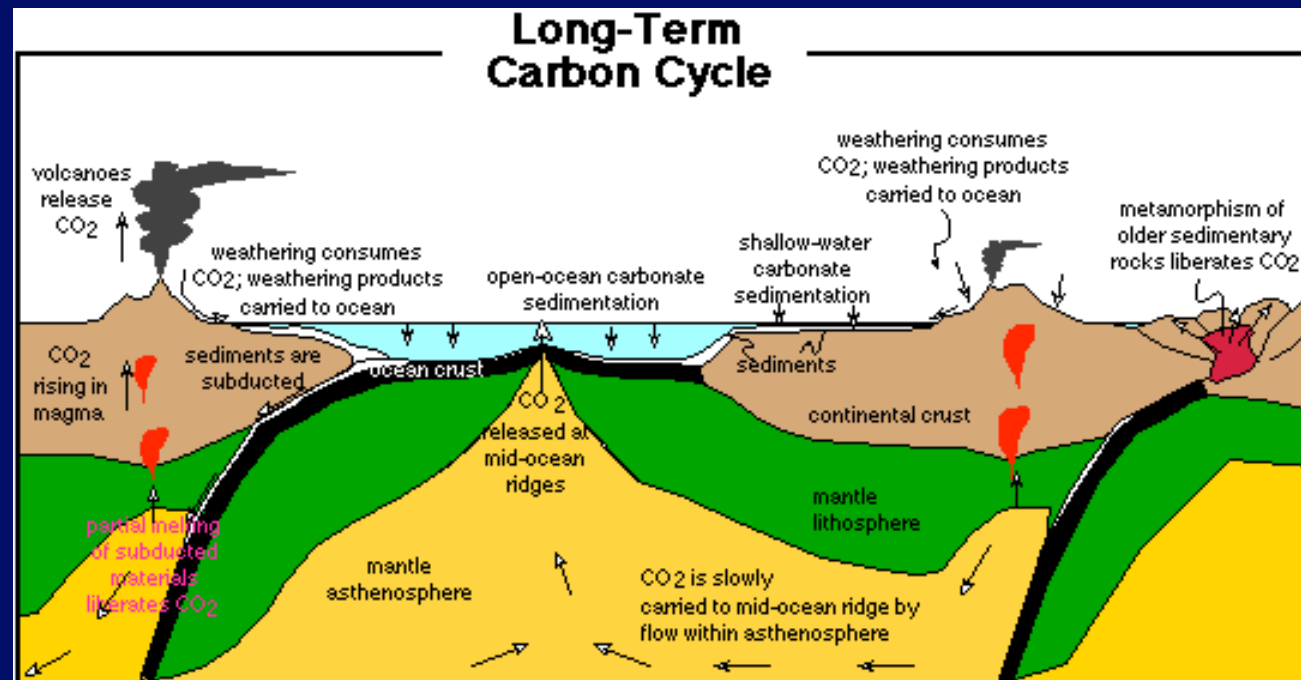
CO<sub>2</sub>

Whitmire et al.

