Extreme Earth: Why does the ground move?

UKS2 Geography, Autumn 2, 2026

Vocabulary	Definition
Equator	It is the imaginary line that runs around the centre of the globe at 0 degrees latitude, at equal distance between the North and South Poles.
Tectonic plates	The earth is made up of huge pieces of flat rock called tectonic plates.
Earthquake	When tectonic plates rub together, the movement forces waves of energy to come to the Earth's surface- this causes tremors.
Richter Scale	The Richter magnitude scale is used to measure the size of earthquakes.
Tsunami	An earthquake that occurs at the bottom of the sea that can push water upwards and create huge waves.
Volcano	A volcano is an opening in the Earth's crust that allows magma, hot ash and gases to escape.
Eruption	The name of the process in which solids, liquids or gases are expelled through a vent in the earth's surface.
Epicentre	An earthquake epicentre is the point on the Earth's surface directly above the earthquake focus.
Tremors	A vibration causes by slippage of the Earth's crust at a fault, especially before or after a major earthquake.
Lava	Molten rock flowing from the vent of a volcano during an eruption.
Magma	Molten (liquid) rock beneath the earth's surface.

Key Knowledge

1) What causes a volcanic eruption?
Most volcanic eruptions are caused by pieces of the Earth's crust, called tectonic plates, moving towards each other.

2) What causes an earthquake?
As plates move in different directions over long periods of time, friction causes energy to build up. It becomes so great that the energy is released, which creates a shockwave – an earthquake.

3) Why are some eruptions/quakes more severe than others?
The larger the fault area, the larger the earthquake. The more people living in an area, the more likely that more deaths and casualties may arise.

4) Why do natural disasters occur in some places and not in others?
Countries located along the tectonic plate boundaries may frequently experience earthquakes and volcanic activity.

5) How can the 3Ps (Prediction, Protection and Preparation) impact positively and negatively on the damaged caused by natural disasters? Experts know where earthquakes are likely to happen; buildings are constructed so they safe to live in and will not collapse; and drills are in place so people know what to do. However, it is difficult to predict when they will happen.







