

Tsunami

by Bill Gaynor

Summary

Using the tsunami of December 26, 2004, as a starting point, this text explains the various causes of tsunamis. A scientist explains how tsunami warning systems work, and an eyewitness gives an account of the 2004 tsunami.

Features of the Text

- Explanation
- Interview
- Specialized vocabulary—*epicenter, plate, seismologist*
- Eyewitness account
- Use of diagrams and photographs
- Chronological text organization
- Mathematical concepts

Purpose

Tsunami can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** exploring the features of an explanation;
- S** comparing and contrasting information;
- S** identifying main ideas and supporting details;
- S** asking questions of the text.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Exploring the features of an explanation

Introducing the text

Review the features of explanations, including the language they use, such as prepositions of time, clear sequence, cause and effect, action verbs, descriptive language, and the present tense.

- *What makes some explanations better than others?*

Tell the students that they are about to read a book about tsunamis that includes several explanations. As they read, they can consider the features of explanations identified by the author and think about how they help them to better understand the text.

Reading and discussing the text

Read aloud the explanation on page 2. Discuss the use of action verbs, linking words, words in bold, and descriptive language.

Ask the students to read to the end of page 7.

- *How has the eyewitness account helped the explanation?*
- *Why is the tsunami worse once it reaches the coast?*

Ask the students to read to the end of page 12.

- *How did the diagrams help your understanding?*
- *Why do you think the author has included real examples?*

Ask the students to read to the end of the book.

- *Why do you think the author included the last section about being ready?*
- *What is the difference between the interview on pages 13 to 15 and the explanation on pages 8 to 10?*

Discuss how the interview explains how something works and the previous explanation identifies why tsunamis occur. Explain how they have similar features. Discuss the various kinds of explanations the students have read and list their features. Encourage them to use these features in their personal writing.

Following Up

The students can:

- use the blackline master on page 33 to write questions about the text
- identify and research another natural phenomenon and explain how or why it occurs
- design a poster describing how people should prepare for a tsunami
- research other tsunamis and prepare a timeline showing when and where they happened.