

Earthquakes

The Earth might feel solid and still beneath your feet, but it is constantly moving. The Earth's outer layer, called the crust, is broken into enormous pieces called tectonic plates. These plates float slowly on hot, melted rock called magma. They move just a few centimetres every year.

At the edges of these plates, called boundaries, the plates can push into each other, pull apart, or slide sideways past one another. When plates grind against each other, they sometimes get stuck. Enormous amounts of energy build up and when the plates finally slip, that energy is released as an earthquake.

The point inside the Earth where the earthquake begins is called the focus. Directly above it on the surface is the epicentre. This is usually where the shaking is strongest.

Earthquakes send out waves of energy called seismic waves. These spread outwards in all directions, rather like ripples on water.

Scientists use an instrument called a seismometer to detect and measure earthquakes. The strength of an earthquake is recorded on the Richter Scale.

Questions

1. What is the Earth's outer layer called?
2. What are tectonic plates?
3. What is magma?
4. What are the edges of tectonic plates called?
5. Name one thing that can happen when plates meet at a boundary.
6. What is released when plates suddenly slip?
7. What is the focus of an earthquake?
8. What is the epicentre?
9. What instrument do scientists use to measure earthquakes?
10. Why do you think earthquakes are usually most damaging close to the epicentre?



Text B Quiz



Read and Retrieve