

Write your notes
about what you are
reading in this space.

Science Shorts -7

Terrifying Tsunamis

Tsunamis are massive ocean wavers caused by an undersea earthquake or a major volcanic eruption. The seafloor lifts up suddenly, displacing huge amounts of water. Tsunamis are sent out in all directions from this earthquake. The resulting wave races across the ocean at speeds of up to 800 miles per hour, which is faster than most jet airplanes.

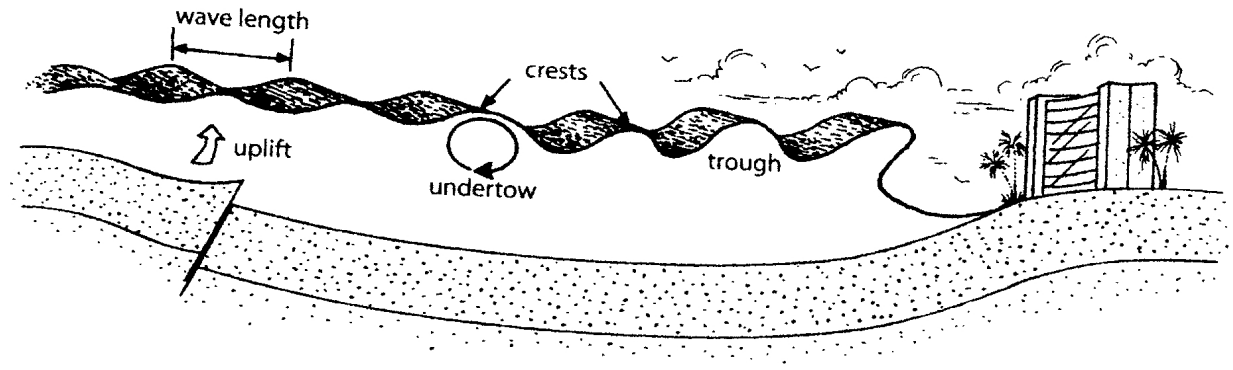
If you were on a nearby ship at sea, you probably would not even notice the wave because the water is so deep. However, the water near the shoreline is shallow. The water slows down, building up to an enormous height. When a tsunami hits the shore, it may tower more than 100 feet (30 m) high. That's taller than a ten-story building! When the monster wave hits the shore hundreds or even thousands of miles away from where the earthquake or volcano occurred it quickly floods large areas. And the undertow of the wave, the backward pull under each crest, drags people, houses and cars out to sea.

Many times, but not always the only warning of a tsunami is the rapid receding of the ocean. Then the massive wave strikes! The tsunami is not one, but a series of waves which arrive about 10 to 20 minutes apart. The waves may continue to arrive for hours.

Tsunamis are one of the most deadly natural disasters. They can destroy all life and property wherever they hit. In 1883 the Krakatoa volcano eruption caused a tsunami to wipe out the islands of Java and Sumatra. Over 36,000 people died. Only one person survived. As recently as 2004 a tsunami hit the Indian Ocean after a major undersea earthquake. In that tsunami 283,000 people died.

Most tsunamis occur in the Pacific Ocean and the first tsunami warning system was set up in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1948. This system helps to pinpoint earthquakes in the area and makes it possible to evacuate people from low-lying coastal area.

Use the reading and the diagram to write a word that describes a tsunami for each letter in the word tsunami.



Tsunami

**T
S
U
N
A
M
I**