How Things Work

Grade 3 Name: _____

Read the passage carefully. Then answer the questions using details from the text.

How Earthquakes Shake Our World

Earth's surface is not one solid piece. It's like a giant puzzle made of huge sections called tectonic plates. These plates are always slowly moving, but we can't feel it most of the time. Think of them as massive rafts floating on a softer layer deep inside our planet.

Imagine two giant puzzle pieces trying to slide past each other. Sometimes, they get stuck because their edges are rough. Even though they are stuck, the plates keep trying to move. This builds up a lot of pressure and energy at the spot where they are locked together.

When the pressure becomes too great, the plates suddenly slip past each other. This sudden movement releases all the stored energy in waves, like ripples in water. These waves are called seismic waves . They travel out from the point where the plates slipped.

These seismic waves travel through the ground, making it shake. That shaking is what we feel as an earthquake. So, an earthquake is really just Earth's way of releasing built-up stress from its moving plates, causing the ground to tremble and sometimes rumble.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1) What is the main idea of this passage?

(A) Earthquakes happen when Earth's plates move and release energy.

(B) Earth's surface is made of puzzle-like plates.

(C) The Earth is always changing.

(D) Scientists can predict when earthquakes will happen.

(2) Which detail best supports the main idea?

(A) Plates get stuck and build up pressure.

(B) Earthquakes can cause buildings to shake.

(C) Some plates are under the ocean. (D) Geologists study earthquakes.

(3) What would be the best title for this passage?

(A) How Earthquakes Happen (B) Living on Earth (C) Shaking Ground

(D) The Puzzle Pieces of Earth

(4) Which sentence does NOT belong in this passage?

(A) Earth's surface is made of giant plates.

(B) Plates can get stuck and build up energy.

(C) Earthquakes are measured with a seismograph.

(D) When plates slip, they release energy as seismic waves.

(5) Write the main idea in your own words. Include one detail from the passage.