



ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

GLOSSARY

earthquake – a short period of time when the ground shakes because of geological movements deep below the surface, often causing damage, injuries, and/or death

* People living in southern California experience many small earthquakes over the course of their lives.

to occur – to happen; to take place

* Police are trying to determine exactly when the murder occurred.

seismologist – a scientist who studies earthquakes and the movement of the earth

* Seismologists say a major earthquake will happen here sometime within the next 50 years, but they can't provide a more specific date or time.

magnitude – the size of something; how big or small something is

* If they understood the real magnitude of the problem, they would be much more concerned with finding a solution.

Richter scale – a number-based system for measuring and reporting the size and strength of earthquakes

* The earthquake was only 2.0 on the Richter scale, so we couldn't really feel it.

epicenter – the center of an earthquake; the exact point on the earth's surface where an earthquake is strongest

* Although it was a large earthquake, it didn't cause very much damage, because there weren't any cities near the epicenter.

fault – fault line; a large crack or long hole in the earth's surface where parts of the earth are moving away from each other

* I would never want to live near the San Andreas fault.

aftershock – one of many small earthquakes that happens soon after a large earthquake

* After the earthquake, people were warned not to go back into their houses until all the aftershocks had ended.



ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

high-intensity – very strong and powerful, but normally lasting for only a short period of time

* If you want to lose weight, is it better to do a short, high-intensity workout or a longer, low-intensity workout?

to predict – to say what will happen in the future

* If we could predict the future of the stock market, we'd be rich.

damage – harm; what results when things are broken or destroyed

* The flooding caused a lot of damage to their carpet and furniture.

to be declared – to officially be named something or categorized in a particular way

* War between the two sides was declared in 1842.

disaster area – a geographical area where there has been a lot of damage, injuries, and/or death, usually as the result of a natural disaster or disease

* After the strong tornadoes, much of the Midwest was declared a disaster area.

to send aid – to send money, food, medical supplies, and other important things to another country or an area that is in an emergency and needs a lot of help

* Which countries sent aid to Haiti after the earthquake in January 2010?

relief effort – an organized attempt to send money, food, medical supplies, and other important things to another country or area that is in an emergency and needs a lot of help, usually organized at an international level

* Do you think the relief efforts can prevent people from dying in the famine?

UN – United Nations; a very large international organization that tries to solve global problems

* Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish are the official languages of the UN.



ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these would cause the most damage?
 - a) A high-intensity earthquake.
 - b) An aftershock.
 - c) A relief effort.
2. Where would an earthquake be felt most strongly?
 - a) At the epicenter.
 - b) Along the faults.
 - c) In a disaster area.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

fault

The word “fault,” in this podcast, means a large crack or long hole in the earth’s surface where parts of the earth are moving away from each other: “You’d be a fool to build your home near a fault.” The word “fault” is also used to talk about who should be blamed for something bad that happens: “It’s my fault that we don’t have enough money to pay the bills. If I hadn’t bought that new big-screen TV, we’d have more savings in the bank.” The phrase “at fault” is also used to describe the person who is responsible for something bad that has happened: “Which driver was at fault in the accident?” Finally, a “fault” is someone’s personal weakness: “Her greatest fault is that she’s impatient.”

relief

In this podcast, the phrase “relief effort” means an organized attempt to send money, food, medical supplies, and other important things to another country or area that is in an emergency and needs a lot of help, usually organized at an international level: “Hundreds of doctors are going into the country as part of the relief effort.” When talking about emotions, “relief” is the good feeling when a lot of fear, pain, or worry has ended: “Everyone smiled with relief when the police announced that they had found the little girl.” The phrase “pain relief” describes the reduction or removal of pain: “These pills should provide some pain relief while your broken bones are healing.” Finally, when talking about maps, the phrase “in relief” describes a map that shows the different heights of things: “Do you have a map that shows these mountains in relief?”



ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, many “nonprofit organizations” (organizations that exist to help others or to serve a cause, not to make money) provide disaster relief services. Some of these organizations work “domestically” (within the United States), others work in specific countries or regions, and others work anywhere in the world.

The American Red Cross is probably the best-known “humanitarian” (intending to help people) organization. It “responds” (reacts) to all kinds of emergencies. For example, after Hurricane Katrina, it provided bottled water, food, and “tents” (temporary shelters; a shelter made of fabric that people can use to sleep in) for the “victims” (people affected by a disaster). The American Red Cross also helps disaster victims find their friends and family members if they have been separated.

The Salvation Army is a nonprofit organization that “primarily” (mostly) helps Americans meet their “basic needs” by assisting poor people with food, water, and housing. However, it also has disaster response teams that work in specific American communities when they need help.

World Vision is a Christian relief organization that tries to improve the lives of children living in “poverty” (without money) everywhere in the world and especially in disaster areas. It asks individuals to “sponsor” a child, sending a certain amount of money each month to cover the costs of giving that child food, water, medicine, and education.

