



Natural disasters: Which natural disaster has the largest impact of human life?



Key Knowledge

A disaster is a sudden accident which causes significant damage to the landscape or loss of life. They can be human disasters or naturally occurring disasters – in this unit we look at naturally occurring disasters.

A natural disaster causes loss of life or property damage, leaves some economic damage after it has been completed and can even effect people emotionally and mentally.

The Earth's surface is called the crust. It is made up of different rocky sections called tectonic plates, which fit together like a puzzle covering earth. Tectonic plates are located all over the world. They cover the Earth's inner layers and act as a sort of shell below the ground and the sea. The plates that are below the continents (land) are known as continental plates. The plates that are covered by ocean are called oceanic plates. These are thinner and heavier.

Most natural disasters are impossible to prevent. The forces of nature that cause them are beyond the control of humans. Their effects, however, may be reduced in several ways: by preparing for natural disasters, by preventing them where possible, and by reducing the impact they have on people.

Key Vocabulary and Phrases

Converge	Two tectonic plates pushing together
Divergent boundaries	Two tectonic plates moving apart. It can cause earthquakes and magma to rise to the surface which can form a new crust
Volcanologist	Volcanologists are Science professionals who study volcanos
Phenomenon	A naturally occurring and unusual event
Tectonic plate	The outer part of Earth is made up of 12 large irregularly-shaped slabs of rock called 'plates'
Ring of fire	A path along the Pacific Ocean characterized by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes. The majority of Earth's volcanoes and earthquakes take place along the Ring of Fire.
Richter scale	The Richter magnitude scale is a scale of numbers used to tell the size of earthquakes.
Subduction	The sideways and downward movement of the edge of a plate of the earth's crust into the mantle beneath another plate