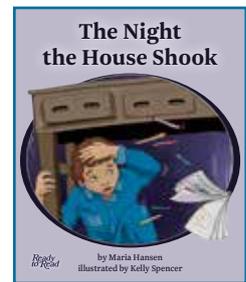


# The Night the House Shook

by Maria Hansen  
illustrated by Kelly Spencer

This text is levelled at Blue 3.



## Overview

This story, narrated by a young boy, is based on an actual experience during the Christchurch earthquake of September 2010. An earthquake wakes the boy. When the shaking stops, his parents check on the children and discover that his little brother, Lenny, has slept through the whole thing. When Lenny wakes, he can't understand why his room is so messy. This text provides drama and humour to convey important messages about coping with an earthquake.

This text supports the development of a self-extending reading processing system. It requires students to “apply their reading processing strategies” and to “monitor their reading, searching for and using multiple sources of information in order to confirm or self-correct” (*The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 10).

There is an audio version of the text as an MP3 file at [readytoread.tki.org.nz](http://readytoread.tki.org.nz)

## Cross-curriculum links

Health and physical education (level 1, community resources) – Identify and discuss obvious hazards in their home, school, and local environment and adopt simple safety practices.

## Related texts

Texts about feeling scared and/or keeping safe: *Is That an Earthquake?* (shared); *Going Camping*, (Yellow 3); *Stay Where You Are* (Blue 2)

## Text characteristics

The students are working towards the standard for after one year at school. Many characteristics of Green texts are also in texts at earlier levels but in simpler forms. These characteristics are shown in boxes with a solid outline. Other boxes show additional characteristics.

Illustrations that support the text and extend the meaning but may not exactly match the words

The familiar setting of home and (possibly) familiar context of an earthquake

Sentences that run over more than one line but do not split phrases

Dialogue between easily identified speakers

Most content explicitly stated but also some implicit content that provides opportunities for students to make simple inferences (for example, that the boy knows what to do in an earthquake)

One night when we were asleep,  
our house started to shake.



The house rattled and rumbled and shook.  
“Earthquake!” Dad yelled from the next room.  
“Get under your desk.”  
I held on tight. Everything was moving.  
It felt like being in a boat on a rough sea.

Some visual language features such as the shaky lines that represent the movement from the earthquake

Some descriptive phrases (“held on tight”, “like being in a boat on a rough sea”) that add drama

Contractions and a figure of speech (“I don’t believe it”) within the dialogue

Adverbial phrases (“One night, when we were asleep”, “from the next room”, “After a while”, “In the morning”) that provide additional information

A range of punctuation, including speech marks, commas, question marks, and an exclamation mark, to support phrasing and meaning

Many high-frequency words

Interest words, for example, “earthquake”, “desk”, “hope”, “light switches”, “listened”, “messed up”, “news”, “power”, “radio”, “rattled”, “rumbled”, “scared”, “shake”, “shaking”, “shook”, “took”, “tried”, “turned on”, “yelled” (including a range of regular and irregular verbs and verb forms), that are likely to be in the reader’s oral vocabulary and are strongly supported by the context, sentence structure, and the illustrations

## Suggested reading purpose

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

We are reading this book to find out what happened when the house shook.

## Possible learning goals

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically about” texts?)

The behaviours listed below link to *The Literacy Learning Progressions*. **Select from and adapt** them to set your specific learning goal. Be guided by your students’ needs and experiences – their culture, language, and identity. (*Reading and Writing Standards for years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

The text provides opportunities for students to:

- make connections between their own experiences or knowledge of being in an earthquake and use information in the text to make inferences about how the boy feels throughout the story
- identify and summarise the events in the text in order to support their inferences about the boy
- make meaning by searching for and using multiple sources of information
- self-monitor their reading and self-correct where necessary, for example by rerunning text or checking further sources of information.

## Introducing the text

Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that the introduction to the text is effective in activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support for a successful first reading. Adapt your introduction according to what you know of your students’ personal experiences of earthquakes, in particular, the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010–11. You could read and discuss the shared book *Is that an Earthquake?* a day or two before reading this book. As part of the discussion before reading, draw out (or feed in) new vocabulary and language structures that you think will need support.

- Tell the students you have a book for them to read about a family who is at home one night when an earthquake happens. Ask the students to share what they know about earthquakes and what earthquakes feel like.
- Look at the cover illustration together and discuss why the boy is under the table. *How do you think the boy is feeling? What sounds do you think the house might make as it shakes?*

- Look at the title page illustration and ask the students to identify the items and predict why the family might need them. Elicit or feed in the idea of the power going off, for example, *How will the radio work if the power goes off?*
- Look at the illustration on page 2 and establish who the characters are, where they are, and what they are doing. Encourage the students to predict what they think will happen next.
- Share the purpose for reading and remind the students to think about their predictions as they read.