Catholic Charities works within the United States to reduce poverty and support families and communities, “regardless of” (without considering) their religious beliefs. The organization provides “technical assistance” (specialized knowledge) and “financial assistance” (money) during domestic disasters.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – a



ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 614: Experiencing an Earthquake.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 614. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Download a Learning Guide for this episode that will give you all of the definitions, sample sentences, additional vocabulary, comprehension questions, cultural notes, and a complete transcript of everything we say on this episode.

This episode is a dialogue between Jamal and Keisha. They're talking about something which is very common to many parts of the world, including Los Angeles: earthquakes. We'll go over some of the vocabulary related to that topic. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Jamal: Did you feel that?

Keisha: Was that an earthquake?

Jamal: Yes, I think so. Turn on the news.

Newsreader: "Reports are coming in about an earthquake that occurred at 4:35 p.m. in the downtown area. We spoke with a seismologist at the Earthquake Center and learned that the earthquake had a magnitude of 3.2 on the Richter scale. The epicenter was near downtown, along one of the major faults, and the seismologist warns that there will be some aftershocks."

Keisha: Phew! I'm glad the earthquake wasn't a high-intensity one. I wish they could predict more accurately when those earthquakes are going to happen.

Jamal: Yeah, me, too. I've looked around the house and don't see any damage, though. I guess our house won't be declared a disaster area.

Keisha: Don't be too sure. Considering the mess you've made in kitchen, it could easily be called a disaster area.



ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

Jamal: In that case, will you be sending aid? I think I'm too tired to do the dishes.

Keisha: You won't be getting any aid from me. If you're hoping for a relief effort, you'd better ask the UN.

[end of dialogue]

Jamal begins by saying, "Did you feel that?" Keisha says, "Was that an earthquake?" An "earthquake" is a short period of time when the ground shakes or moves because there is some sort of what we would call geological movement underneath the ground. Most places that experience earthquakes often have earthquakes that are very small or minor. I feel an earthquake here in Los Angeles maybe once a year, usually it's small, maybe twice a year. It depends on where you live exactly, but that's about average, although there are many small earthquakes that most people don't feel that are taking place all the time, at least that's what I've read.

Keisha asks if it was an earthquake; she wasn't sure. Usually you can tell. Sometimes if you look over at, for example, a lamp and you see the string that you use to turn on the lamp is moving back and forth, well that's a sign that there was something that moved the whole house or the whole apartment. Jamal says, "Yes, I think so (I think it was an earthquake). Turn on the news," meaning turn on the radio or the television to see if there is a news report. Nowadays, we would probably just turn on the computer and look on the Internet.

Next, a newscaster, who sounds surprisingly like Jamal, gives us the news. A "newscaster" is someone on the television or that you hear on radio that reads the news to you – tells you what the news is. The newscaster says, "Reports (information) are coming in about an earthquake that occurred at 4:35 p.m. in the downtown area." "Reports are coming in" means we are receiving information from different places. The earthquake "occurred" (it happened; it took place) at 4:35 p.m., in the afternoon, in the downtown area. "We spoke with a seismologist at the Earthquake Center and learned that the earthquake had a magnitude of 3.2 on the Richter scale." A "seismologist" (seismologist) is a scientist who studies earthquakes – who studies the movements of the earth. Here in Southern California there are seismologists at California Institute of Technology, or what we call here Cal Tech, and usually after an earthquake there is a seismologist that is interviewed from this area – this university research center. Here, the seismologist is interviewed and says that the earthquake had a



ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

magnitude of 3.2. “Magnitude” (magnitude) is how big or small something is; it’s the size of something, usually used in talking about things like earthquakes. Or, it can also be used to describe a problem: “The magnitude of the problem is huge (is large).” The magnitude of the earthquake is how powerful it is, and there’s a way of measuring this called the Richter scale. The “Richter,” which is the name of the person who helped invent it, is a system for measuring the size of earthquakes. A 3.2 is not a serious earthquake. If it’s 5-6-7, these are large and potentially very damaging earthquakes – earthquakes that could cause a lot of damage: people getting hurt, buildings falling down, and so forth.

Well, this was a small earthquake, a 3.2. “The epicenter,” the newscaster continues, “was near downtown.” The “epicenter” (epicenter) is where the earthquakes started; it’s like the center of the earthquake, the place in the ground where it started. Earthquakes are caused, as you probably know, by the movement of what we call tectonic plates. These are parts of the earth that move back, or can move back and forth and that creates the movement, which is the earthquake. The epicenter was downtown – near downtown along one of the major faults. A “fault” (fault) here means or is short for a “fault line,” which is a crack or a long hole in the earth, where the earth is moving away from each other so it opens up the earth. That’s a fault – that’s the manifestation, I should say, of a fault; that’s how you can see where a fault is, but there isn’t necessarily a hole in the ground right where the fault is. There are earthquake faults – areas that would likely have an earthquake all around Southern California, as well as Northern California – although we’re less interested in them! The biggest fault here is called the San Andreas fault. “Fault” has some other meanings in English, very different meanings, and those can be found in the Learning Guide.

