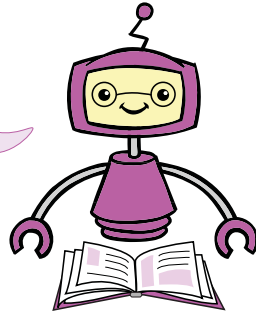


# What a disaster!

Most people don't spend a lot of time thinking about natural disasters. Sometimes, however, natural disasters can have a huge impact on our lives. Let's find out more about them and how they are reported ...



## LINKS TO:

Stage 3, Module 12

Learning Object 3: *On the other hand*

## PRIOR LEARNING:

### Stage 2

Module 12 Work Sheet 3: *This is your life*

Module 13 Work Sheet 1: *Bittersweet chocolate*

## 1 Tsunamis and earthquakes

Most of the time, our world is fairly benign, but sometimes a severe natural disaster creates havoc for people, animals and landscapes.

Occasionally, the news media might broadcast a severe disaster warning, and advise people to take precautions such as staying off the roads, remaining inside their homes, or evacuating the area.

In this work sheet you will be asked to read a news article about the 2011 tsunami in Japan. Before you begin, let's find out a little more about disaster reporting and severe natural disaster events.

### Writing about natural disasters

News reports about natural disasters usually focus on two key aspects: the disaster itself, and the impact it has on people's lives.

The example you are about to read is a newspaper report. Often, news articles employ an inverted pyramid structure. Imagine an upside-down pyramid. The main details of the story fill up the widest part of the pyramid and the supporting information is included, in order of importance, in the lower, narrower sections.

The news report you are about to read is about a tsunami. But what is a tsunami?

### Tsunamis

A tsunami is a series of enormous waves. The waves are sometimes called tidal waves, because at first they look like a rising tide. The waves can roll in very quickly, or over several hours. Tsunamis cause damage in two ways: through the smashing force of walls of water travelling at high speed, and through the power of the water draining away from the land, carrying everything with it.

Japan has recorded the highest number of tsunamis. The first one recorded was caused by the Great Hakuho Earthquake of 648AD.

### Earthquakes

An earthquake is caused by movements in the earth's tectonic plates. These movements result in a release of seismic energy on the earth's crust. We experience earthquakes as a shaking and shuddering of the land, sometimes including changes to the landscape such as cracks or splits in the earth.

The **magnitude** and **intensity** of an earthquake are measured by seismometers. An earthquake of magnitude 7 on the Richter scale causes serious damage over a large area.

These are just two of the severe weather events that can occur. You might like to do some research about others, such as tornadoes, volcanoes, or droughts.

The following text is a short newspaper report on the Japanese tsunami in 2011.

**Read the text, using all the reading strategies you have already learned in Stages 1 and 2.**

After you have read the text you will be asked to complete two kinds of reading exercises: comprehension questions and critical-thinking questions.

## **Nenek selamat sembilan hari setelah tsunami**

*Osaka. 21 Maret, 2011*

Dua orang yang ditemukan masih hidup, termasuk seorang wanita lanjut usia, telah diselamatkan dari reruntuhan sebuah rumah di kota Ishinomaki yang luluh lantak, sembilan hari setelah terjadinya gempa bumi dan tsunami yang dahsyat.

“Seorang wanita berumur 80 tahun dan seorang anak laki-laki berumur 16 tahun ditemukan di bawah puing-puing,” kata seorang juru bicara polisi dari prefektur Miyagi.

“Suhu badan mereka cukup rendah tapi mereka sadar. Rincian mengenai kondisi mereka tidak dapat diketahui dengan segera. Mereka telah dikirim ke rumah sakit.”

Sumi Abe dan cucu laki-lakinya Jin Abe sedang berada di dapur ketika gempa bumi terjadi pada 11 Maret yang lalu.

Rumah mereka ambruk sementara mereka masih berada di dalam tapi si cucu berhasil mengambil makanan dari lemari es, dengan begitu membantu mereka tetap hidup.

Diberitakan bahwa anak laki-laki itu menggigil dan menderita mati rasa di salah satu kakinya ketika mereka diselamatkan.

Hampir sebanyak 21.000 orang dinyatakan meninggal atau dianggap hilang setelah terjadinya gempa bumi berkekuatan 9.0 dan tsunami raksasa yang selanjutnya meratakan pantai timur laut Jepang.

Pada hari Sabtu, pasukan tentara mengumumkan bahwa mereka telah menemukan seorang laki-laki yang berhasil bertahan hidup selama delapan hari di sebuah rumah yang setengah hancur, tapi ternyata dia adalah seorang pengungsi yang kembali ke rumahnya setelah terjadinya bencana alam tersebut.

Suhu yang mendekati beku dan salju telah menghambat operasi penyelamatan yang dilakukan.

Prefektur Miyagi, di mana anak laki-laki dan neneknya itu ditemukan, adalah yang paling parah terkena dampak gempa bumi dan tsunami itu, dengan jumlah kematian sebanyak 4882.

(continued on following page)

## Exercise 1

---

### Reading comprehension

First, let's have a look at how well you understood the text.

**1.1 What are the main ideas in the text? Summarise, in English, the main ideas from each paragraph.**

**Introduction**

---

---

**Body paragraph 1**

---

---

**Body paragraph 2**

---

---

**Body paragraph 3**

---

---

**Body paragraph 4**

---

---

**Body paragraph 5**

---

---

**Body paragraph 6**

---

---

---

**Body paragraph 7**

---

---

(continued on following page)

---

**Body paragraph 8**

---

**Conclusion**

**1.2** Were there particular words or phrases you found difficult to understand? What strategies did you use to understand these words or phrases, or to understand the text as a whole despite not being sure what some words meant?

---

---

---

---

**1.3 When did the earthquake occur?**

---

---

**1.4 Which area of Japan suffered the most damage in the tsunami?**

---

---

**1.5 What is the relationship between the two people who were rescued?**

---

---

**1.6 How many people, in total, were rescued?**

---

---

## Exercise 2

---

### Critical thinking

It is time to start using your critical-thinking skills by asking some critical-thinking questions about the text you have read.

When answering critical-thinking questions, you should always support your answers with quotations from the text. This shows that you are focusing your attention on the text, and helps to ground your answer.

**Answer these questions in English, with quotations from the text, where appropriate.**

**2.1 What or who is the main focus of the news story? Why do you think this is the case?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**2.2 What evidence does the journalist provide to support the story? How reliable is this evidence? How relevant is it to the focus of the story?**

---

---

---

**Hint!** Consider whether the journalist could have chosen a different focus for the story and, if so, what effect this would have had on the story.

**Hint!** Consider the authority of the person providing the evidence. Are they an expert in the field, or someone with first-hand experience? If their authority comes from first-hand experience, how reliable are they as a witness?

(continued on following page)



