

It will take years and billions of dollars to rebuild the area of China hit by an earthquake last May.

When the Ground Quakes



Earthquakes often cause roads to crack and split apart.

Earthquakes can bring serious—sometimes deadly—trouble. Over the last few months, a number of quakes have occurred. Some were powerful, while others could hardly be felt.

All Shook Up

Small quakes occurred in California and South Carolina, and in the country of Sweden. No one was hurt. That did not stop the quakes from being scary.

Danielle Williams was caught in the quake in Sweden. “I suddenly awoke to having my bed whipped back and forth across my room,” she says.

In China, things were far worse. Last May, a very powerful quake happened there. About 70,000 people were killed. Many more

were **injured**, or hurt. Millions lost their homes.

Underground Activity

Why do earthquakes happen? Earth’s crust is made of huge layers of rock, called *plates*, which are always moving slowly. They move less than an inch each year! That’s still enough to cause problems.

The edges of the plates rub against each other for years. Sometimes, they get to a point where the plates

slip past each other. When that happens, waves of energy travel through the ground, causing it to shake. This shaking can often be felt hundreds of miles away from where a quake occurs.

As of now, there is no way to **predict**, or figure out ahead of time, when an earthquake will occur. But scientists are working on it!

—By Glenn Greenberg



Kid Reporters write about living through natural disasters at www.scholastic.com/news.

How Quakes Happen

- 1 Two plates move in different directions. They push against each other until they suddenly slip.
- 2 The slip lets out huge waves of energy that travel through the ground and make it shake.
- 3 The spot on Earth’s surface directly above where the quake occurs is called the *epicenter* (EP-uh-sehnt-uh).



Find It!



MINI-LESSON: Cause and Effect

A *cause* is the reason something happens. An *effect* is the result of something happening. On this page, find and underline the effect of Earth’s plates slipping past each other.

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