

Earthquake Simulation Script

Imagine that you hear a low, rumbling, roaring sound. The noise builds, getting louder and louder, for a few seconds. Then, Wham! There's a terrific jolt. You feel like someone suddenly slammed on the brakes in the car, or like a truck just rammed into the side of the building.

The floor seems to be moving beneath you. It's hard to stand up, or even stay in your seat. If you do stand up, you might feel like you're riding a raft down a fast river. When you walk, it's like trying to walk on a trampoline or a waterbed. You hear someone say, "Earthquake! Drop, Cover, and Hold!"

I want all of you at your desks to take cover as quickly and quietly as you can, right now. Please listen very carefully.

The shaking and commotion may last about 60 seconds or a little longer. We'll have our timer count off the seconds for as long as this earthquake lasts. [The timer may begin counting softly now.]

The building is creaking and rattling. Books are falling from the bookcase. Hanging lamps and plants are swaying. Suddenly a pot falls to the floor and smashes, and the plant spills. A window pane just shattered, and glass is falling to the floor. The table is sliding, too.

Be sure to stay in the drop, cover, and hold position under your desk. If your desk is moving, grab the legs and move with it.

You hear noises outside. Dogs are barking. Cats are meowing. A baby is crying. People are shouting and screaming. The shaking is making church bells ring. You hear crashing sounds, from brick chimneys and other loose parts of the building falling to the ground. Trees outside are swaying and scraping against the walls.

Inside the room, pictures are moving on their nails. Oh! That one just fell off the wall and crashed to the floor. The desk drawers are sliding open. The lights begin to flicker on and off... they just went out! Now the door swings back and forth on its hinges. Bang! It slams shut. There's silence now. Just as suddenly as the noise and shaking began, the room grows quiet. [The timer can stop counting now.]

Please, everyone, get back in your seats. It is important to remain very quiet and wait for instructions. When it is safe to leave the building, I am going to lead you outside to an open space. Stay together, and be ready to take cover again at any moment, because the shaking may start again. Sometimes other quakes, called aftershocks, occur after the damaging earthquake has stopped.

HELP: Hands-on Earthquake Learning Package, California Edition (1983). Environmental Volunteers, Inc.