



The Planet Earth
Geography – Junior Cert
Quick Notes

The Planet Earth

The earth consists of three layers – the crust (outer), the mantle (middle) and the core (inner). The plates carry the continents and the oceans. There are seven major plates – Eurasian Plate, Indian Plate, African Plate, American Plate, Nazca Plate, Pacific Plate, Australian Plate. The plates are constantly moving and this process is called continental drift. When plates collide they form fold mountains, when plates separate, volcanoes occur and when plates slide past each other, earthquakes occur. The place within the crust where the earthquake occurs is the focus. The point on the surface above the focus is the epicentre. Earthquakes produce shock waves. A seismograph measures shock waves and the Richter Scale records the size of the shock waves. Earthquakes cause loss of life, collapse of buildings and damage to gas mains. Volcanoes may be active e.g. Mount Etna, dormant e.g. Mount Saint Helens or extinct e.g. Slemish Mountain County Antrim. The Pacific Ring of Fire is a region where most earthquakes and volcanoes occur.