

# Informative Partner Essay - Writing Prompt

Here in Florida, earthquakes seem like a remote and foreign concept. We may know what they are, but might not have a full grasp of what they're really like and what they can do.

You have been asked to write an article for a newsletter to new California residents to explain the effects of earthquakes. Use the information presented in the four source texts to support your points. Try to use all of the sources.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- read the passages;
- plan your essay;
- write your essay; and
- revise and edit your essay.

Be sure to

- include a controlling idea/thesis statement;
- use evidence from multiple sources; and
- avoid overly relying on one source

Your response should be in the form of a  
multiparagraph essay.

**Partners:**

\_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Source Materials for Step 2

**AS YOU READ** You will be writing an informative essay about earthquakes. Carefully study the sources in Step 2. Annotate by underlining and circling information that may be useful to you when you write your essay.

### Source 1: Informative Brochure

#### If you Traveled to Gondwana . . .

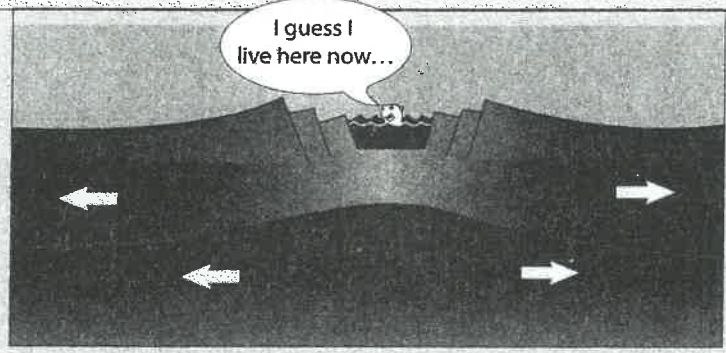
Do you wish you could ride your bike to Europe? Would you like to grow palm trees in Antarctica? Well, a mere 200 million years ago, you could have.

#### Ancient History

Earth's continents are not fixed in place. Rather, they slide slowly over the planet's molten mantle, colliding and separating, creating new landforms. The process is not gentle. Where two continental plates meet, mountains form, earthquakes rattle, and volcanoes erupt. Where continental plates slide apart, the consequences are no less drastic. Oceans pour in, and plants and animals that once lived together become isolated.

The lands of the southern hemisphere—South America, Africa, Australia, India, and Antarctica—were once united in the supercontinent Gondwana.

**When continental plates move away from each other, huge rifts occur and ocean water spills in. These shifting seas take ocean life with it, so it's possible to find certain species—such as fish—who have been isolated from their original habitat.**

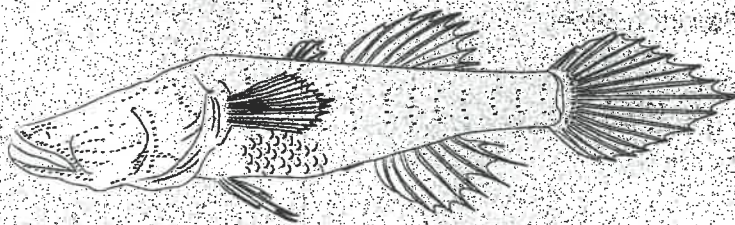




## Ancient Ancestors

- The llama of South America is related to the camel of Africa. How could this be? How could either species cross the Atlantic Ocean? They didn't. The ancestor of llamas and camels lived on Gondwana—before the supercontinent split apart.
- Fossil discoveries show that the platypus has only lived in two far-flung places: in Australia and in Argentina, countries which were joined before the supercontinent broke apart.
- Even blind, cave-dwelling goby fish were scattered by Gondwana's split. Scientists recently learned that a species of goby native to Madagascar is related to a species of goby in Australia—6,000 kilometers away!

Who knows where the continents will end up 200 million years from now. Maybe some long-lost relatives, such as goby fish, can reunite!



