Name: Date: Score: / 6

Earthquakes: Reading Comprehension

Nonfiction: Science · about 190 words

Read the passage. Then answer each question. Circle the best answer or write your answer on the lines.

🌍 Earthquakes

Earth's outer layer, called the crust, is not one solid piece. It is broken into giant slabs of rock called tectonic plates. These plates fit together like pieces of a puzzle, and they are always moving very slowly, about as fast as your fingernails grow.

Sometimes, the edges of two plates get stuck as they try to slide past each other. Pressure builds up over many years. When the rocks finally slip, energy is released all at once. This energy travels through the ground in waves, making the ground shake. That shaking is an earthquake.

Scientists measure earthquakes with an instrument called a seismometer. They describe an earthquake's strength using a magnitude scale. Each step up on the scale means the shaking is about ten times larger. Most earthquakes are too small for people to feel, but large ones can damage buildings, roads, and bridges.

California has many earthquakes because it sits along the San Andreas Fault, where two plates meet. People who live in earthquake areas practice "Drop, Cover, and Hold On." Drop to your hands and knees, take cover under a sturdy table, and hold on until the shaking stops.

1. **Main idea:** What is this passage mostly about?
   A. what causes earthquakes and how to stay safe B. the history of California C. how to build a table
   D. how volcanoes erupt

2. **Vocabulary:** Tectonic plates are...
   A. giant slabs of rock that make up Earth's crust B. kinds of maps C. dishes used in labs
   D. earthquake waves

3. **Detail:** How fast do plates move?
   A. as fast as a car B. about as fast as your fingernails grow C. as fast as a running horse
   D. they never move

4. **Sequence:** What happens when the stuck rocks finally slip?
   A. The crust melts. B. A new ocean forms right away. C. The plates stop moving forever.
   D. Energy is released, and the ground shakes.

5. **Detail:** What instrument measures earthquakes?
   A. a seismometer B. a thermometer C. a telescope D. a ruler

6. **Detail:** What should you do during an earthquake?

ANSWER KEY

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