

Year 5/6

Reading

Comprehension

**Armed Forces Day**

# Armed Forces Day

This year, Armed Forces Day in the UK is on Saturday 25th June. People celebrate the men and women who serve and have served in the armed forces.

## What Is Armed Forces Day?

Armed Forces Day (formerly Veterans Day) in the United Kingdom is a chance to show support for the men and women who make up the armed forces community, from currently serving troops to reserves and veterans. It is important to remember the difference between Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Day. Armed Forces Day generally focuses on celebrating living current and ex-servicemen and women, whereas Remembrance Day focuses on honouring the dead service men and women.



## The Origins of Armed Forces Day

Veterans Day was first observed in 2006 and the name was officially changed to Armed Forces Day in 2009. Following the first celebrations in 2007, Jim Devine, the Member of Parliament for Livingston, called for Armed Forces Day to be a public holiday because he thought we should recognise the outstanding contributions which veterans have made to the country. Although an official event, it is not yet a public holiday in the UK.

## When Does Armed Forces Day Take Place?

Each year, Armed Forces Day takes place on the last Saturday of June. The celebrations for Armed Forces Day begin on the Monday prior to this, when the Armed Forces Day flag is raised on buildings and famous landmarks around the country. The date of the last Saturday in June was chosen as it coincides with the date when the first Victoria Cross was awarded in London in 1857. The Victoria Cross is a special medal presented to armed forces personnel for outstanding bravery.



### **Where Does Armed Forces Day Take Place?**

Each year, the Armed Forces Day celebrations take place in a host town in the UK. It is called the National Event. In addition to this, hundreds of smaller, celebratory events also take place in other locations across the country.

### **How Is Armed Forces Day Celebrated?**

There are many ways for people, communities and organisations across the country to show their support and get involved, from attending an event or throwing a party, to arranging a local event. An estimated 50,000 people attend the celebrations in the host location each year.

The day-long celebrations, at the National Event and other locations, include events such as:

- The presentation of medals to living ex-servicemen and women
- Military parades
- Activities and artistic performances staged on land, sea and air
- Drumhead services
- Fly-overs by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, the Red Arrows and Helicopter Formation
- Arena displays including the Royal Marine Commando Display Team and the Royal Marine Band
- Military displays representing all of the armed forces
- Firework displays

### **Why Do We Celebrate Armed Forces Day?**

Showing support for the armed forces provides a much valued morale boost for the troops and their families. Plans for a Veterans Day were announced in February 2006 by the then-Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, who said the aim was to ensure the contribution of veterans was never forgotten. You can find out more about what they are doing at home and around the world by visiting the official sites of the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force.







### **Reservists**

Reservists give up their spare time to serve in the reserve forces, balancing their civilian life with a military career to ensure that should their country require them, they would be ready to serve.

The reserve forces make up approximately one sixth of our armed forces personnel and as such, are integral to protecting the nation's security at home and overseas.



### **Veterans**

A veteran is anyone who has served in the HM Armed Forces at any time (including National Service and reserve forces). Armed Forces Day celebrates their continued role within the military community.



### **Cadets**

The Cadet Forces (Sea Cadets, Army Cadets, Air Cadets and the Combined Cadet Force) currently support over 130,000 young people in more than 3,000 locations across the UK. Cadets learn life and career building skills, as well as gaining vocational qualifications.



# Armed Forces Day Questions

1. What was the original name of Armed Forces Day?

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2. What is the purpose of Armed Forces Day?

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3. How do we know that MPs believe Armed Forces Day is so important?

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4. How is Armed Forces Day different to Remembrance Day?

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5. Why is the date of Armed Forces Day significant?

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6. What is the main difference between each of the Armed Forces?

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7. Why are the reservists so important?

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8. What evidence tells us that becoming a cadet would be very fulfilling?

