

Earthquakes in Taiwan

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Taiwan experiences hundreds of earthquakes every year due to its unique **geological** position. The island sits on the boundary where the Philippine Sea Plate pushes beneath the Eurasian Plate. This process, called **subduction**, creates enormous pressure underground that releases as seismic energy. Most earthquakes are too small to notice, but Taiwan's location makes it one of the most **seismically** active places on the planet.

The most **devastating** earthquake in modern Taiwanese history struck on September 21st, 1999. Known as the Chi-Chi earthquake, it measured 7.6 on the Richter **magnitude** scale. Over 2,400 people lost their lives and 50,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed. This tragedy became a turning point that transformed how Taiwan approaches building safety and earthquake preparedness.

After Chi-Chi, Taiwan invested heavily in making its buildings and **infrastructure** stronger. New codes require structures to use **reinforced** concrete and steel to withstand powerful earthquakes. Taipei 101 features a giant tuned mass damper that reduces swaying during tremors. Taiwan's commitment to engineering has made its modern buildings among the safest in any earthquake zone.

Earthquake **preparedness** is taught in schools and workplaces across Taiwan. Students practice the "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" drill multiple times each year. The government sends early warning alerts to every mobile phone seconds before strong shaking begins. Taiwan's advanced warning **systems** give people precious seconds to protect themselves before an earthquake strikes.

Living with earthquakes has shaped Taiwanese **resilience** in remarkable ways. Communities come together quickly after disasters to rebuild and support affected families. Taiwan now shares its engineering knowledge with countries facing similar **seismic** risks worldwide. Taiwan's story shows how a society can learn from tragedy and grow stronger through preparation and unity.

A. Vocabulary

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|-------------------------|--|
| 1. geological _____ | a. related to the structure of the earth |
| 2. subduction _____ | b. the state of being ready for something |
| 3. seismically _____ | c. related to or caused by earthquakes |
| 4. devastating _____ | d. organized sets of connected things working together |
| 5. magnitude _____ | e. made stronger with additional materials |
| 6. infrastructure _____ | f. the ability to recover quickly from difficulties |
| 7. reinforced _____ | g. causing great damage or destruction |
| 8. preparedness _____ | h. roads, bridges, and systems a society needs |
| 9. systems _____ | i. the size or strength of an earthquake |
| 10. resilience _____ | j. when one plate slides under another |

B. True or False

1. Taiwan sits on the boundary of two tectonic plates. ____
2. The Chi-Chi earthquake happened in 2001. ____
3. The Chi-Chi earthquake measured 7.6 on the Richter scale. ____
4. Over two thousand people died in the Chi-Chi earthquake. ____
5. Taipei 101 has a tuned mass damper. ____
6. Taiwan does not send earthquake warning alerts to phones. ____
7. Students practice earthquake drills in schools. ____
8. Taiwan's building codes were not changed after Chi-Chi. ____
9. Taiwan shares its earthquake engineering knowledge with other countries. ____

C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: geological, subduction, devastating, magnitude, infrastructure, reinforced, resilience

1. Taiwan experiences many earthquakes because of its unique _____ position.
2. The process called _____ creates enormous pressure underground.
3. The Chi-Chi earthquake was the most _____ in modern Taiwanese history.
4. The earthquake measured seven point six on the Richter _____ scale.
5. Taiwan invested heavily in making its _____ much stronger.

D. Comprehension Questions

1. Why does Taiwan have so many earthquakes?
2. When did the Chi-Chi earthquake happen and how strong was it?
3. What changes did Taiwan make to buildings after the Chi-Chi earthquake?
4. How does Taiwan warn people about earthquakes?
5. What is the 'Drop, Cover, and Hold On' drill?

E. Discussion Questions

1. How would you prepare your home and family for an earthquake?
2. Why is it important for countries to share disaster knowledge with each other?
3. Do you think living in an earthquake zone makes people stronger? Why or why not?

Answer Key

Earthquakes in Taiwan — Teacher Reference Only

A. Vocabulary: 1-e, 2-f, 3-g, 4-h, 5-a, 6-i, 7-c, 8-j, 9-b, 10-d

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-F, 3-T, 4-T, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-F, 9-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-geological, 2-subduction, 3-devastating, 4-magnitude, 5-infrastructure

D. Comprehension:

1. It sits on the boundary of two tectonic plates
2. September 21, 1999, magnitude 7.6
3. New building codes, reinforced concrete, steel framing
4. Early warning alerts sent to mobile phones
5. An earthquake safety drill practiced in schools