

# "Earthquake!"

## CHARACTERS

Rick Terscale  
Andreas Fault  
Mag Nitude  
Moe Shun  
Shay King



- Rick:** Hello, and welcome to the most rockin' game show around: Earthquake! I'm your host, Rick Terscale. Let's meet today's contestants, shall we?
- Andreas:** I'm Andreas Fault, and I'm a restaurant manager from Cantwell, Alaska.
- Mag:** I'm Mag Nitude, and I'm a computer expert from Glen Rock, New Jersey.
- Moe:** My name is Moe Shun, and I'm a geologist at California State University.
- Shay:** I'm Shay King, and I run a science camp in Twin Falls, Idaho.
- Rick:** Okay, contestants, get ready for your first question. For 100 points, please hit your buzzers if you know the answer to: WHAT IS AN EARTHQUAKE?

*(Each player hits a buzzer, but only Andreas's buzzer lights up.)*

- Rick:** Okay, Andreas. Please tell us: WHAT IS AN EARTHQUAKE?



**Andreas:** An earthquake is a shaking of the ground that can cause dishes to rattle, buildings to fall, and roads to crack and split apart.

**Rick:** You're right! Our next question, for 100 points is: WHAT CAUSES AN EARTHQUAKE?

*(Mag's buzzer lights up.)*

**Mag:** The earth is held up by four elephants that stand on the back of a turtle.

**Moe, Shay,  
and Andreas:** WHAT?

**Mag:** The elephants stand on the turtle, and the turtle stands on top of a cobra, which isn't easy. Have you ever tried to stand and keep your balance on a snake? When any of the animals move, the earth shakes.

**Moe:** That's not science, it's legend. It's a way people used to explain earthquakes long ago, before scientists found out what really caused them.

**Mag:** Man, I've believed that my whole life. What really does cause an earthquake, then?

**Rick:** Contestants, please tell me: WHAT CAUSES AN EARTHQUAKE?

*(Shay's buzzer lights up.)*

**Shay:** Inside the earth, there are huge slabs of rock called plates. Sometimes a plate slides out of place suddenly and pushes against another plate. When this happens, pressure builds up and causes an explosion inside the earth. The explosion makes the ground shake and sometimes crack.



**Rick:** Correct! The next question, for 200 points is: HOW LONG DOES AN EARTHQUAKE LAST?

*(Moe's buzzer lights up.)*

**Moe:** There is no set time. An earthquake might last only seconds or it might go on for one minute or more.

**Rick:** Right! Next question, again for 200: HOW DO SCIENTISTS COMPARE ONE EARTHQUAKE TO ANOTHER?

*(Andreas's buzzer lights up.)*

**Andreas:** Scientists use tools to detect the earth's motion. The more motion a quake causes, the worse the damage. What I mean is, earthquakes that cause the earth to shake a lot create more damage to the ground, buildings, and roads than earthquakes that cause only gentle vibrations.

**Rick:** That's right, Andreas!

**Moe:** *(raising his hand)* I'd like to add to that if I may, Rick.

**Mag:** *(staring at Moe)* You can't speak out in a game show, Moe. You have to wait until Rick asks a question.

**Moe:** I'm not looking for points, Mag. I just want to add something to what Andreas said.

**Andreas:** *(insulted)* I just got 200 points for what I said. I think it was good enough.

**Moe:** Well, you didn't say anything about the Richter Scale.

**Andreas:** I wasn't asked about the Richter Scale. I'm just here to answer the questions.



**Rick:** (*getting nervous*) Be calm, everyone, and we'll get to it!  
Now, on to my next question . . .

(*Mag and Andreas glare at Moe as all four contestants get ready to press their buzzers.*)

**Rick:** For 500 points: WHAT IS THE RICHTER SCALE?

(*Moe's buzzer lights up.*)

**Mag, Andreas,  
and Shay:**

Well, that's not fair! Of course he's going to get the answer! He gave you the idea!

**Moe:** (*ignoring them*) For 500 points, Rick, the Richter scale is one of the measurements scientists use to tell how strong an earthquake was. People won't even feel an earthquake that measures 2 or less on the Richter scale. An earthquake that measures 8 or higher, though, causes the ground to shake violently and crack apart, causing enormous damage.

**Shay:** (*raising her hand*) I'd like to add something. Let's say we talk about which earthquakes happen most often in a year: ones you can feel or ones you can't feel?

**Rick:** (*looking through his note cards, nervously*) I don't see that question on my cards, Shay.

**Shay:** (*smacks her buzzer*) For 1,000 points, I say that the earthquakes that happen most often are those you can't feel—the ones that score 2 or under on the Richter scale. More than 600,000 of these happen every year, while fewer than 20 earthquakes per year score 7 or higher on the Richter Scale.

(*Andreas's buzzer lights up.*)



**Andreas:** For 5,000 points, I'd like to add this. Can earthquakes be predicted or prevented? The answer is no. Scientists know what causes earthquakes, but they can't tell when one is coming or where it's going to be.

*(Moe's buzzer lights up.)*

**Moe:** For 10,000 points, I'd like to be more specific! Scientists can't prevent or predict earthquakes, but they can tell where on the earth quakes are most likely to happen. Places where the earth's crust is already cracked, especially places where earthquakes have already happened, are the most likely places for quakes to occur.

*(At this point, all of the contestants frantically press their buttons, wanting to speak next.)*

**Rick:** Contestants, get hold of yourselves! This is a game show! I ask the questions! I award the points! I AM THE HOST!

*(Mag, Moe, Shay, and Andreas leave their buttons and get out of their seats, facing each other and arguing.)*

**Rick:** *(Alarmed, he looks at the audience.)* Well, folks, that seems to be it for today. Tune in tomorrow for another unsteady episode of Earthquake!

 THE END 