



When the Ground Shakes and the Sky Burns

Podcast length: ~18 min

Lesson time: 40–50 min

Episode: *When the Ground Shakes and the Sky Burns*



Listen to the episode

Scan the code or visit takaromedia.com to hear "When the Ground Shakes and the Sky Burns."

Learning Focus

Understanding how natural disasters and extreme weather affect communities differently depending on geography, infrastructure, and preparedness.

Learning Strands

Primary: Think Critically

Supporting: Understand the News, Understand Others

Key Vocabulary

tectonic plates

Richter scale

infrastructure

heat wave

preparedness

biodiversity

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Explain how earthquakes occur and how extreme heat can affect people and infrastructure.
- Compare how different communities prepare for and respond to natural hazards.
- Use evidence from the podcast to explain why the effects of natural hazards can vary between places.

Materials Needed

- Podcast / audio
 - Board or chart paper
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Learning Outcomes

Students can:

- Explain the basic causes and effects of an earthquake and an extreme heat wave.
- Identify how infrastructure and preparedness can influence the impact of a natural hazard.
- Support a comparison between two communities using evidence from the episode.

Before Listening 3–5 min

Ask students:

Why might the same natural event cause more damage in one place than another?

If you have time, follow up with:

What can people do before a natural disaster happens to reduce its impact?

Listen to the Podcast 15–18 min

Ask students to listen for three things:

1. What happened in Venezuela?
2. How was Europe affected by extreme heat?
3. What made the effects of these events worse — or helped communities respond?

Check for Understanding 8–10 min

1. **Recall:** What caused the earthquake described in the episode, and how strong were the two earthquakes?
2. **Explain:** Why can buildings in countries such as Japan be better prepared to withstand earthquakes?
3. **Compare:** Why was extreme heat particularly difficult for many European communities to manage?
4. **Reason:** How did the heat affect infrastructure in Europe? Give one example from the episode. (Possible examples include railway lines expanding in the heat or rivers becoming too warm to effectively cool nuclear power plants.)

Choose One 10–12 min

OPTION A — DISCUSSION

Is Nature the Problem—or Our Preparation?

- Why can a natural event become a humanitarian crisis in one place but have a smaller impact somewhere else?
- How much of the damage caused by natural hazards can humans prevent or reduce?

Here's a useful sentence structure if students get stuck: "The episode shows that the impact of a natural hazard depends on _____ because _____."

OPTION B — EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Build a More Prepared Community

Put students into small groups. Give each group one hazard:

- Earthquake
- Extreme heat
- Flooding
- Extreme cold

Ask groups to design a more prepared community. They must decide:

1. What is the main danger?
2. What could be damaged or affected?
3. What should the community do before the event?
4. What should people do during the event?
5. What could the community change or build to reduce future risk?

If you have time, ask a group representative from each group to share their most important ideas with the class. The goal is for students to recognize that preparedness is not only about what people do during a disaster — it can also involve how communities design buildings, transportation, homes, and other infrastructure before a disaster occurs.

Exit Ticket 2–3 min

One way a community can prepare for a natural hazard is _____ because _____.