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# Armed Forces Day Answers

1. What was the original name of Armed Forces Day?

**Veterans Day.**

2. What is the purpose of Armed Forces Day?

**To show support for the men and women who make up the armed forces community, from currently serving troops to reserves and veterans.**

3. How do we know that MPs believe Armed Forces Day is so important?

**Due to the fact that on 25th June 2007, Jim Devine, the Member of Parliament for Livingston, called for Armed Forces Day to be a public holiday, because he believed that we should recognise the outstanding contribution that veterans have made to the country.**

4. How is Armed Forces Day different to Remembrance Day?

**Armed Forces Day generally focuses on celebrating living current and ex-servicemen and women, whereas Remembrance Day focuses on honouring the dead service men and women.**

5. Why is the date of Armed Forces Day significant?

**Due to the fact that it coincides with the date when the first Victoria Cross was awarded in London in 1857.**

6. What is the main difference between each of the Armed Forces?

**Where they are based – land, sea or air.**

7. Why are the reservists so important?

**The Reserve Forces make up approximately one sixth of our armed forces personnel and as such, are integral to protecting the nation's security at home and overseas.**

8. What evidence tells us that becoming a cadet would be very fulfilling?

**Cadets learn life and career building skills as well as gaining vocational qualifications. Also it is clearly popular because over 130,000 young people in more than 3,000 locations across the UK are involved.**



**Back to Earth with  
a BUMP!**

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# BACK TO EARTH WITH A BUMP!

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Reported by Amanda Kelper, Media Correspondent, London

Last week, British astronaut Tim Peake returned home from an incredible six month stay aboard the International Space Station (ISS), alongside his crewmates Yuri Malenchenko and Timothy Kopra. He is the first British astronaut to have lived on the ISS.

The men were launched into space on 15th December 2015 and in the months before take-off, they trained intensively for their trip. Training involved learning to speak Russian, spending 12 days under the sea and a winter survival expedition.

During their space mission, the astronauts conducted experiments, tested out new technology and inspired the next generation of space travellers. Peake told reporters that the highlight of his trip was a spacewalk where he had to make a repair on the space station. Whilst he was 400km away from his home, Tim also ran the equivalent of the London Marathon on his treadmill.

Having circled the planet nearly 3,000 times in 186 days, the crew returned home to Earth via a Soyuz capsule, which reached speeds of up to 28,000 kilometres per hour (25 times the speed of sound). The touchdown was bumpy due to high winds, however the astronauts landed safely near the town of Zhezkazgan in Kazakhstan. They all returned in good health. Having arrived back on solid ground, the astronauts were pulled out of the capsule and carried as their leg muscles were too weak to walk. Whilst sitting in their space suits, the men were checked over by medical staff. During these checks, Peake was asked how it felt to be home, 'The smells of Earth are so strong and it's wonderful to be back in the fresh air.'



*Landing with a bump! Tim Peake lands safely in Kazakhstan.*

Tim later flew from Kazakhstan to the headquarters of the European Space Agency in Cologne, Germany where he is recovering and adjusting to life back on Earth. Scientists are carrying out tests to see how his body has been affected by his time in space.

In a recent press conference, Peake commented on how he'd missed family and friends, and even the rain. Tim expressed how much he was now looking forward to spending some quality time with his family. When asked if he'd return to space in the future, he replied, '...in a heartbeat.'

His service to science has earned him an honour from the Queen. Peake was made a CMG, or companion of the order of St Michael and St George. In response, Tim said, 'I am only one privileged person in a complex team of technicians, scientists, engineers, educators, trainers and flight directors, all working in pursuit of one of the greatest scientific and technical challenges of our time - exploring our solar system for the benefit of people on Earth. This award is for them.'

## Comprehension Questions

Answer questions in full sentences.

1. How long had Peake been living on the ISS?

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2. Why do you think Peake needed to learn Russian before he went?

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3. Write down **three** jobs Tim had to do on the mission.

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4. What made the touchdown bumpy?

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5. Why were the astronauts carried out of the capsule?

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6. What did Peake notice once he'd left the capsule?

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7. What was hard about being on the ISS for so long?

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8. Why do you think Tim dedicated his special honour to the entire team?

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9. Give two reasons why space travel is important.

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10. Why has a picture and caption been added to the report?

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# Back To Earth With A Bump! **Answers**

1. How long had Peake been living on the ISS?  
**Tim Peake had been living on the ISS for six months.**
2. Why do you think Peake needed to learn Russian before he went?  
**He needed to learn Russian as one of the other astronauts was Russian. He needed to be able to communicate with him.**
3. Write down **three** jobs Tim had to do on the mission.  
**He conducted experiments, tested out new technology and did necessary repairs on the ISS.**
4. What made the touchdown bumpy?  
**The touchdown was bumpy due to high winds.**
5. Why were the astronauts carried out of the capsule?  
**They were carried as their leg muscles were too weak to walk.**
6. What did Peake notice once he'd left the capsule?  
**He noticed the smells of Earth and the fresh air.**
7. What was hard about being on the ISS for so long?  
**Tim said that being away from his family and friends for such a long time wasn't easy.**
8. Why do you think Tim dedicated his special honour to the entire team?  
**Own answers, which may include reference to his space travel mission being a team effort.**
9. Give two reasons why space travel is important.  
**Own answers, which may include to make new discoveries, to find out if there's life in other parts of the Solar System, to conduct important experiments in space, etc.**
10. Why has a picture and caption been added to the report?  
**It has been added to make the report more eye-catching and interesting to the reader.**