The newscaster continues by saying that the seismologist warns that there will be some aftershocks. “Aftershocks” (one word) are small earthquakes that happen after a large earthquake. So when there’s a large earthquake, the earth isn’t done moving – it hasn’t stopped moving completely typically, and there are additional earthquakes that could happen an hour, two hours, perhaps even days from the original, large earthquake.

Now we’re back to Keisha and Jamal. Keisha says, “Phew!” which is just a way of expressing relief. “Phew! I’m glad the earthquake wasn’t a high-intensity one.” “High-intensity” means a strong, a powerful one. It lasts usually a short time, but it is very powerful. This was not a high-intensity earthquake. Keisha says, “I wish they could predict more accurately when those earthquakes are going to happen.” “To predict” means to say what is going to happen in the future. Seismologists are trying to get better at predicting when earthquakes will



ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

take place so that they can warn people in advance, but unfortunately the science is not yet sufficiently advanced to do that.

Jamal says, “Yeah, me, too,” meaning I agree, I wish also the seismologists could predict more accurately. Jamal says, “I’ve looked around the house and I don’t see any damage (any harm).” “Damage” is what results when things are broken or destroyed. He says, “I guess our house won’t be declared a disaster area.” “To be declared” is a formal way of saying to be officially named something or to be put in a certain category. A “disaster area” is an area where there has been a lot of damage – people have been hurt; people have died – usually because of what we would call a natural disaster. A “disaster” (disaster) is when there is a large event that harms or hurts many people or causes a lot of damage. Sometimes we use “disaster” to describe a situation where everything went wrong: “How was your date last night with Julie?” and you say, “Oh, it was a disaster! She talked about her ex-boyfriend the whole night.” Here, however, “disaster” is used in the more traditional way. In the United States when there is a lot of damage due to a natural disaster, which would be an earthquake, a flood, tornadoes, a hurricane, anything that is caused by the forces of nature, the government will sometimes declare an area a disaster area, and that makes it eligible – that qualifies it – that means that it can receive additional money and help from the government.

Jamal says that the house is not damaged and will not be declared a disaster area. Keisha says, “Don’t be too sure. Considering the mess you’ve made in kitchen, it could easily be called a disaster area.” Here, we’re seeing the other use of the word “disaster” to describe a very negative situation. In this case, Jamal has made a mess – he has made the kitchen dirty, and that, Keisha says, is also a disaster area. Jamal, joking of course, says, “In that case, will you be sending aid?” “Aid” (aid) is help. In a disaster it’s usually food, medical supplies, other things that a country needs or an area needs after a disaster: drinking water, money, and so forth. To “send aid,” then, would be to send those things to the disaster area.

Jamal is joking, saying that he needs aid to clean up the kitchen. He says, “I think I’m too tired to do the dishes.” Keisha says, “You won’t be getting any aid from me (I’m not going to help you). If you’re hoping for a relief effort, you’d better ask the UN.” “Relief” (relief) is a change in a situation, in a bad situation things get better. “Relief efforts” are when organizations and governments try to organize aid. They have a committee – they have leaders that organize the money, the food, the medical supplies, and other things. Usually after a major disaster – and there have been unhappily many in recent years – there is a relief



ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

effort organized by different countries, by organizations such as the Red Cross. The “UN” is the United Nations, which of course is the large international organization that tries to solve problems among nations, as well as help when there is a disaster. Keisha, continuing the joke, says that there is going to be no relief effort and that Jamal should ask the United Nations to help him with the disaster area he created in the kitchen.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Jamal: Did you feel that?

Keisha: Was that an earthquake?

Jamal: Yes, I think so. Turn on the news.

Newscaster: “Reports are coming in about an earthquake that occurred at 4:35 p.m. in the downtown area. We spoke with a seismologist at the Earthquake Center and learned that the earthquake had a magnitude of 3.2 on the Richter scale. The epicenter was near downtown, along one of the major faults, and the seismologist warns that there will be some aftershocks.”

Keisha: Phew! I’m glad the earthquake wasn’t a high-intensity one. I wish they could predict more accurately when those earthquakes are going to happen.

Jamal: Yeah, me, too. I’ve looked around the house and don’t see any damage, though. I guess our house won’t be declared a disaster area.

Keisha: Don’t be too sure. Considering the mess you’ve made in kitchen, it could easily be called a disaster area.

Jamal: In that case, will you be sending aid? I think I’m too tired to do the dishes.

Keisha: You won’t be getting any aid from me. If you’re hoping for a relief effort, you’d better ask the UN.

[end of dialogue]



English as a Second Language Podcast
www.eslpod.com

ESL Podcast 614 – Experiencing an Earthquake

We hope this episode will not be declared a disaster area. We thank Dr. Lucy Tse for writing it.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us again on ESL Podcast.

English as a Second Language Podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan, copyright 2010 by the Center for Educational Development.