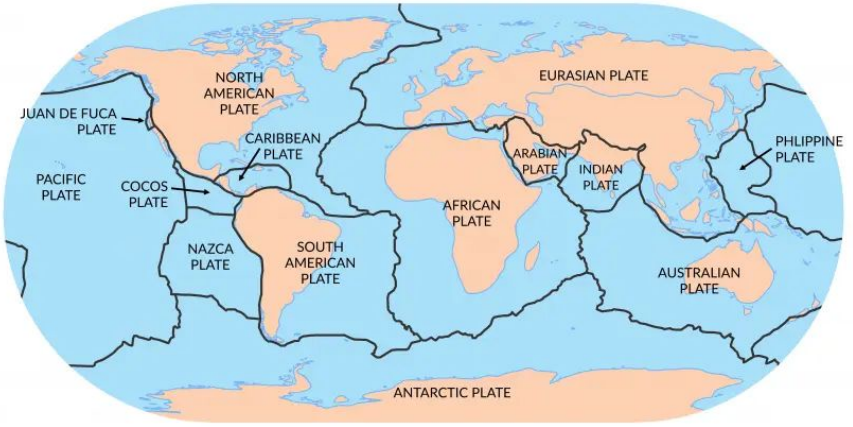
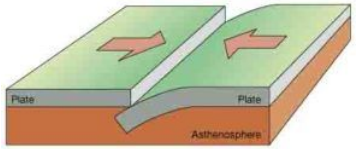
Year 6 Geography: What are the causes of earthquakes and how do they impact our world?

Key Topics: Tectonic Plates, the causes of earthquakes, a case study of Haiti, tsunamis, a case study of Japan.

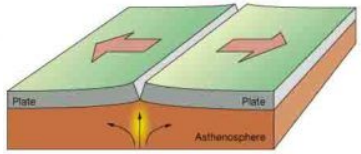
Key Vocabulary	
aid agency	A charity that specialises in giving relief and help to those who are in need because of war or natural disasters.
economy	An economy is the way money is made and used in a country. Rich countries have strong economies and poorer countries have weaker economies.
epi centre	This is the point on the earth's crust directly above the focus of an earthquake.
infrastructure	Infrastructure is the physical things such as roads, railways, water supplies, power supplies, internet access, buildings, hospitals and schools etc.. that are needed for a country to run.
humanitarian	Humanitarian work is work aimed at relieving the suffering and poverty of humanity.
magnitude	The size of something is its magnitude.
mortuary	A place where dead bodies are stored.
nuclear power plant	A place where electricity is produced using the process of nuclear fission (the splitting of atoms)
radiation	Radiation is energy released from an atom as either waves or particles. High doses of radiation can cause radiation sickness.
relief	Relief is the financial or practical help given to those in need.
Richter scale	A numerical scale for measuring the size of earthquakes.
seismologist	A scientist who studies earthquakes
seismic waves	The shock waves, or waves of energy that are caused by an earthquake.. They ripple across the earth's surface.
tectonic plates	Tectonic plates are very, very large piece of the earth's crust that float on the mantle and move.
tsunami	A giant wave, often caused by an earthquake under the sea bed
United Nations	An international organisation formed in 1945 to maintain peace and security in the world.

Tectonic Plates: Oceanic and Continental

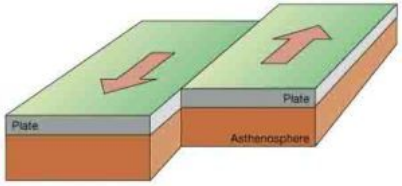




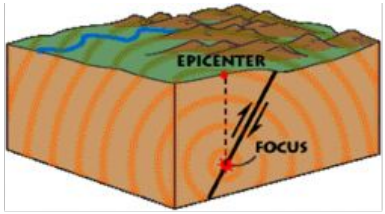
Convergent Plate Boundary
Two tectonic plates move together and collide, sometimes one plate is pushed under the other.



Divergent Plate Boundary
Two tectonic plates move away from each other causing a crack or vent to open up



Transform Plate Boundary
Two tectonics plates slide horizontally past each other.



Earthquake Focus and Epicenter, Source: USGS

Seismic waves, or shock waves, spread out from the focus of the earthquake. The waves are most strongly felt at the epicentre, directly above the focus of the earthquake. This is where the most damage will occur.