**Two contemporary species of goby fish—one native to Madagascar and the other to Australia—are said to have separated from from a goby species living in Gondwana.**



### Close Read

Explain what causes movement in the Earth's continents. Cite textual evidence in your response.

## Source 2: Blog

### EYEWITNESS REPORT

# A Rough Commute

Steven Nguyen  
Sacramento, California

#### 3:38 pm

Traffic on Franklin Boulevard is barely crawling, and every lane is packed. It's like an early rush hour, only going in both directions.

#### 3:55 pm

We all stop as a convoy of screaming fire engines and ambulances makes its way north. I try to call home again. No luck—just a beep-beep-beep busy signal. Everybody in California must be trying to call home now, and the telecommunications system is overwhelmed. The car radio isn't much help. Most of the dial is static; only a few stations are still transmitting. Somebody says the quake measured 7.8 on the Richter scale, with an epicenter 15 miles east.

#### 4:29 pm

Northbound traffic on Franklin Boulevard comes to a grinding halt. I give up and turn west onto Stockton Street.

#### 5:05 pm

A huge cloud of blue smoke is rising to the east. Sirens wail in all directions. Helicopters clatter across the sky.

#### 5:18 pm

The traffic on Stockton stops moving, so I take some side streets and try the freeway. I should have been suspicious by the lack of cars. Within seconds, I have to slam on the brakes. A section of asphalt six lanes wide has been tilted up like a castle drawbridge. I get out of the car and gasp. The scar of the quake is plain to see—a jagged line of raw earth tracing across miles of tomato fields. No way forward. I climb back in my car and turn around.

Welcome!

About/FAQ

Surprise me!

Subscribe by Email

#### SEARCH

#### Archives

2013

2012

2011

2010

## Discuss and Decide

What details in this blog help you picture the events described here? Cite textual evidence in your response.



## Source 3: News Report

# LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE

San Francisco, CA

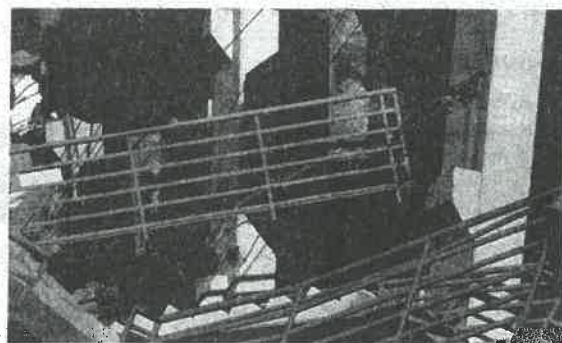
October 18, 1989

by Olivia Esposito

The earthquake struck at 5:04 P.M., while the San Francisco Giants and Oakland Athletics were warming up for the third game of the 1989 World Series. With an epicenter near Santa Cruz, about 50 miles to the south, the quake measured 7.1 on the Richter Scale and shook the ground for 15 seconds. Although the players and fans at Candlestick Park were understandably frightened, the stadium stood and nobody was injured.

Across the region, others were not so lucky. The earthquake killed more than 60 people, injured almost 4,000, and left several thousand Californians homeless. A span of the Bay Bridge collapsed, tens of thousands of buildings were damaged or destroyed, and the final repair bill came to \$6 billion.

Much of the destruction centered on the region's roadways, and some of the worst damage occurred to a raised section of Interstate 880 in Oakland. This double-deck freeway had been built in



The Loma Prieta earthquake took place during the World Series in 1989.

the 1950s and reinforced for earthquakes in the 1970s. Unfortunately this part of the structure was built on reclaimed marshland. During the earthquake, the soil liquefied. The freeway buckled, support columns failed, and the upper deck crashed onto the first deck, killing 41 people in their cars.

Some observers think that the World Series saved lives that day. Many office workers went home early to watch the game on TV, while countless others walked to restaurants to see the game. As a result, fewer cars were on the road, and an untold number of drivers avoided catastrophe.

### Discuss and Decide

What was the most destructive effect of the Loma Prieta earthquake?

