

Earthquakes Glossary

An earthquake is the shaking of the earth's surface caused by movement below ground.
An earthquake measures more than 4.0 on the Richter scale.

aftershock	A smaller earthquake that happens after, and because of, a larger earthquake.
epicentre	The central point of the origin of the earthquake.
fault line	A crack in the earth's surface where the risk of earthquakes can be higher.
foreshock	A smaller earthquake which comes before a main earthquake.
mainshock	The main and biggest earthquake.
magnitude	The number given to show the size of the earthquake.
Mercalli scale	The scale used to measure effects of earthquakes. It ranges from 'not felt', meaning no quake was felt by anyone, to 'extreme', where well-built buildings are destroyed.
microquake	The smallest measurable earthquake.
Richter scale	Developed by Charles Richter in 1935, it is a scale of levels from 0–10 used to measure the strength of an earthquake. Each level is ten times more than the level before it so level 4 is ten times greater than level 3.
Ring of Fire	The circle of volcanoes and earthquake sites in the Pacific Ocean.
seismic	An adjective that describes things to do with earthquakes, for example 'there has been some seismic activity in this area'.
seismograph	The instrument used to measure earthquakes.
seismologist	Someone who studies earthquakes.
tectonic plates	Sections of the earth's crust which are like huge jigsaw pieces.
tremor	Seismic activity that measures less than 4.0 on the Richter scale.
tsunami	A giant wave caused by an earthquake under the ocean or an eruption of an underwater volcano.
Valdivia earthquake	It occurred in 1960 and is the largest, recorded earthquake, measuring 9.5 on the Richter scale.

Cut these out and play a pairs game to see if you can match up the word with its description.