

Key words

tectonic plates - broken pieces of the Earth's crust, which are constantly moving. They can be continental (land) or oceanic (water).

mountain - an elevation on the Earth's surface created by two tectonic plates colliding

earthquake - a sudden shockwave caused by a release of pressure between the Earth's tectonic plates

Richter Scale - the scale used to measure the magnitude (strength) of earthquakes

crust - the outer layer of the Earth that we live on

mantle - the layer of the Earth underneath the crust made of magma

outer core - the layer of the Earth underneath the mantle

inner core - the inner most layer of the Earth

volcano - an elevation of the Earth's crust where lava comes out of a vent or crater

shield volcano - a wide, flat type of volcano

stratovolcano - a tall, steep type of volcano

active - a volcano that has erupted recently

dormant - a volcano that has not erupted recently but is expected to in the future

tsunami - a large sea wave caused by an earthquake

Key facts

- Mountains are formed when tectonic plates collide. When continental plates collide, fold mountains form. If the plates continue to move towards each other, the mountain gets taller.
- Volcanoes are formed by tectonic plates colliding. There are both active volcanoes and dormant volcanoes.
- Tectonic plates move because of currents (convection currents) in the mantle.
- Convection currents happen when warm material rises while cool material sinks in a circular motion.
- Sometimes, when tectonic plates move, pressure that has built up over time is released - this causes the ground to shake. This is called an earthquake.
- Earthquakes are measured using the Richter Scale.
- The epicentre of an earthquake is the place on the Earth's surface where the rock broke.

Key diagrams