# Battle of the Somme

# Battle of the Somme

The Battle of the Somme took place during the First World War in France by the River Somme. It began on 1st July 1916 and ended on 18th November 1916. The French army had lost many soldiers to the German army at Verdun. The British Army were ordered to help the French army defend themselves against the Germans.

## Trenches

During WWI, huge trenches were dug into the ground wherever there was a battle. The soldiers would live in the trenches and, when ordered to, had to climb up out of the trenches and run towards the enemy troops.

This was called "going over the top". Trenches were muddy, narrow and damp.

## The British Plan

The plan was to fire at the German lines and then advance towards them on foot and fight face to face.

Many British commanders did not think this was a very good strategy, but others like the British General, Douglas Haig, thought it was the best thing to do.

On that first day, the British Army fired 1 738 000 shells at the German trenches. Then they advanced towards them. It was catastrophic.

The Germans were hardly affected as they hid deep in their trenches. The British soldiers were mown down by German machine gun fire.

The British Army suffered 20 000 casualties on that first day!

It has been reported that the Germans were so horrified at the vast number of British soldiers who were killed that day that some of them refused to keep firing.

Many people in Britain were angry at the huge loss of so many young men, and called it The Lost Generation.



Back in Britain, people began to build simple war shrines in honour of the fallen soldiers.

These were simple, wooden handmade tablets with the names of the men carved into them.

# Battle of the Somme

## Did you know?

The British Army had soldiers from other countries fighting with them. The men came from Ireland, Newfoundland, South Africa and India.

## No Man's Land

The area between the British trenches and German trenches was called No Man's Land. On 14th July 1916, the British Army soldiers gathered here at night, ready to launch a massive dawn attack.

At 3.20am the British pounded the enemy lines and the Germans were taken by surprise. On 13th November 1916, the British attacked the German defences and captured 7,000 German prisoners.

## The End of the War

Winter was closing in. The terrible weather meant men were trying to fight in muddy, boggy fields. Fighting was suspended. The plan was to carry on fighting in February, but the Germans decided to retreat. The battle was officially over on 18th November 1916.

## Battle of the Somme Facts

- It had been a terrible battle, with 420 000 casualties for the British Army.
- The French lost 200 000 men.
- The Germans lost 500 000 men.
- In 141 days, the British had only advanced 7 miles.
- Many men from Britain had been grouped together in battalions from the same town. The groups were called British Pals.

Journalists were given misinformation about the battle, and reported that, "German prisoners are surrendering freely and a good many have already fallen into our hands." This was not true.



# Battle of the Somme

1. Why did the British Army become involved in the Battle of the Somme?

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2. How long did the battle last?

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3. Explain what you think the trenches were for.

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4. Explain, in your own words, what the British plan was?

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5. What does 'catastrophic' mean in this context?

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6. Why do you think the journalists were given the wrong information?

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7. What was the purpose of the war shrines?

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# Battle of the Somme

8. Why was the fighting suspended?

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9. What would have been the effect in Britain if whole battalions were wiped out?

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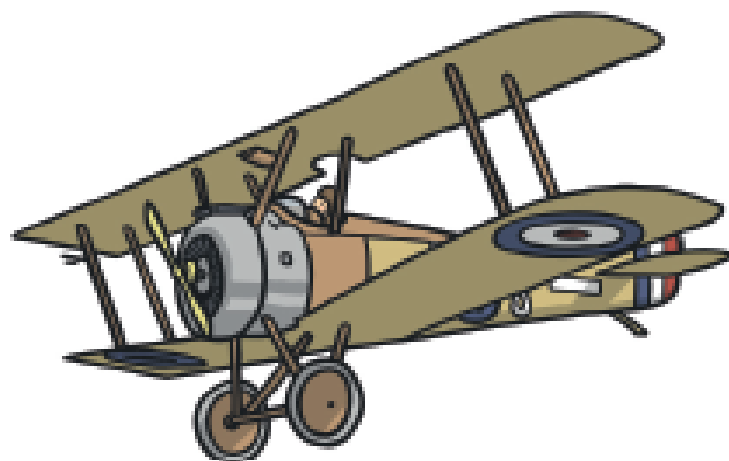
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10. What is your opinion of the Battle of the Somme? Explain your opinion.