CHZ 0.95 - 1.5 AU

$$\Rightarrow n_p \sim 1$$

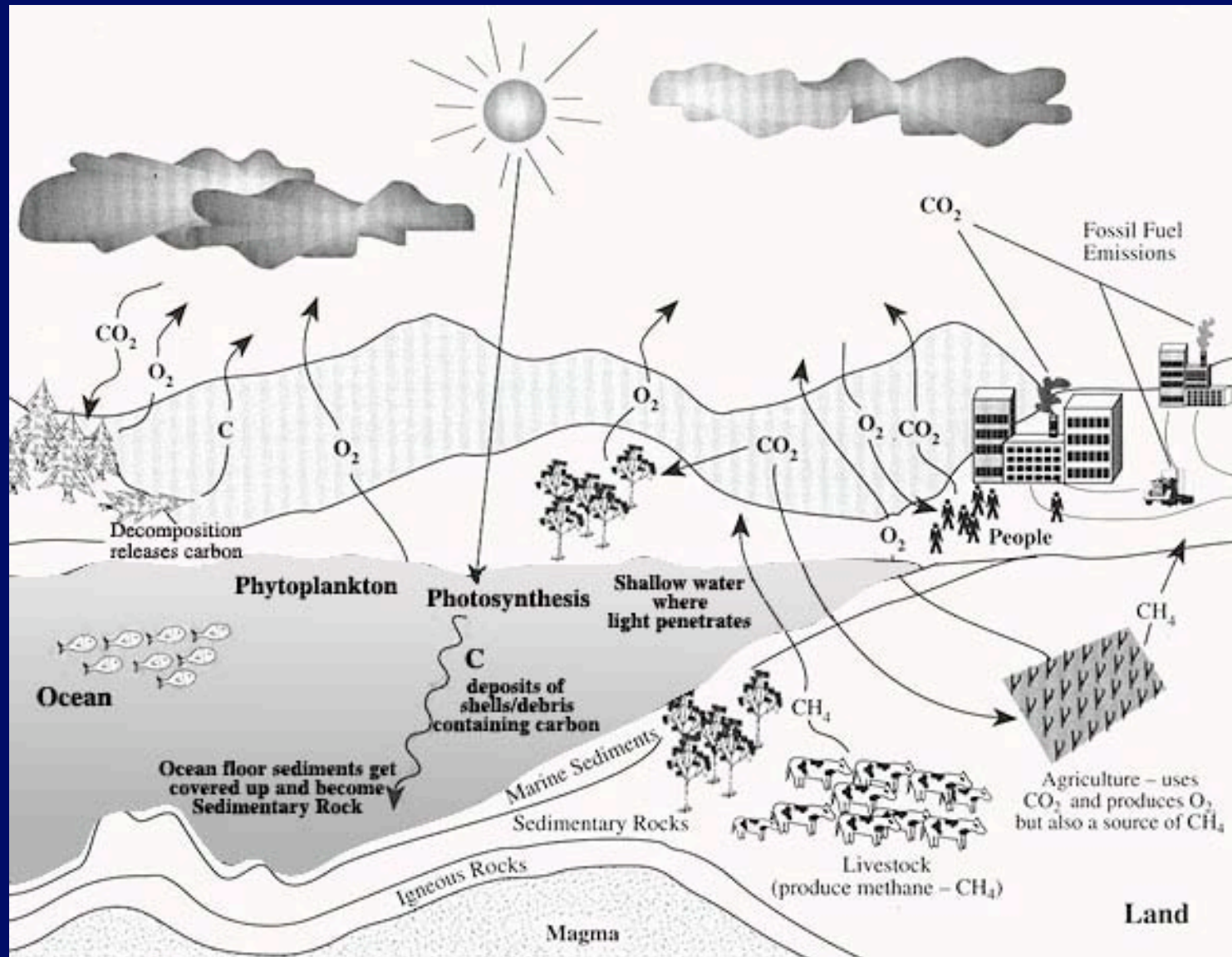
# The Carbon Cycle without Life

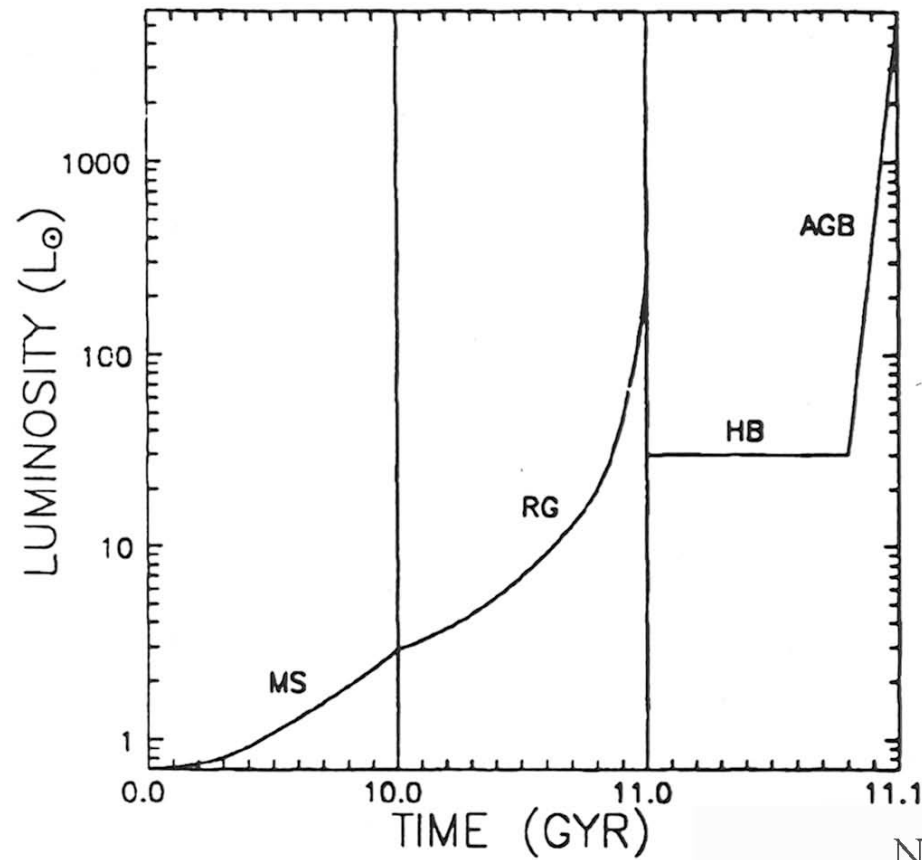


**Figure 7.3.** Schematic representation of the long-term global carbon cycle showing the flows (hollow arrows) of carbon that are important on timescales of more than 100 Kyr. Carbon is added to the atmosphere through metamorphic degassing and volcanic activity on land and at mid-ocean ridges. Atmospheric carbon is used in the weathering of silicate minerals in a temperature-sensitive dissolution process; the products of this weathering are carried by rivers to the oceans. Carbonate sedimentation extracts carbon from the oceans and ties it up in the form of limestones. Pelagic limestones deposited in the deep ocean can be subducted and melted. Limestones deposited on continental crust are recycled much more slowly — if they are exposed and weathered, their remains may end up as pelagic carbonates; if they get caught up in a continental collision, they can be metamorphosed, liberating their  $\text{CO}_2$ .



# The Carbon Cycle on Earth Now





Note Changing Scale

FIG. 1. Luminosity evolution of a  $1 M_{\odot}$  star of solar composition. Note that the scale is broken at 10 and 11 Gyr. The discontinuity at 11 Gyr is real and is due to the helium flash. The phases are: MS = main sequence, RG = red giant, HB = horizontal branch, and AGB = asymptotic giant branch. The final white dwarf phase is not illustrated. Details of the evolution during the HB and AGB phases are omitted.

$$r_2 = \sqrt{\frac{L(t)}{S_2(T)}}$$

# Cold Starts?

- As Habitable Zone moves out
  - Can you unfreeze a frozen planet?
  - Will it become suitable for life?
  - If not, HZ will shrink
  - CHZ is smaller

