

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210307-iceland-earthquakes.html>

It's a little hard to believe, but Iceland has experienced 18,000 earthquakes in the space of a week. Most of them have been too small to feel. The largest quake was on February 24 and was a magnitude 5.6. The seismic activity suggests that a volcano in the southwest of Iceland may be about to erupt. Volcanoes in southwestern Iceland have been dormant for over 800 years, but seismologists believe an eruption could be imminent. Iceland is a volcanic island and is used to the occasional tremor. However, swarms of quakes have unsettled residents in the capital city Reykjavik. Scientists say despite the large number of quakes, there has been very little damage.

Iceland is situated on top of the meeting of tectonic plates deep in the earth. Tectonic plates are pieces of Earth's crust around 100km thick on which Earth's land mass sits. The plates below Iceland are continually splitting apart and pushing North America and Eurasia away from each other at an infinitesimally slow rate. Living on a tectonic plate means seismic activity is inevitable. One Reykjavik resident spoke about his anxiety caused by the 18,000 recent quakes. He said: "I have experienced earthquakes before, but never so many in a row. It is very unusual to feel the Earth shake 24 hours a day for a whole week. It makes you feel very small and impotent against nature."

Sources: <https://nbc-2.com/news/national-world/2021/03/04/iceland-hit-with-17000-earthquakes-in-the-past-week-a-volcanic-eruption-could-be-near1/>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/04/world/europe/earthquakes-eruption-iceland.html>
<https://people.com/human-interest/iceland-18000-earthquakes-last-week-signaling-potential-eruption/>

WARM-UPS

1. EARTHQUAKES: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about Earthquakes. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

hard / earthquakes / magnitude / volcano / eruption / imminent / residents / damage meeting / plates / land mass / rate / inevitable / anxiety / unusual / in a row / nature

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. VOLCANOES: Students A **strongly** believe volcanoes are more dangerous than earthquakes; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. GEOLOGICAL FEATURES: What do you know about these geological features? What do you want to know? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	What I Know	What I Want to Know
Volcanoes		
Earthquakes		
Deserts		
Glaciers		
Tsunamis		
Caves		

5. PLATE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "plate". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. NATURAL DISASTERS: Rank these with your partner. Put the most dangerous at the top at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Volcanoes
- Earthquakes
- Floods
- Sandstorms
- Tsunamis
- Wildfires
- Hurricanes
- Blizzards

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1. magnitude | a. A series of similar-sized earthquakes occurring together, typically near a volcano. |
| 2. seismic | b. (of a volcano) become active and eject lava, ash, and gases. |
| 3. erupt | c. About to happen. |
| 4. dormant | d. The great size or extent of something. |
| 5. imminent | e. A slight earthquake. |
| 6. tremor | f. Relating to earthquakes or other vibrations of the earth and its crust. |
| 7. swarm | g. Having normal physical functions suspended or slowed down for a period of time. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 8. tectonic | h. At an extremely small rate. |
| 9. crust | i. Certain to happen; unavoidable. |
| 10. land mass | j. Unable to take effective action; helpless or powerless. |
| 11. infinitesimally | k. The outermost layer of rock that covers a planet. |
| 12. inevitable | l. A person who lives somewhere permanently or on a long-term basis. |
| 13. resident | m. A continent or other large body of land. |
| 14. impotent | n. Relating to the structure of the earth's crust and the large-scale processes which take place within it. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210307-iceland-earthquakes.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. Most of the earthquakes in Iceland last week could be felt. **T / F**
- b. The largest of the earthquakes was 6.5 in magnitude. **T / F**
- c. Volcanoes in the northeast of Iceland are set to erupt. **T / F**
- d. The 18,000 earthquakes have caused very little damage. **T / F**
- e. Tectonic plates are about 100km thick. **T / F**
- f. Iceland is on a tectonic plate that is moving very quickly. **T / F**
- g. Swarms of earthquakes made residents of Iceland's capital city worry. **T / F**
- h. A Reykjavik resident said he felt impotent against nature. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms. The words in **bold** are from the news article.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. magnitude | a. inactive |
| 2. dormant | b. breaking |
| 3. imminent | c. destruction |
| 4. unsettled | d. consecutively |
| 5. damage | e. intensity |
| 6. situated | f. coming |
| 7. splitting | g. unavoidable |
| 8. inevitable | h. worry |
| 9. anxiety | i. unnerved |
| 10. in a row | j. located |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. It's a little hard | a. impotent |
| 2. 18,000 earthquakes in the space | b. of quakes |
| 3. seismic | c. plates deep in the earth |
| 4. seismologists believe an eruption | d. activity |
| 5. swarms | e. about his anxiety |
| 6. tectonic | f. to believe |
| 7. at an infinitesimally slow | g. a row |
| 8. One Reykjavik resident spoke | h. rate |
| 9. never so many in | i. of a week |
| 10. It makes you feel very small and | j. could be imminent |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210307-iceland-earthquakes.html>

1. How many of the 18,000 earthquakes were too small to feel?
2. What was the magnitude of the largest earthquake?
3. How long have volcanoes in southwest Iceland been dormant?
4. What is the collective noun for earthquakes or tremors?
5. How thick are tectonic plates?
6. What is being pushed away from North America?
7. What does the article say living on a tectonic plate means?
8. What did a Reykjavik resident feel about the 18,000 quakes?
9. What has the Reykjavik not experienced before?
10. What did the resident say he felt impotent against?

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210307-iceland-earthquakes.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'earthquake' and 'Earth'.

earthquake	Earth

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• believe• feel• erupt• imminent• swarms• damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• top• below• slow• means• row• nature
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EARTHQUAKES DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'earthquake'?
3. What do you know about earthquakes?
4. What do you think of earthquakes?
5. What do you know about Iceland?
6. Have you ever experienced an earthquake?
7. What should you do in an earthquake?
8. What do you know about volcanoes?
9. Would you move if you lived near a volcano?
10. Is a volcano or earthquake more dangerous?

Iceland has 18,000 earthquakes in a week - 7th March, 2021
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EARTHQUAKES DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'Earth'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What do you know about the earth's crust?
15. What might Earth look like if the plates keep moving?
16. When was the last time you were anxious?
17. What would you do if there were earthquakes for a week?
18. What advice do you have for people in Iceland?
19. What do you think of the power of nature?
20. What questions would you like to ask a volcano expert?