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# Battle of the Somme Answers

## Answers

1 Why did the British Army become involved in the Battle of the Somme?

**The British were ordered to help the French defend their country from the Germans.**

2 How long did the battle last?

**Approximately 4 months.**

3 Explain what you think the trenches were for.

**The trenches were for soldiers to hide in/ stay safe from machine gun fire.**

4 Explain in your own words, what the British plan was.

**The British plan was to attack the enemy lines with gunfire and then walk over and fight them face to face.**

5 What does 'catastrophic' mean in this context?

**Catastrophic means there were huge losses of life for the British Army and they failed to defeat the enemy.**

6 Why do you think journalists were given the wrong information?

**Journalists were given the wrong information so that the British public would think the soldiers were winning and doing better than they actually were.**

7 What was the purpose of war shrines?

**To honour and remember the dead soldiers.**

8 Why was the fighting suspended?

**Because the weather was so awful and they could no longer fight in the mud.**

9 What would have been the effect in Britain if whole battalions were wiped out?

**If a battalion was wiped out, then a town could lose most, if not all of, their young men.**

10 What is your opinion of the Battle of the Somme? Explain your opinion.

**Own response, opinions must be justified.**

# **Rainforest Deforestation**

# Rainforest Deforestation

Rainforests are a very important part of our planet, giving us oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide and giving a home to 50% of the animal and plant species of the planet. Not to mention the medicines and cures that are made from the plants that grow there.

## Deforestation

Deforestation is the name given to the destruction of the rainforests and this is being done by burning them down, chopping down the trees or flooding the areas. This is happening so fast that an area the size of twenty football pitches is being destroyed every minute! If this carries on at this speed, it will take less than a hundred years to destroy all the rainforests on Earth.



### Fact File in Numbers

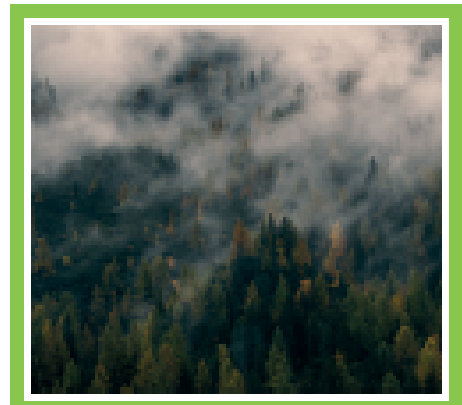
- 20% of the world's oxygen is produced in the Amazon forest.
- 28,000 species of animals are expected to become extinct in the next 25 years due to deforestation.
- 50% of the tropical rainforests that we had have already gone.

## Why are they being destroyed?

The biggest reason for clearing the rainforests is to make space for producing food, including cattle to be farmed for cheap beef and also growing large crops, such as soya beans and palm oil. In addition, other causes of deforestation, which are also related to making money include: chopping down and using the wood from the forest; building roads for mining metals, gold or diamonds; flooding areas to make dams to generate electricity and also digging for oil.

## How can they be saved?

You could help by raising money for a deforestation charity. Also, you could think about the reasons that the forests are being destroyed and how you could help. For example, the cheap beef farmed in the areas that used to be rainforest land is often used in fast food chains. Could you avoid eating fast food from these outlets? You could also check on your supermarket food labels - was it farmed in an area where deforestation is taking place? You could also use rainforest friendly wood so you know it is not a product of deforestation. Finally remember, paper comes from trees so any paper saving you can do, as well as recycling, will help the environment.



# Questions about Rainforest Deforestation

1. Name a reason not to destroy rainforests given in the first paragraph.

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2. Name **one** of the three ways given that a rainforest can be destroyed.

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3. What does 'deforestation' mean?

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4. In the fact file, what does the word 'extinct' mean?

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5. Why does saving paper help the rainforests?

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6. Why has the author used an exclamation mark in paragraph two?

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7. What **fraction** of the earth's plant and animal species live in the rainforests?

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8. What is the main reason that rainforests are being destroyed?

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9. Which rainforest produces 20% of the world's oxygen?