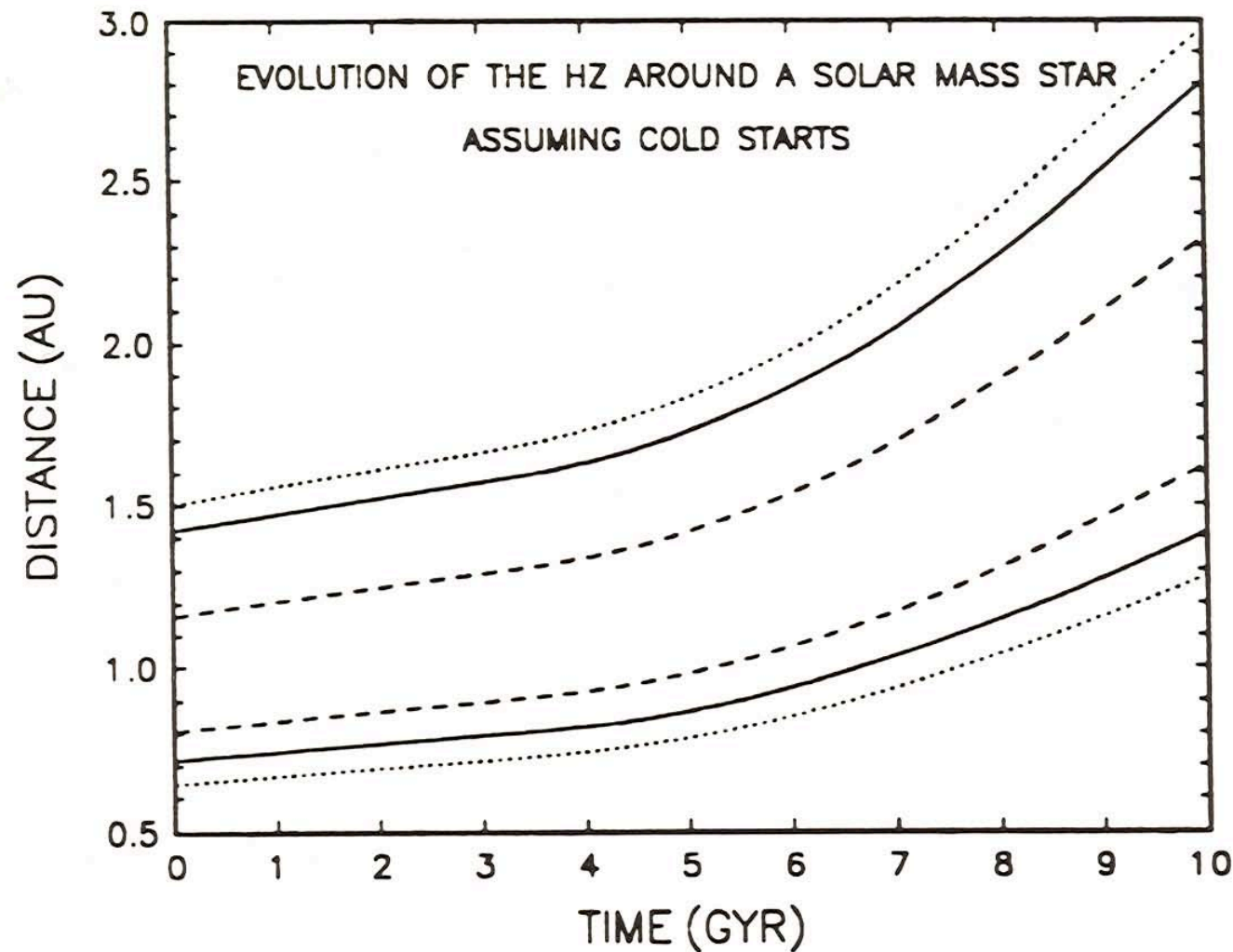


FIG. 2. Evolution of the HZ around a  $1 M_{\odot}$  star assuming that an ice covered planet that was initially beyond the outer HZ boundary can be cold started. The three cases shown are discussed in the text and correspond to the most conservative Case 1 (long dashes), the intermediate Case 2 (solid curves), and the least conservative Case 3 (short dashes).

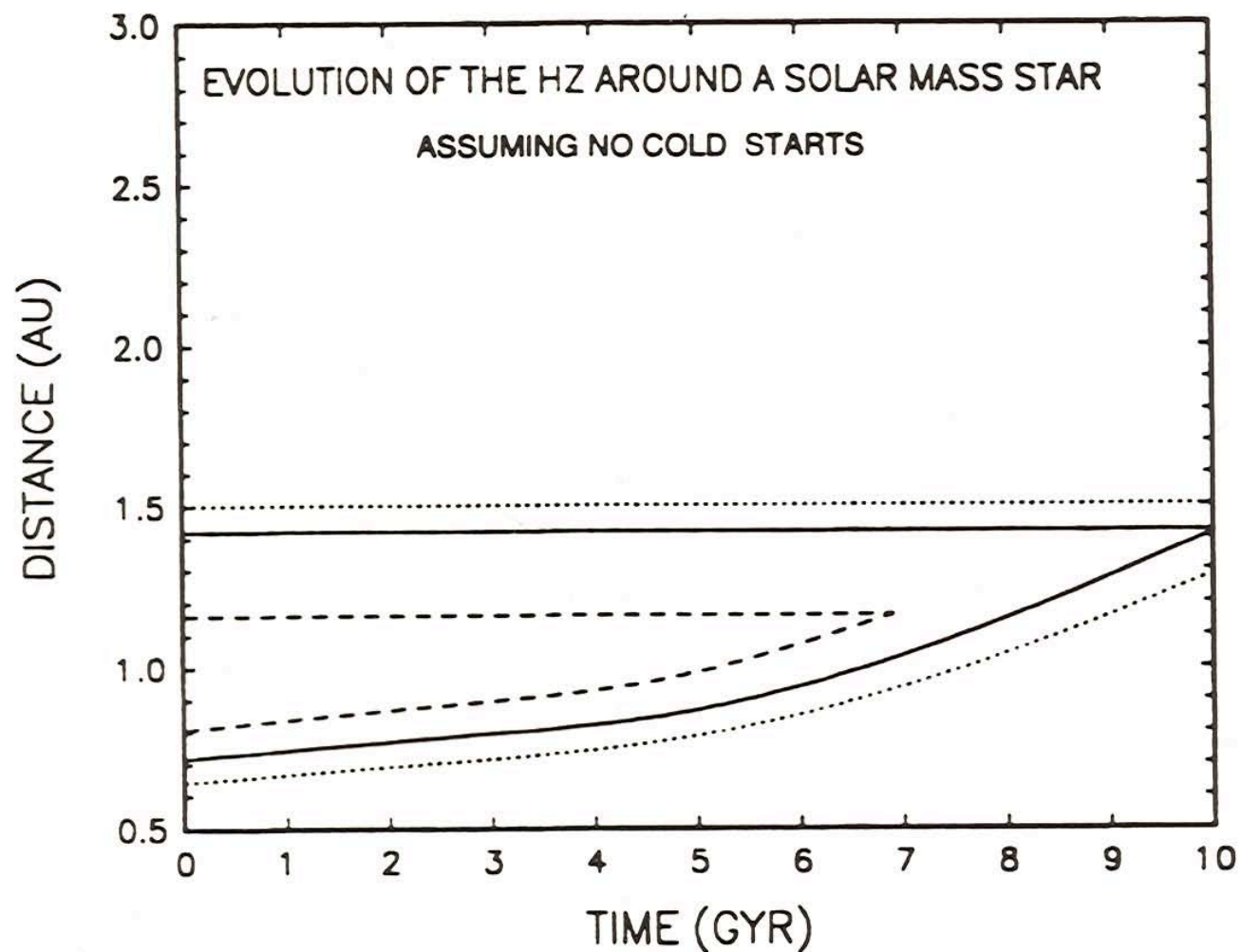


FIG. 3. Evolution of the HZ around a  $1 M_{\odot}$  star assuming that an ice covered planet that was initially beyond the outer HZ boundary cannot be cold started until the stellar flux is greater than the critical greenhouse value. The three cases shown are discussed in the text and correspond to the most conservative Case 1 (long dashes), the intermediate Case 2 (solid curves), and the least conservative Case 3 (short dashes).

