

Earthquakes: The Shaking Earth

Join Finn the Dolphin on a deep-dive journey beneath the surface to discover why the ground beneath our feet decides to move!

- **What are tectonic plates?** They are giant, puzzle-like slabs of rock that make up the Earth's outer layer, constantly sliding and grinding against each other.
- **Where does an earthquake start?** The point inside the Earth where the rock first breaks is called the focus, while the point directly above it on the surface is the epicentre.
- **How do we measure earthquakes?** Experts use the Moment Magnitude Scale to assign a number to an earthquake, which represents how much energy was released during the event.
- **What is a fault line?** This is a fracture or crack in the Earth's crust where the massive tectonic plates meet and movement often occurs.
- **Why do earthquakes happen?** They occur because the edges of tectonic plates become stuck due to friction, causing pressure to build up until the rock suddenly snaps and releases energy.

Did you know? Did you know? Even though we cannot feel most of them, scientists record over 500,000 earthquakes every single year! Most of these are so small that they are only detected by highly sensitive equipment called a seismograph.

Key vocabulary: Tectonic plates · Epicentre · Seismograph · Crust · Fault line · Magnitude