Cite textual evidence in your response.

## Source 4: Insurance Claim

| Earthquake Insurance Claim Form                    |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Policy Holder</b><br>Sandra T. Upton            |   | <b>Insurance Company</b><br>Alphabets, LLC           |
| <b>Address</b><br>5231 Live Oak Way, Los Gatos, CA |   | <b>Policy Identification Number</b><br>0221-95550123 |
| <b>Covered Property</b><br>(same)                  |   | <b>Earthquake Date</b><br>10/17/89                   |
| Item   | Damage  | Estimated Repair/<br>Replacement Cost                |
| driveway   | concrete buckled and cracked  | \$3,200  |
| chimney/fireplace                                  | partially collapsed   | \$5,000  |
| front porch  | support columns askew   | \$2,800  |
| hallway  | east wall cracked in three places                                   | \$4,100  |
| kitchen  | window broken, counters cracked, ceiling collapsed                  | \$7,250  |
| bedroom  | window broken, closet walls cracked, floor displaced                | \$9,300  |
| bathroom   | shower wall cracked, sink crushed, toilet broken, ceiling collapsed | \$8,600  |
| front room   | windows broken, window frames dislodged, ceiling cracked            | \$5,490  |
| garage   | windows broken, wall cracked  | \$1,900  |
| appliances   | hot-water heater, refrigerator, stove, oven, television destroyed   | \$5,740  |
| backyard   | porch buckled, approximately half of fence collapsed                | \$1,500  |
| <b>Total</b>                                       |   | <b>\$54,880</b>                                      |

### Discuss and Decide

Which details from the insurance claim help you better understand the scope and cost of an earthquake's destructiveness? Cite evidence from the claim form in your response.

**PLANNING SHEET**

Use this sheet to plan what you will write. The writing on this sheet will NOT be scored.

Controlling Idea (Thesis Statement) - \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph #1 Main Idea - \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence (quotation and page #) - \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence - \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence - \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph #2 Main Idea - \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence - \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence - \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence - \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph #3 Main Idea (If You Have a 3<sup>rd</sup>) - \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence - \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence - \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence - \_\_\_\_\_

Write lead-ins for **two** of the above pieces of evidence.

Why did you choose this order to organize your paragraphs?



## Informative/Explanatory Essay Grading Rubric

### **“Write to inform a new California resident about the effects of Earthquakes.”**

|   |  |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Purpose, Focus, and Organization</b> | <p>The response is <u>consistently focused</u> within the purpose, audience, and task.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10 points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strongly maintained controlling idea with little or no loosely related material</li> <li>-Skillful use of transitions</li> <li>-Logical progression of ideas</li> <li>-Appropriate style and objective tone are established and maintained</li> <li>- Your paragraphs are well-formed organized, and complete.</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>8 points</b></p> <p>The response is adequately sustained and generally focused.</p>                     | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6 points</b></p> <p>The response is somewhat sustained but may include loosely related or extraneous material.</p>                                      | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-5 points</b></p> <p>The response is related to the topic, but may demonstrate little or no organizational structure.</p>                                   |
| <b>Evidence and Elaboration</b>         | <p>The response provides thorough, convincing, and credible support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10 points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise reference to sources</li> <li>-Effective use of elaborative techniques, demonstrating an understanding of the topic</li> <li>-Clear and effective expression of ideas</li> <li>- Varied sentence structure</li> </ul>       | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>8 points</b></p> <p>The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6 points</b></p> <p>The response provides uneven, support/evidence for the writer’s claim that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-5 points</b></p> <p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the writer’s claim, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details.</p> |
| <b>Conventions of Standard English</b>  | <p>The response demonstrates a strong command of basic conventions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>5 points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Some minor errors in usage, but no patterns of errors</li> <li>-Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</li> </ul>  |   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-5 points</b></p> <p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions.</p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Total Score</b></p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: 1.5em;"><b>/25</b></p>   |