# Temperatures for Life on Earth

Lower limit?

Some microbes survive for long periods in Antarctic ice

e.g. Lake Vostok - 2.5 miles below glacial ice in Antarctica

Microbes found ~ 400 feet above lake in an ice core

Freeze-dried for ~  $10^6$  yrs?

Revive when exposed to liquid

Lower limit is probably about  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  (253 K)



# Upper Limit?

We have learned that some microbes can survive in pressurized water at T up to 400 K (120° C)!

Such microbes have special adaptations to protect their heat-sensitive molecules

For complex life, upper limit seems to be ~ 325K

~52° C or 126° F

But is this limit just an accident of evolution on Earth?

## Other Habitable Zones

Microbial Habitable Zone (MHZ)

Fixed by Range of T microbes can withstand

“Animal” Habitable Zone (AHZ)

“Animal” = complex, differentiated, multicellular life

Ward + Brownlee in *Rare Earth* note AHZ much smaller than MHZ

They also argue that parts of our Galaxy unsuitable for animal life

We will consider this last point under  $f_i$



# Snowball Earth

Increasing evidence that Earth nearly froze over twice

2.4 billion years ago & 650-800 Myr ago

Climate can have dramatic changes

Apparently - these were ended by volcanic eruptions that put much more CO<sub>2</sub> in atmosphere

# Other Considerations

## 1. Sub-surface Water?

If you don't need photosynthesis, no need to be on surface

T increases with depth into Earth

⇒ liquid water under “ground”

	e.g. Mars?	Europa (Moon of Jupiter)
HZ →	1.5 AU	5 AU
$n_p$	~ 2	~ 3

## 2. Other Solvents

e.g. Titan (moon of Saturn) has some liquid methane ( $\text{CH}_4$ )

HZ  $\longrightarrow$  10 AU

$n_p$   $\longrightarrow$   $\sim 4$

## 3. Other planetary systems

Jupiter-like planets  $\sim 1$  AU (in HZ)

Life on Moons?

# Other requirements?

Pressure? Bacteria on deep sea floor up to 1000 atmospheres

But not “animal” life

Not too salty? - halophilic bacteria  
up to 33% salt solution

pH? - LOG [H ions]

pH 1  
acid

7  
normal  
H<sub>2</sub>O

ph 14  
alkali

Almost all cells regulate pH to 7.7

1      ←      microbes      →      13

Again, microbes have adapted to just about any environment of Earth

# Importance of Heavy Elements

Planetary systems found so far

Are found more commonly around stars with a lot of heavy elements

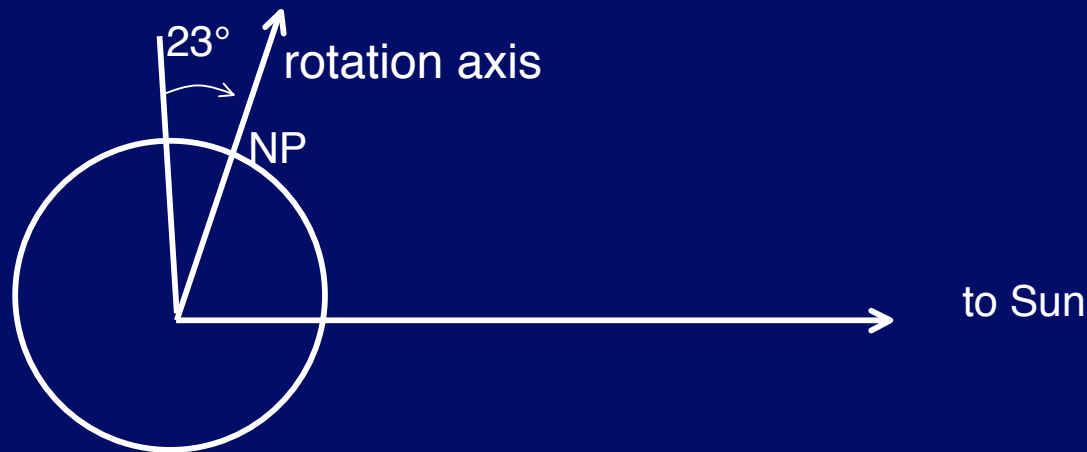
Does this apply to systems more like ours?

# The Importance of the Moon

The Moon makes the tides bigger than if only the Sun caused tides

May be important in the origin of life

The Moon stabilizes the Earth's obliquity



Varies regularly from 22.1 to 24.5 over 41,000 yrs.

Without the Moon, tugs from other planets  
could make it vary chaotically

Large obliquity could cause snowball Earth

Ward & Brownlee

Only if a large supercontinent at the poles

Williams, Kasting, Caldeira



# Issues Raised by Discovery of Other Planetary Systems

1. We know that not all planetary systems are like ours

But, searches so far could not find systems like ours  $\Rightarrow$  most **could** be like ours

2. Exotic possibilities for life  
Europa-like moons around giant planets orbiting  
 $\sim 1$  AU

# Stellar Requirements ( $f_s$ )

## 1. Sufficient Heavy Elements

Terrestrial planets, bioelements

1st generation - ruled out

Population II - ruled out

No significant loss

## 2. Main Sequence (Stable L $\Rightarrow$ Stable T possible)

e.g. Sun will increase L by  $10^3$   
 $5 \times 10^9$  yr from now

Red Giants - ruled out

0.99 OK

### 3. Stellar Mass Not Too High (Main sequence Life $\geq 5 \times 10^9$ yr )

Roughly,  $L \propto M^4$       Fuel  $\propto M$

Lifetime  $\propto \frac{\text{Fuel}}{L}$       or       $\frac{1}{M^3}$

# Stellar Lifetimes

M ( $M_{\odot}$ )	Lifetime (yrs)
30	$2 \times 10^6$
10	$3 \times 10^7$
3	$6 \times 10^8$
1	$1 \times 10^{10}$
1/3	$2 \times 10^{11}$
1/10	$3 \times 10^{12}$

If  $t > 5 \times 10^9$  yrs

$M < 1.25 M_{\odot}$

$M > 1.25 M_{\odot}$  - ruled out if we require  $5 \times 10^9$  yr for intelligent life to evolve

Most stars are low mass, so

0.90 OK

## 4. Stellar Mass Not Too Low

a) Do terrestrial planets form?

