

# What caused the Kobe earthquake and why did so many people die as a result?

At 5.40 am on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> Jan 1995, Kobe in Japan was struck by an earthquake. It lasted 20 seconds and measured 7.2 on the Richter scale.

<sup>1</sup> Many survivors were taken immediately to a central building with stockpiles of food, water and blankets.	<sup>9</sup> Volunteers dug through the rubble with their bare hands to search for victims.	<sup>17</sup> Kobe was very close to the epicentre of the earthquake.	<sup>24</sup> Stress builds up in the rocks of the Pacific and Philippines plates.
<sup>2</sup> 5,000 people died in the earthquake and 350,000 were made homeless.	<sup>10</sup> Mrs Endo was trapped under the rubble of her home and died of suffocation after 36 hours.	<sup>18</sup> Many fire engines ran out of water before the fires were put out.	<sup>25</sup> Since 1981 Japanese houses have been built to be earthquake proof.
<sup>3</sup> Gas pipes exploded and fires burnt all over the city.	<sup>11</sup> The port of Kobe, the world's largest container port, was destroyed.	<sup>19</sup> Several hospitals in the old part of Kobe were destroyed in the earthquake.	<sup>26</sup> Kazuo, helped by friends, found his mother's body at 1.20 p.m. on 19th January.
<sup>4</sup> The earthquake struck at 5.40 a.m. on Tuesday 17th January 1995.	<sup>12</sup> Mr & Mrs Endo lived in the older residential part of Kobe called Nishinomiya. Most of the people who lived here were old.	<sup>20</sup> When the ground moved some of the buildings did not follow and collapsed.	<sup>27</sup> Ambulances and fire engines were unable to reach damaged areas because the roads were blocked by collapsed buildings.
<sup>5</sup> Some buildings in central Kobe have structures which are computer controlled and adjust to earth movements.	<sup>13</sup> The Endos' son, Kazuo, lives in a new apartment block in central Kobe.	<sup>21</sup> Large areas of Kobe were blacked out because electricity lines were cut. With the smoke from the fires the search for survivors was difficult.	<sup>27</sup> When stress is released from rocks at plate boundaries by moving, waves travel through the earth's crust.
<sup>6</sup> The roof of the Endos' house was made of heavy concrete tiles.	<sup>14</sup> Underground water pipes were broken by the tremors.	<sup>22</sup> There is a Japanese saying - 'The devil will pass over a house with a good roof and move on to the next one.'	<sup>28</sup> The Japanese government and people were greatly shocked by the death and disaster.
<sup>7</sup> Southern Japan, where Kobe is located, has not had a major earthquake since 1596.	<sup>15</sup> The Endos' house was built before 1960.	<sup>23</sup> More than 600 aftershocks followed the earthquake.	<sup>30</sup> Japan has a population of 124 million and a population density of about 310 per square kilometre.
<sup>8</sup> Japan is a rich country. It is one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world.	<sup>16</sup> Mr Endo visited his son on the evening of 16th January and spent the night there.		

Cross through boxes which are not helpful to answer the questions above.

Letter C for a cause of the earthquake.

Letter D for why so many people died.