

**archaeologist**

Someone who studies human history and prehistory, through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artefacts and other physical remains.

**avalanche**

A large amount of snow, ice, dirt, sand or rock that slides very quickly down the side of a mountain.

**compression**

When materials in the Earth’s crust push and squeeze against one another as more materials are deposited on top and the pressure increases. Sedimentary rocks are formed in this way as rock is formed from the squashed materials.

**drought**

A long period of time with little or no rainfall. Droughts can lead to a shortage of water and damage to crops.

**earthquake**

A violent, sudden shaking of the ground that can cause lots of damage and destruction. The movement of the Earth’s tectonic plates or volcanic eruptions cause earthquakes.

**effusive eruption**

A volcanic eruption where lava flows steadily out of a volcano.

**epicentre**

The exact location on the Earth’s surface that is directly above an earthquake.

**erosion**

The process where rock or soil is worn away by water, wind or ice. Erosion creates many interesting features on the Earth’s surface, including peaks, valleys and coastlines.

**explosive eruption**

A violent volcanic eruption where ash, gas and magma explode out of a volcano, high up into the air.

**flood**

A large amount of water that rises and covers a usually dry area, often after heavy rain.

**fossil**

The remains of a once-living organism, preserved as rock.

**geologist**

A person who studies and collects rock and soil samples to learn about the structure and history of the Earth.

**hurricane**

A violent wind that forms over warm ocean waters, such as the west Atlantic Ocean, and moves in a large circle. Hurricanes can push ocean water ashore in what is called a ‘storm surge’ and can cause great damage to buildings and trees.

**igneous**

A type of rock that forms when molten rock cools and turns back into a solid. Examples of igneous rock include pumice and obsidian.

**lava**

Molten rock that comes out of a volcano during an eruption.

**magma**

Molten rock found under the Earth’s surface.

**magnitude**

A measure of how large an earthquake is at its source, represented by a number on the Richter scale.

**metamorphic**

A type of rock that forms deep underground from sedimentary or igneous rock. The heat and pressure underground changes the rock’s properties. Examples of metamorphic rock include slate and marble.

**natural disaster**

A sudden and terrible event in nature such as a hurricane, earthquake or tsunami. A natural disaster causes serious damage and many deaths.



**orienteering**

A competitive activity in which participants have to quickly find their way across an unfamiliar area of rough country by using a map and compass.

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**pyroclastic flow**

A fast-moving mass of hot ash, gas and lava that has exploded out of a volcano.

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**Richter scale**

A mathematical scale (1–10) used by scientists to describe the size of an earthquake. 1 is used to describe the weakest earthquake and 10 is used to describe the strongest.

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**sedimentary**

A type of rock that forms from sand, mud and pebbles along with dead animals and plants that are squashed together, over millions of years, until they turn into rock. Examples of sedimentary rock include sandstone and chalk.

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**seismic**

Caused by or relating to an earthquake.

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**seismometer**

A device used to measure and record the strength and duration of an earthquake.

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**storm**

An extreme weather condition with strong winds and often heavy rain, hail, snow, sleet, or thunder and lightning.

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**tectonic plates**

The Earth’s crust, or outer layer, is made up of large, moving pieces of rock called tectonic plates. All of the Earth’s land and water sit on these plates.

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**tragedy**

A very sad situation or event, such as a natural disaster, where great suffering and damage have been caused.

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**tremor**

A small shaking or vibrating movement of the Earth that often occurs before or after an earthquake.

**tsunami**

A very large wave in the ocean that is caused by an earthquake or volcanic eruption under the sea.

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**volcanic eruption**

The sudden and violent explosion of lava, gas, ash and rock out of a volcano.

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**volcano**

A mountain or hill with a hole in the top that sometimes erupts, sending out lava, rock, ash and gas. An active volcano is one that has erupted in the past 10,000 years. A dormant volcano is one that hasn't erupted in the past 10,000 years but is expected to again. An extinct volcano is one that isn't expected to erupt again.

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**volcanologist**

A person who studies and visits volcanoes, collecting rock and lava samples. Volcanologists study volcanoes to predict eruptions.

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**wildfire**

A large fire that is out of control and quickly destroys a wide area of woodland or brush.