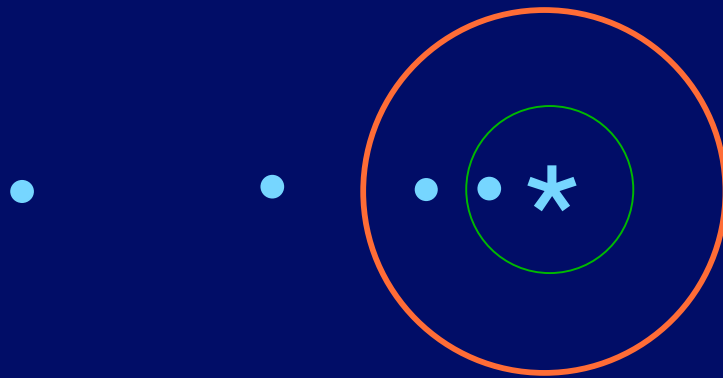
“Jupiters” should form closer to low mass star

Prevent formation of terrestrial planets?

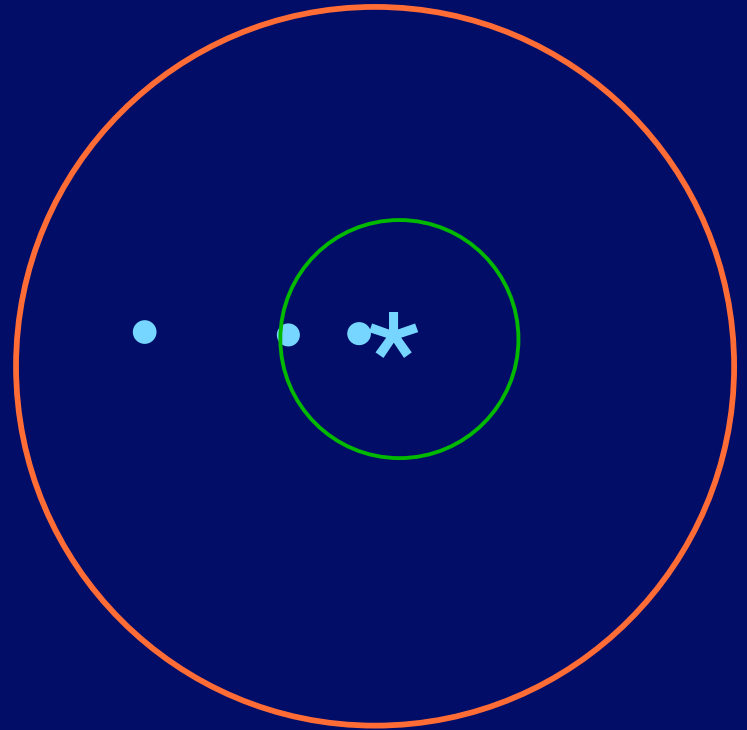
b) Chance of having terrestrial planet in CHZ?

CHZ smaller for Low L

For Logarithmic Spacing,  $n_p$  independent of size



Lower  $L$



Higher  $L$



But if planet spacing as in Solar System  
and

CHZ not smaller than innermost planet orbit

Chances are the same

c) Low mass stars have strong flares

High energy particles?

