

Understanding Earthquakes

Learning objective: Describing the causes and effects of earthquakes

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Ellie the elephant was learning about earthquakes in her geography lesson. She asked her teacher, 'What causes an earthquake?' Her teacher explained that it happens when two big plates in the Earth's surface move and get stuck. This builds up a lot of energy, which finally releases with a big shaking. Sometimes, the ground gets so shaky that it liquefies, like a puddle of mud. This can cause buildings and bridges to collapse. A tsunami is a big wave that can be triggered by an earthquake. It can travel across the ocean and cause damage to the coastline when it reaches land. Ellie thought she understood earthquakes a bit better now.

Word bank: earthquake · plate tectonics · shaking · liquefaction · tsunami

1. What was Ellie learning about in her geography lesson? (2 marks)

2. Why do earthquakes happen? (2 marks)

3. What happens to the ground during an earthquake, according to Ellie's teacher? (2 marks)

4. What might happen to a coastline if a tsunami reaches it? (3 marks)

5. Do you think it's a good idea to live in a place that is prone to earthquakes? Explain your answer. (5 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of a coastline before and after a tsunami has hit it.



Extension challenge: Research and write about a famous earthquake that happened in a place you know about. How did it affect the local community?