

Iceland has 18,000 earthquakes in a week

7th March, 2021



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 powerless against nature."

Sources: nbc-2.com / nytimes.com / people.com

Writing

People should not live in earthquake-prone areas. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

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

True / False

- 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

Synonym Match

(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 |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about earthquakes?
- b) What do you think of earthquakes?
- c) What do you know about Iceland?
- d) Have you ever experienced an earthquake?
- e) What should you do in an earthquake?
- f) What do you know about volcanoes?
- g) Would you move if you lived near a volcano?
- h) Is a volcano or earthquake more dangerous?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 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 |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you know about the earth's crust?
- What might Earth look like if the plates keep moving?
- When was the last time you were anxious?
- What would you do if there were earthquakes for a week?
- What advice do you have for people in Iceland?
- What do you think of the power of nature?
- What questions would you like to ask a volcano expert?

Spelling

- sieicms activity
- rotmand for over 800 years
- an eruption could be mieinnmt
- swsarm of quakes
- riseetdns in the capital city
- ieeptsd the large number
- oitctcne plates
- nutlycaolin splitting apart
- at an iafiyimlinsetln slow rate
- activity is vibetaeiln
- yaxitne caused by the 18,000 recent quakes
- you feel very small and tmnpotei

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. a	3. f	4. i	5. c
6. j	7. b	8. g	9. h	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Volcanoes

You think volcanoes are the most dangerous natural disasters. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their disasters. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): earthquakes, tsunamis or hurricanes.

Role B – Earthquakes

You think earthquakes are the most dangerous natural disasters. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their disasters. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): volcanoes, tsunamis or hurricanes.

Role C – Tsunamis

You think tsunamis are the most dangerous natural disasters. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their disasters. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): earthquakes, volcanoes or hurricanes.

Role D – Hurricanes

You think hurricanes are the most dangerous natural disasters. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their disasters. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): earthquakes, tsunamis or volcanoes.

Speaking – 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 | • Tsunamis |
| • Earthquakes | • Wildfires |
| • Floods | • Hurricanes |
| • Sandstorms | • Blizzards |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.