## Monitoring the reading

- Observe closely as the students read the text to themselves, intervening only if a student clearly needs help. Note their confidence and perseverance with challenges, in particular, how they manage the descriptive language, and any instances of self-monitoring, cross-checking, and self-correction. As students finish reading, they can quietly reread the story until everyone has finished.
- If a student makes an error without noticing a problem, wait until the end of the sentence or the page before intervening, unless they stop reading. Waiting gives them the opportunity to notice the error and fix it themselves.
- Some prompts that you could use include: *Are you sure? Were you right? Read the sentence again. Try that again and think about what would sound right and look right.; What else could you check?; You said \_\_\_\_\_, does that make sense?; If the word was \_\_\_\_\_, what letters would you expect to see?*
- Remember to base these types of prompts on what you know about the students’ prior knowledge. For example, asking an English language learner if a word sounds right may not be useful if they are not familiar enough with English phonemes and vocabulary to know the answer. In this case, an explanation and further examples would be more effective.
- Reinforce the students’ attempts to problem-solve, whether they are successful or not, for example, *You noticed the word wasn’t right, and you went back and tried to fix it/fix it ... how did you know?*

Other prompts could include:

Text	Student reads	Teacher prompt
Lenny was still fast asleep.	Lenny was <b>staying</b> fast asleep.	<i>You said ... in this sentence. Does that look right to you? Read it again.</i>
Dad tried the light switches.	Dad <b>turned the lights...</b> (the student stops and looks confused).	Prompt the student to use meaning and visual information: <i>What did Dad do? Look at how that word ("tried") starts. Try that sentence again.</i>
"I hope there isn't going to be another earthquake."	I hope there isn't going to be <b>any more</b> earthquakes.	Prompt to check with another information source: <i>That sounds right and makes sense, but does it look right to you?</i>

For further suggestions about ways to support students to self-monitor (to cross-check, confirm, and self-correct), see *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4*, page 130.

## Discussing the text

- Share and discuss the information on the inside back cover of the book, the fact that the story is based on a true story, and why the author went to check up on her neighbours.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose. Have them work in pairs to look through the book together and summarise the events on each page. Record their ideas on a chart.
- Discuss whether their earlier predictions were right or if there were surprises in the story.
- Encourage the students to think critically. Have them reread page 5. *Why do you think Mum said, "I don't believe it"?* If necessary, have them refer back to what happened on page 3.

## After reading: practice and reinforcement

After-reading tasks should arise from monitoring the students' needs during the lesson and should provide purposeful practice and reinforcement. Where possible, links should be made to other reading texts, including texts generated from language experience and shared writing and to the wider literacy programme (oral language, writing, handwriting, and word games and activities) and other curriculum areas.

**Select from and adapt** these suggestions, according to the needs of your students.

- Have the students reread the text aloud to a partner. Listen in, noting their ability to self-monitor and to use the punctuation and context to support phrasing and expression, particularly in the dialogue. You may also use this time to do a quick running record with a student to provide more information on an aspect you have noticed.
- Provide many opportunities for the students to reread this text and to read other stories with similar themes (see Related texts). This also helps to extend their comprehension.
- The students can also build their comprehension and fluency by rereading the text while listening to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Have the students reread the text with a focus on how the characters, especially the narrator, are feeling. Have them read sections aloud in ways that demonstrate this. The students could follow this up by using the text for Readers' Theatre.
- Discuss the meaning of "earthquake". Review words that describe the shaking ("rumbled", "rattled", "shook", "shaking", "like being in a boat on a rough sea"). Create a vocabulary chart together. Encourage the students to add other words with similar meanings, such as "rumbling", "rattling", and "wobbling" from *Is That an Earthquake?* Display the chart and provide opportunities for students to incorporate some of the words into their own writing. Model the use of the vocabulary in shared writing and encourage the students to notice and enjoy the words in other contexts. For further ways to support English language learners, visit [ESOL teaching strategies/Vocabulary](#).
- Ask the students to use the summary chart created during "Discussing the text" to help them identify what the family knew about how to keep safe in an earthquake. The students could compare this with the safety information on the inside back cover of *Is that an Earthquake?* Have them draw and write about three safe practices.

- Make connections to previous discussions about earthquake safety and your earlier discussions about this book. Discuss what items would be important for an earthquake kit and why. Record the items on a T-chart and have the students work in pairs to record why each item is important.

For example:

Things that we need in an earthquake kit	
Item	Why we think it is important
torch	If it's dark and the power goes off, we can still see.
radio	
water	
spare batteries	

- Browse through the book and get the students to find sentences that include contractions (“didn’t”, “don’t”, “isn’t”, “I’m”). Reread the sentences and write the contractions out in full to show the students what letters are replaced by the apostrophe. Discuss how contractions make the dialogue seem more like talking.
- Reread page 3 and discuss the irregular past tense forms of “shook” and “held”. Explain that there are some verbs, like “shake” and “hold” that can’t have “ed” added to them. Have the students share other examples or remind them of examples, such as feel/felt, run/ran, sit/sat.