Earthquakes: Shaking the Earth’s Crust

Learning objective: To write a non-chronological report explaining how and why earthquakes occur.

Use this writing frame to help you structure your report. Remember to use formal, objective language and include technical vocabulary. Use the word bank to help you link your ideas together.

Earthquakes are powerful natural phenomena that occur when the Earth’s surface suddenly shakes due to the movement of underground rock.

Word bank: consequently · tectonic plates · seismic waves · furthermore · epicentre · in addition · subsequently · nevertheless · tremors · as a result

1. Introduction: Define what an earthquake is and explain that the Earth's outer layer is made of moving plates. Start with: Earthquakes are... (2 marks)

2. The Causes: Describe how tectonic plates move and get stuck against each other. Start with: Beneath the Earth's crust, giant tectonic plates are constantly... (3 marks)

3. The Impact: Explain what happens at the surface when energy is released as seismic waves. Start with: When the pressure is finally released, energy travels through the ground in the form of... (3 marks)

4. Measuring Earthquakes: Mention how scientists use a seismograph to record the strength of the shaking. Start with: To measure the intensity of an earthquake, scientists use a specialist piece of equipment known as... (2 marks)

5. Conclusion: Summarise why earthquakes are significant events for people living in vulnerable areas. Start with: In conclusion, while earthquakes can be destructive, understanding their causes helps communities... (2 marks)

Extension challenge: Finn the dolphin is curious about what happens when an earthquake occurs under the ocean. Research what a 'tsunami' is and write a short paragraph explaining the connection between underwater earthquakes and ocean waves.