**FORCES IN NATURE**

Tremendous forces are at work in the Earth - building up, breaking down and carrying away material. The Earth’s crust can be altered by forces of nature that cause:

* volcanoes
* earthquakes
* folding
* faulting

Volcanoes

Most volcanoes can be found near plate boundaries. They are formed when huge forces within the mantle cause one plate to be forced down below another and in the process melt rock from the heat the force produces. This melted rock is the magma that forces its way to the surface.

Earthquakes

Earthquakes are generally caused by the movement of the crustal plates. This results in a tremor if there is a small movement or a shock if there is a large movement.

The exact point at where an earthquake occurs is called the focus. The point on the earth’s surface directly above the focus is called the epicentre. If the epicentre is under or near the ocean a tsunami could be produced similar to the one that occur on Boxing Day 2004.