

GEOGRAPHY · GRADES 4–5

Volcanoes and Earthquakes

Plate tectonics in action

Key terms

Tectonic plates	Huge slabs of Earth's crust that float on the molten mantle.
Plate boundary	Where two plates meet — most volcanoes and earthquakes happen here.
Magma	Molten rock below the surface.
Lava	Magma that has reached the surface.
Crater	A bowl-shaped opening at the top of a volcano.
Active	Has erupted recently and could erupt again.
Dormant	Has not erupted for a long time but might in future.
Extinct	Has not erupted for thousands of years and won't again.
Richter scale	Measures earthquake strength (each step = 10× more powerful).
Ring of Fire	A ring of volcanoes around the Pacific Ocean.

