

## The Great Lisbon Quake of 1755

Discipline: Geography	Key Stage: 3 or 4	Key Idea: Forces/Literacy
Title: The Great Lisbon Quake of 1755		
Aim: Use historical accounts to provide evidence of past events and match these to explanations using modern scientific ideas.		

### Background

The Great Lisbon Earthquake took place in 1775. But it was not just an earthquake that the residents of Lisbon experienced that night.

Earthquakes occur as a result of the Earth's plates colliding or rubbing against each other. The plate movements are caused by forces operating within the Earth's mantle as the magma moves against the plates. A relatively small movement of the crust can create enormous damage to buildings and structures which are not designed to be flexible.

A small disturbance of the seabed can displace a huge volume of water which becomes even more noticeable as the depth of the seabed decreases.

**Have a look at these websites for more information:**

The Lisbon Earthquake:

[http://www.soc.soton.ac.uk/CHD/classroom@sea/portugal/lisbon\\_quake.html](http://www.soc.soton.ac.uk/CHD/classroom@sea/portugal/lisbon_quake.html)).

Plate tectonics:

[http://www.soc.soton.ac.uk/CHD/classroom@sea/carlsberg/science/tectonics\\_index.html](http://www.soc.soton.ac.uk/CHD/classroom@sea/carlsberg/science/tectonics_index.html)

The rock cycle:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/rocks/rockcycle.shtml>

### Activity

- Imagine what could happen in your town if it was hit by a severe earthquake. What other disasters could result? How might your family and your home be affected? How might it affect others around you?
- Read the account of the Lisbon earthquake written by the Reverend Charles Davy (see [http://www.soc.soton.ac.uk/CHD/classroom@sea/portugal/quake\\_davy.html](http://www.soc.soton.ac.uk/CHD/classroom@sea/portugal/quake_davy.html) and answer the questions below.
- You may find it easier to read the questions first and use a highlighting tool to pick out parts of the article that are relevant to the questions.

### Questions/tasks

- List the signs of an earthquake that the author experienced. Put these into the correct sequence.
- What dangers are faced by people experiencing an earthquake in a coastal town?
- What was the cause of the darkness that occurred on the fine November morning?
- What evidence is given that aftershocks occurred?
- What was the origin of the sulphurous smell?
- What were the possible causes of fire?
- What caused the sea level to rise and fall by so much during this time?