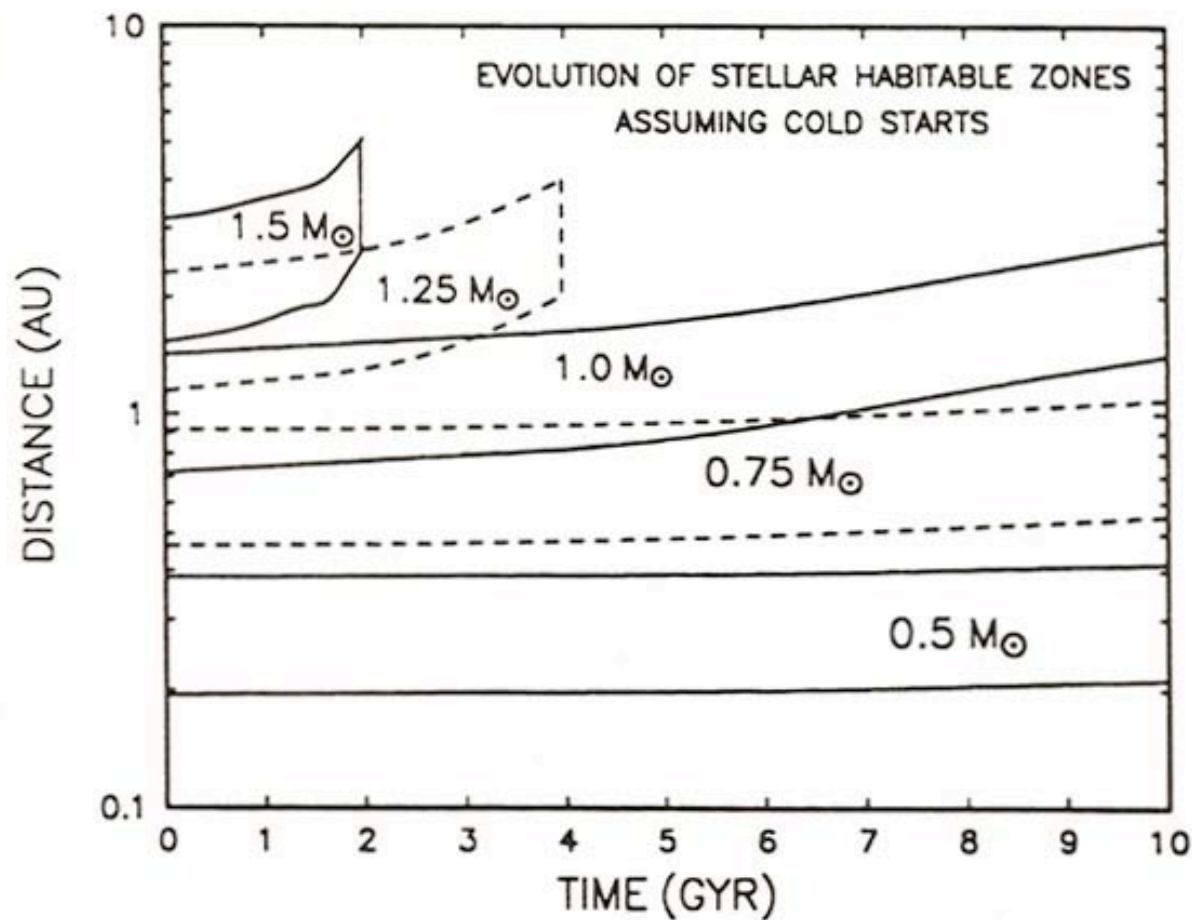


FIG. 5. Evolution of the  $H$  around stars of different masses assuming that cold starts are possible. Case critical fluxes were used and the evolution was truncated at the end of the main sequence phase.

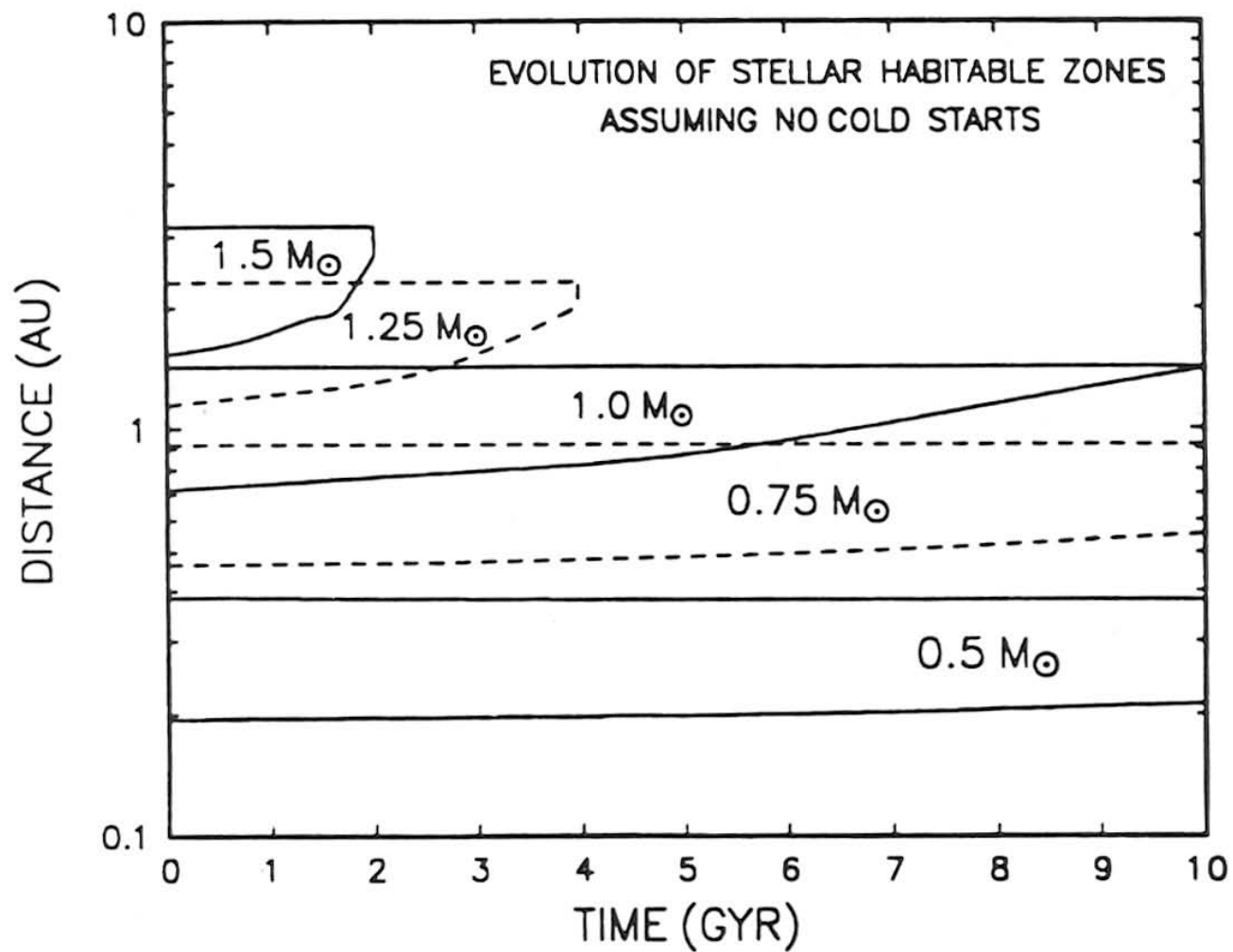


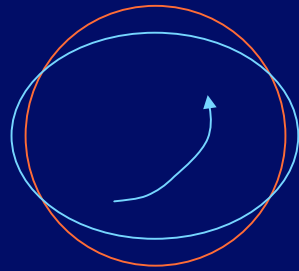
FIG. 6. Evolution of the HZ around stars of different masses assuming that cold starts are not possible. Case 2 critical fluxes were used and the evolution was truncated at the end of the main sequence phase.

d) Synchronous Rotation  
(Same side always faces star)

$$T \propto \left( \frac{L}{D^2} \right)^{1/4} \propto \frac{L^{1/4}}{D^{1/2}} \quad \text{Tidal Forces} \propto \frac{1}{D^3}$$

⇒ As D decreases, Tidal forces become much more important

Cause synchronous rotation



Gravity greatest on side closest

⇒ Bulge

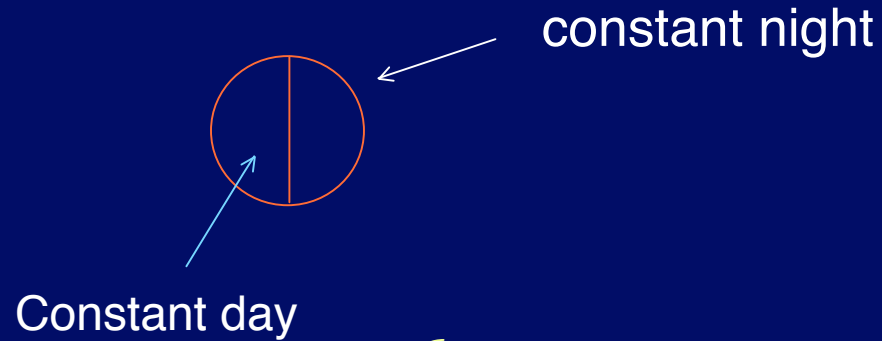
+ Rotation = Tides

If Rotation  $\neq$  orbital period, friction

————→ tends toward synchronous rotation

(but effect of other planets may prevent this)

\*  
star



⇒ Atmosphere freeze-out?

