

# Big Waves!

## By Linda Ruggieri



Take a look at a world map. Can you find the Pacific Ocean? Japan is a country made up of many islands in that **ocean**. Most people in Japan live close to the waters of the Pacific.

A few years ago, people living in the Tohoku region of Japan saw something strange. Giant ocean waves were coming toward them. When the waves reached the beach, they did not stop. Streets and homes were flooded.

Giant waves like those are known as tsunamis (*soo-NAH-meess*). *Tsunami* is a Japanese word that means “harbor wave.”

What causes a tsunami? An earthquake occurs in the ocean. The land below the water shakes. That causes water to swell into giant waves. The waves travel quickly across the ocean.

The tsunami that hit Tohoku started as an earthquake in the ocean eighty miles away. The quake was very strong. The tsunami waves it created kept coming for hours. The waves destroyed ships, cars, and many buildings.

Scientists are studying the events of the Tohoku tsunami. The scientists hope to learn things that will make people safer the next time a tsunami happens.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which country was hit by a tsunami a few years ago?

- A) England
- B) the United States
- C) Japan

2. The article describes how earthquakes in the ocean can cause tsunamis. First, the land below the water shakes. What is the effect of this shaking?

- A) The water swells into giant waves.
- B) The earthquake gets bigger and bigger.
- C) The shaking land gets weaker.

3. The tsunami that hit Tohoku was very powerful.

What evidence best supports this conclusion?

- A) The tsunami waves destroyed ships, cars, and many buildings.
- B) The Tohoku tsunami started as an earthquake in the ocean eighty miles away.
- C) Tsunamis are caused by earthquakes in the ocean.

4. Most people in Japan live near the ocean. When the tsunami hit Japan, it damaged houses, ships, cars, and buildings.

Based on this evidence, what can you infer?

- A) People in Japan have figured out a way to deal with tsunamis.
- B) The Tohoku tsunami was the worst tsunami to ever hit Japan.
- C) The Tohoku tsunami probably affected a lot of people.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A) A few years ago, a tsunami hit Japan and caused lots of damage.
- B) Scientists hope to learn a lot more about tsunamis.
- C) Earthquakes are a big problem for people in Japan.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"What causes a tsunami? An earthquake occurs in the ocean. The land below the water shakes. That causes water to swell into giant waves. The waves travel quickly across the ocean."

Why does the author ask a question at the beginning of this paragraph?

- A) to show that the author does not know the answer to this question
- B) to let readers know that the next sentences will answer the question
- C) to let readers know about a question that scientists are trying to learn more about

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The tsunami waves were giant and kept coming for hours, \_\_\_\_\_ they destroyed many buildings.

- A) so
- B) because
- C) but

8. What event causes a tsunami?

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9. What were two effects that the tsunamis had on Tohoku, Japan?

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10. Scientists are studying the events of the Tohoku tsunami to find ways to keep people safe from the next tsunami. Would it also be useful for scientists to study earthquakes to keep people safe from tsunamis? Why or why not?

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