

Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Natural Disasters**

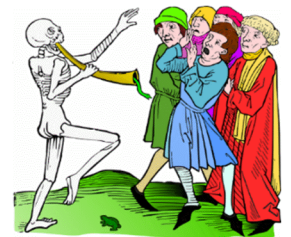
# Natural Disasters

A natural disaster is an environmental event that causes injury to people and/or damage to human property. Many natural disasters are weather related. Others are caused by geological or biological events. Natural disasters are usually unexpected and result in significant long-term and sometimes even permanent destruction in the area where they occur.

Hurricanes and tornadoes are both storms involving extremely strong, rotating winds. A drought is a long period without precipitation. The consequences of drought can include reduced water quality, water shortages, loss of crops (which can cascade into famine, which is widespread hunger), and degradation of the soil in agricultural areas which can make it difficult or impossible to grow food crops.

An earthquake is a shock wave that moves through the earth, usually causing violent shaking of the Earth's surface. There are two main causes of earthquakes: the collision of tectonic plates and volcanic eruption. A volcano is an opening in the Earth's surface through which extremely hot molten rock erupts. Shock waves from erupting volcanoes under water have also been known to produce tsunamis, which are waves that can reach up to 100 feet high by the time they reach land, causing massive destruction for miles inland.

When a contagious disease spreads uncontrollably, resulting in many deaths, it is called pestilence. For example, The Black Death was a very contagious disease that killed between 75 and 200 million people in the Middle Ages between 1347 and 1350. It got its name because of the blue and black blotches that would appear all over the body of someone who had been infected. We now know that it was carried by the fleas on rats, but people at the time did not know what caused the disease. More recent examples of pestilence include influenza (20 million people died worldwide in 1918 - 1919) and AIDS (over 25 million people have died between 1970s to the present).



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### QUESTIONS: Natural Disasters

Circle the correct answer.

1. What is a natural disaster?
  - A. a period of bad weather
  - B. a geological event that adversely affects humans
  - C. an environmental event that causes injury to people and/or damage to human property
  - D. a contagious disease that spreads uncontrollably
  
2. A storm involving extremely strong, rotating winds is called a:
  - A. hurricane
  - B. tornado
  - C. earthquake
  - D. both A and B
  
3. A shock wave that moves through the earth, causing violent shaking of the Earth's surface, is called:
  - A. a hurricane
  - B. pestilence
  - C. an earthquake
  - D. a volcano
  
4. When a contagious disease spreads uncontrollably, resulting in many deaths, it is called:
  - A. a tornado
  - B. pestilence
  - C. an earthquake
  - D. a volcano
  
5. Which of the following is a recent example of pestilence?
  - A. a tornado
  - B. the Black Death
  - C. Hurricane Katrina
  - D. AIDS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# GENIUSCHALLENGE

## NATURAL DISASTERS

1. What is the scientific equipment that measures the size of an earthquake called?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of these is the best material to use if building a house near a volcano?

- a. metal      b. stone      c. foam      d. wood

3. What are the large moving pieces of rock that make up the Earth's outer layer called?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is molten rock inside a volcano called? \_\_\_\_\_

5. True or false: tsunamis are waves caused by wind. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which of these natural disasters can humans prevent or eliminate?

- a. tsunamis  
b. earthquakes  
c. volcanos  
d. humans cannot prevent natural disasters

7. What is one way buildings are made in areas where earthquakes occur?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Volcanoes and earthquakes tend to occur near what?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Which natural disaster causes most of its damage due to shaking?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. True or false: *all* volcanos occur along plate boundaries. \_\_\_\_\_