May not happen if  
atmosphere thick enough  
(0.1 Earth pressure)

$M > 0.5 M_{\odot} \Rightarrow 0.25 \text{ OK}$

$M < 0.5 M_{\odot}$  - ruled out (maybe)

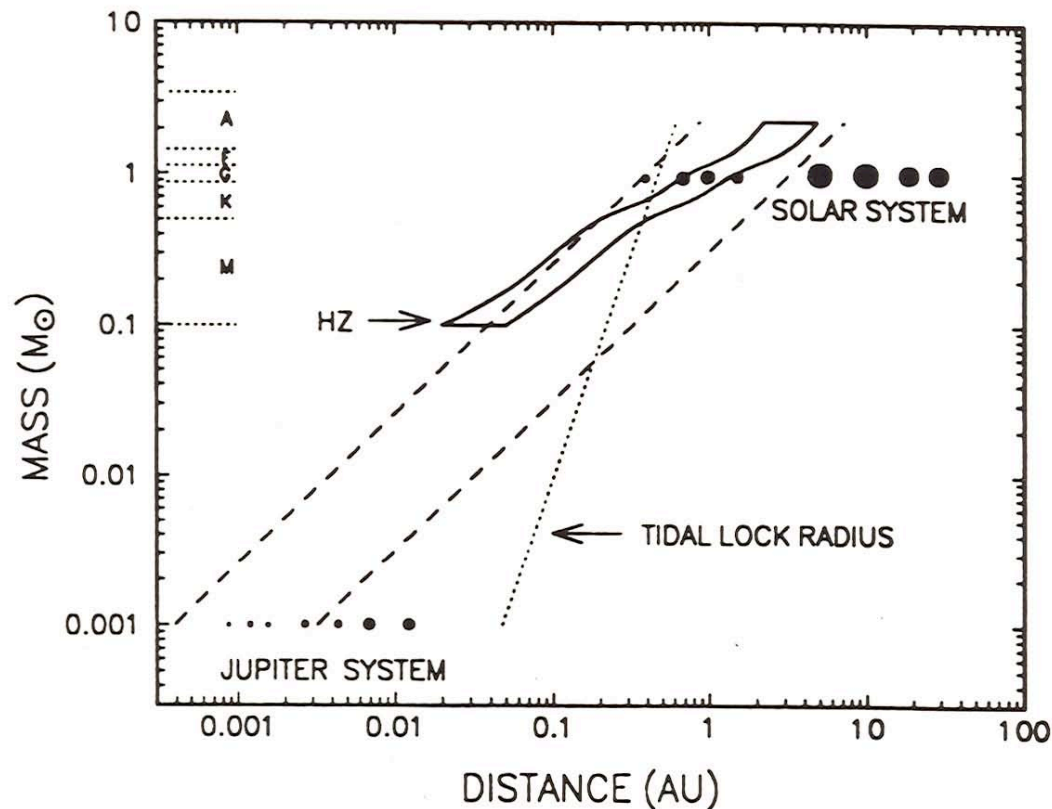
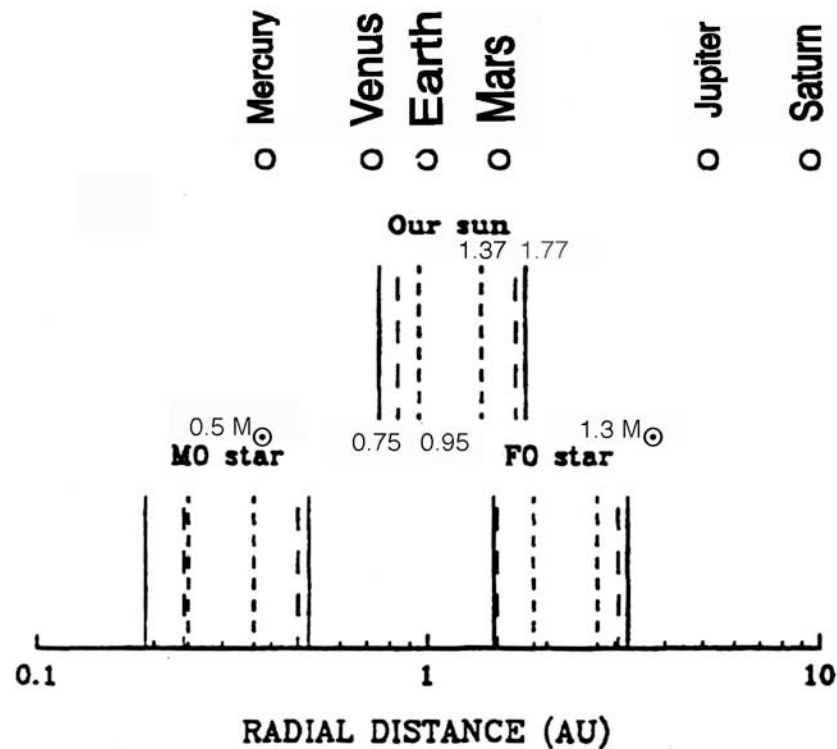
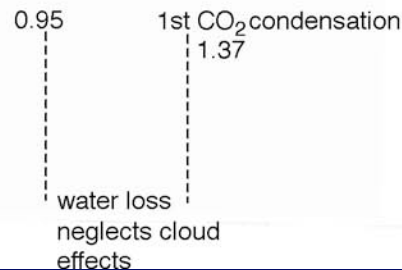


FIG. 8. The ZAMS HZ (dark solid curve) as a function of stellar mass for Case 2 fluxes. The long-dash lines delineate the most probable terrestrial planet formation zone. The short-dash line is the radius for which an Earthlike planet in a circular orbit would be synchronously or slowly rotating as a result of tidal damping. Note that all such planets in the HZ around M stars are within this radius.