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10. What is your opinion about deforestation? What could you do to try and help stop it?

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## Answers

1. Name a reason not to destroy rainforests given in the first paragraph.  
**Any from: medicines, cure for cancer, 50% of animal and plant species live there, gives out oxygen, absorbs carbon dioxide.**
2. Name one of the three ways given that a rainforest can be destroyed.  
**Any from: burning, chopping down, flooding.**
3. What does 'deforestation' mean?  
**Clearing a forest area/ chopping, burning down trees/ getting rid of forests.**
4. In the fact file, what does the word 'extinct' mean?  
**None of that animal/species existing ever again/ none left.**
5. Why does saving paper help the rainforests?  
**Paper is made from wood (making it also causes more carbon footprint).**
6. Why has the author used an exclamation mark in paragraph two?  
**The rate of destruction is surprising (discuss this).**
7. What fraction of the earth's plant and animal species live in the rainforests?  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  (the text says 50%).**
8. What is the main reason that rainforests are being destroyed?  
**Food: Cheap beef, or agricultural crops including soya or palm oil.**
9. Which rainforest produces 20% of the world's oxygen?  
**The Amazon Rainforest.**
10. What is your opinion about deforestation? How could you help to stop it?  
**Open ended for discussion. Answers could discuss raising money for charities, making different choices about food and conserving paper.**

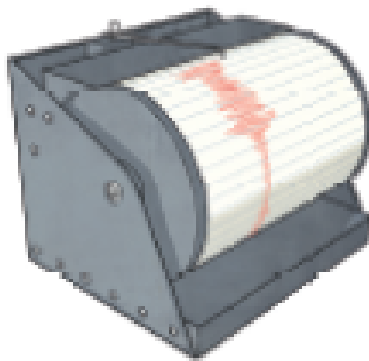
# Earthquakes



# Earthquakes

## The Earth's Crust

The Earth's crust and the top of the mantle have about twenty tectonic plates, which are like puzzle pieces covering the Earth. These plates are always moving and bumping into each other. We call the edges of the plates 'plate boundaries', which are made up of faults. These faults are where most of the world's earthquakes occur. As the plates move, the edges get stuck because they are not smooth, but the rest of the plate keeps moving. When the force is too much, it breaks free and that causes an earthquake.



## Seismograph

A seismograph (say: size-mo-graf) is a special piece of equipment that records earthquakes. Seismometers are securely fastened to the Earth, so when the ground starts to shake, the instrument's case moves too. What doesn't move is a weight that hangs on a string inside the case. When there is an earthquake, the case shakes with the ground but the weight does not, and it draws a line to show how much the ground shook. Scientists use seismograms (graphs produced by the seismograph) to measure how big each earthquake is.

## Interesting Fact

Six Italian scientists were convicted of manslaughter and sent to prison for failing to predict the 2009 L'Aquila earthquake in which 309 people died. They appealed their cases successfully and were eventually not sent to prison.

## You could try to find out:

- 1 How earthquakes are measured.
- 2 How easy they are to predict.
- 3 About other cases where prison sentences have been handed out in unusual circumstances.
- 4 How the appeals process works.

# Questions About Earthquakes

1. On what do the tectonic plates float on and how many tectonic plates are there?

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2. What can plate boundaries do when they are near each other?

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3. What is a 'fault'?

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4. Describe what causes earthquakes.

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5. What is a seismograph?

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6. How does a seismograph work?

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## Answers

### 1. On what do the tectonic plates float and how many are there?

The Mantle and there are about twenty.

### 2. What can plate boundaries do when they are near each other?

Any answer from:

- Crash into each other
- Rub against each other
- Move further apart
- Get caught and stuck
- One moves under the other

### 3. What is a 'fault'?

Any answer that suggests: The line/crack/gap between plates.

### 4. Describe what causes earthquakes.

Any answer that suggests: The plates get stuck whilst they are trying to move and eventually as they are freed, they cause a jolt which shakes the earth around it.

### 5. What is a seismograph?

Any answer that suggests: A seismograph is a special piece of equipment that records earthquakes by drawing them.

### 6. How does a seismograph work?

Any answer that suggests: Seismometers are securely fastened to the Earth, so when the ground starts to shake, the instrument's case moves too. What doesn't move is a weight that hangs on a string inside the case. When there is an earthquake, the case shakes with the ground but the weight does not, and it draws a line to show how much the ground shook.