

# Earthquake terms

## Common Earthquake Terms

**Focus** The focus or hypocentre of an earthquake is where the earthquake originated from, usually underground on the fault zone.

**Epicentre** The epicentre of an earthquake is the point on the surface of Earth directly above the epicentre.

**Fault Plane** A fault is a weak point within a tectonic plate where pressure from beneath the surface can break through and causing shaking in an earthquake.

**Magnitude** Magnitude is used to describe the size of the Earthquake. There are a number of different ways to calculate the magnitude of an earthquake, including the Richter Scale. Scientists also use the **moment magnitude scale**, which calculates the magnitude of an earthquake based on physical properties such as the area of movement (slip) along the fault plane.

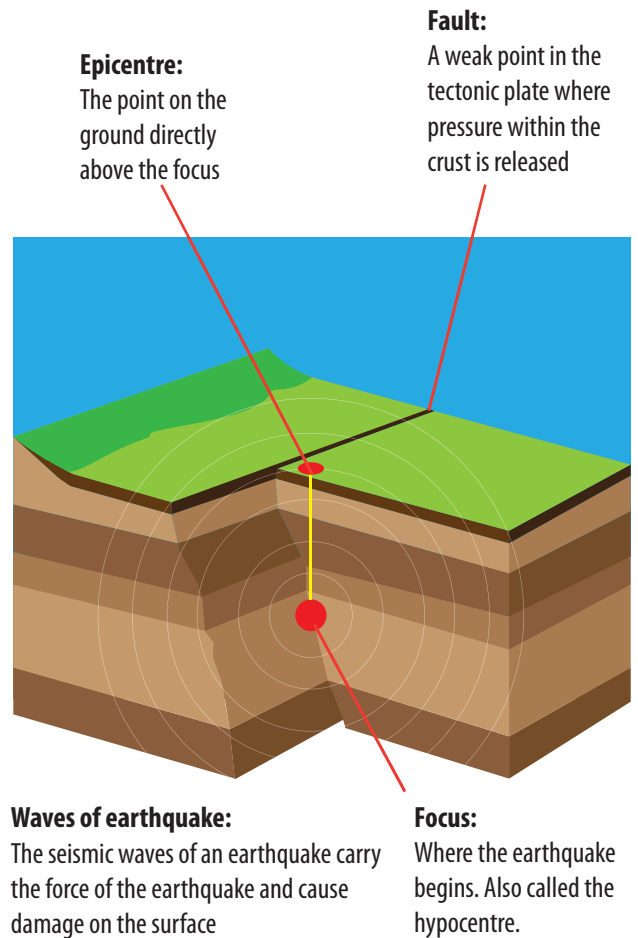
**Modified Mercalli Scale** The Modified Mercalli scale is another way sometimes used to measure an earthquake. This scale is based on what people in the area felt and how much damage was done during the earthquake. This scale is in roman numerals.

**Seismology** Seismology is the study of earthquakes. People who study earthquakes are called Seismologists.

**Aftershock** Aftershocks are smaller earthquakes that may occur after the main earthquake in the same area. They are caused by the area readjusting to the fault movement, and some may be the result of continuing movement along the same fault zone.

**Foreshock** Foreshocks are smaller earthquakes occur in the same area as a larger earthquake that follows. Not all earthquakes have foreshocks or aftershocks. Sometimes a series of similar sized earthquakes, called an earthquake swarm, happens over months without being followed by a significantly larger earthquake.

**Waves** Earthquake waves travel through and on top of the surface of Earth causing the shaking and vibrations on the ground. Earthquake waves can travel hundreds of kilometres causing earthquakes to be felt a long way away from the origin.



<b>Tectonic plates</b>	The outer layer (crust) of Earth is divided into sections called tectonic plates.
<b>Earthquake</b>	A sudden movement of Earth's crust caused by the release of stress accumulated along geologic faults or by volcanic activity.
<b>Tsunami</b>	A giant wave (or series of waves) created by an undersea earthquake, volcanic eruption or landslide.
<b>Tremors</b>	A shaking or vibrating movement, for example a small earthquake.
<b>Seismology</b>	A branch of science focused on the study of earthquakes and seismic activity.
<b>Seismic waves</b>	Waves of energy caused either by earthquakes, by massive man-made explosions or volcanos.
<b>Seismometer</b>	An instrument that detects the intensity, direction and duration of earthquakes and other ground movements such as explosions.
<b>Seismograph</b>	When the earth trembles, this device takes the readings produced by a Seismometer and produces a Seismogram (which is a graph that looks like a squiggly line).
<b>Igneous</b>	This type of rock is formed either underground or above ground from magma or lava.
<b>Emergency plan and kit</b>	A kit provides easy access to items that can help you survive an earthquake, storm or other natural disaster, in one handy location. If an extreme event did occur, having a plan of how you will deal with the event is of importance.
<b>Soil liquefaction</b>	This is the process of loose soil acting like a liquid during an earthquake.