1. Habitable zone limits for the three stars listed in Table 2. The solid lines represent the "recent Venus" and "early Mars" limits; the long-dashed lines represent the "runaway greenhouse" and "maximum greenhouse" limits; and short-dashed lines represent the "water loss" and "1st  $\text{CO}_2$  condensation" limits. "Recent Venus" and "early Mars" limits for the M0 and F0 stars were scaled to our own Sun using the  $S_{\text{eff}}$  values for "water loss" and "maximum greenhouse," respectively. The circles at the top represent the six innermost planets in our Solar System.



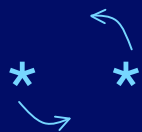


## 5. Binary Stars

### a) Unstable orbits

Unless two stars widely separated  
or very close

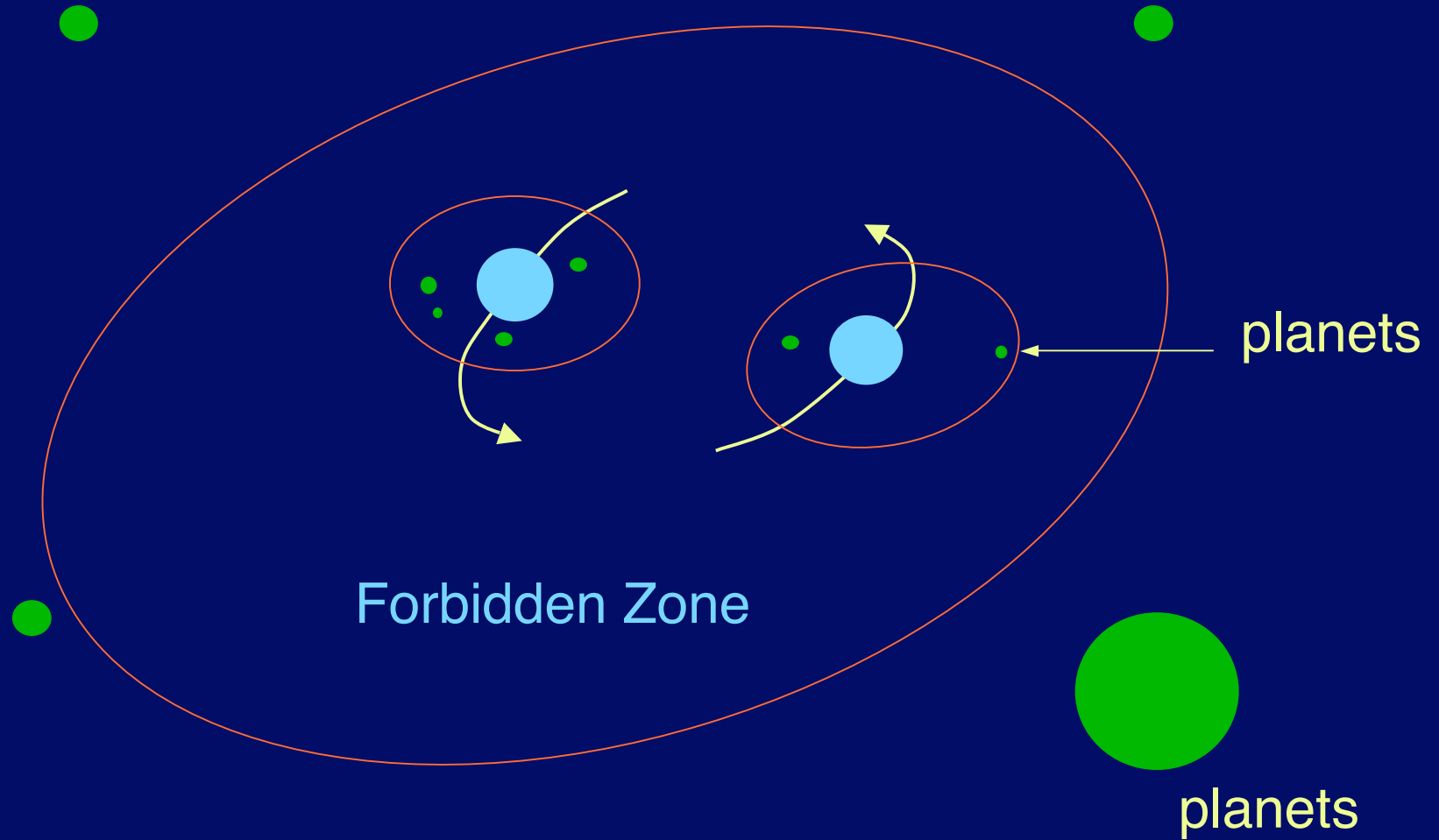
Need  $\frac{\text{Distance to Second Star}}{\text{Distance to Planet}} > \frac{7}{1}$  or  $< \frac{1}{7}$



or



\* (more likely)



Stable orbits around a Binary Star

b) Varying temperature in orbit  
also need  $\sim 7 : 1$

c) Both stars on main sequence,  
 $M < 1.25 M_{\odot}, \dots$

2/3 of all stars are binaries

2/3  $\sim$  “wide enough”

Binaries ruled out?  $f_s < 1/3$  (if you kept them for  $f_p$ )

Not  $> 7 : 1$  ruled out?  $f_s < 1/2$

# Summary

Requirement      Fraction OK      Cumulative

	1. Heavy Elements	1.0	1.0
	2. Main Sequence	0.99	0.99
	3. $M < 1.25 M_{\text{sun}}$	0.90	0.89
?	4. $M > 0.5 M_{\text{sun}}$	0.25	0.22
?	5. Not binary	0.3	0.07
?	5. 7:1 Separation	0.5	0.11

# Bottom Line

- Points 1 to 3 are pretty clear
- Points 4 and 5 are less established
- Room for different estimates for  $f_s$ 
  - Range 0.07 to 0.89 OK
- Then final step:
  - $n_e = n_p f_s$