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# The Great Wave: Tsunami!

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# "The Water Started to Go Funny."

December 26, 2004 was a sunny day in Phuket, Thailand. Many visitors were enjoying the beach. Then a ten-year-old girl from England cried out.

"Get off the beach!" she shouted. "A tsunami is coming!"





People heard her. Everyone ran. Very soon, a monster wave poured over the beach. Water went far inland. Cars and trucks were washed away. Buildings were damaged, but no one on the beach died.



The girl had learned about tsunamis at school. Her teacher had shown a video. On the beach, she saw the same thing. She said, “The water started to go funny. There were **bubbles**. The **tide** went out all of a sudden.”

# Understanding Tsunamis

Most tsunamis start with an underwater earthquake. If the earthquake is strong, the sea floor will move. If the sea floor moves, it will push water up. Waves race across the ocean until they hit land.



## Did You Know?

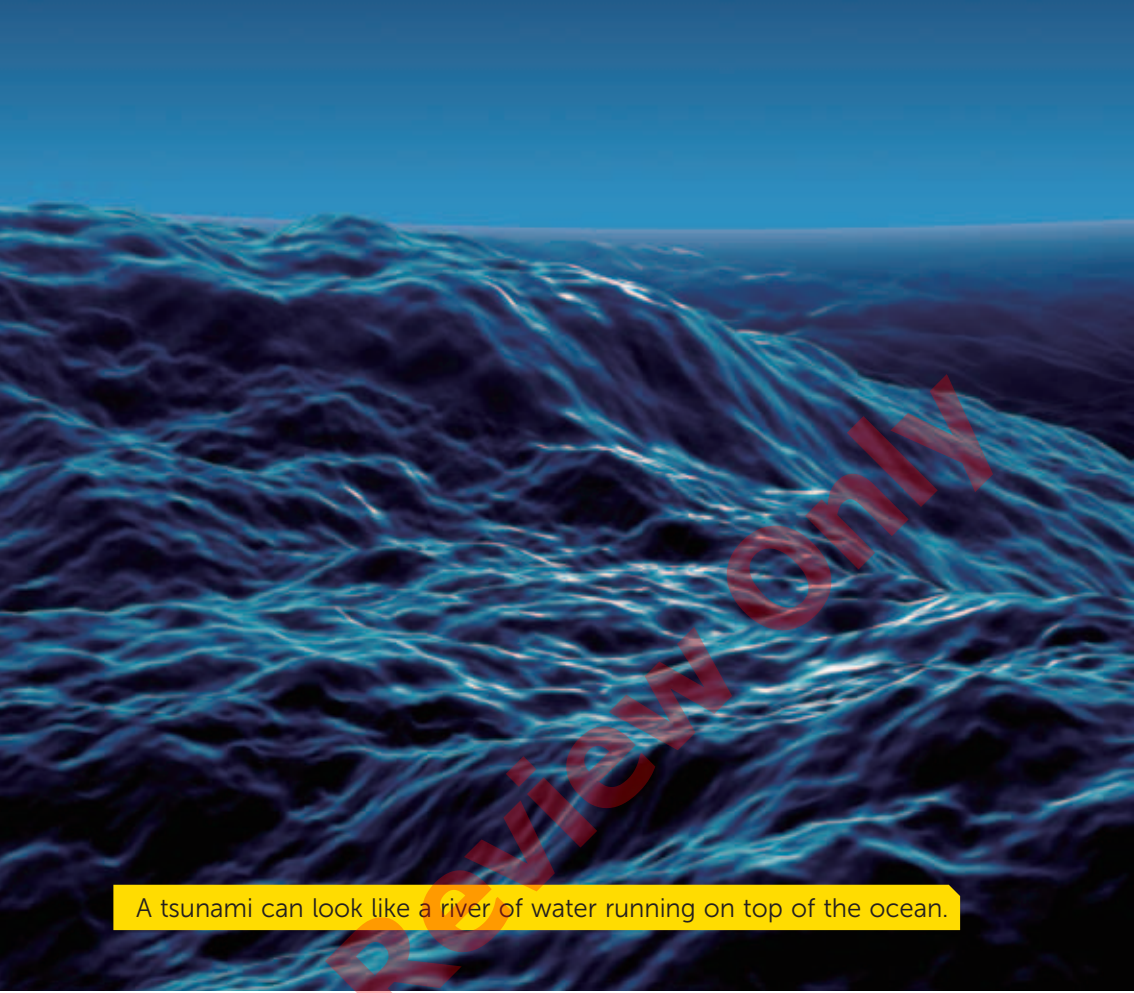
Tsunamis can be caused by many things. They are caused by earthquakes, landslides, or volcano eruptions. A glacier breaking can cause a tsunami.



A tsunami doesn't look like most waves. Usually, waves are caused by tides, wind, and weather. They roll toward land. There, they break on the sand. The water then goes back into the sea.

Surfers enjoy riding big waves on surfboards.





A tsunami can look like a river of water running on top of the ocean.

With a tsunami, the water may go back without a wave breaking on the sand first. Sometimes people walk out to look at the ocean floor. **Suddenly**, the water pours back. It does not break like most waves do. **Instead**, the water **level** rises very, very fast. Waves come one after another like train cars. This is called a wave train. A wave train may last for many hours.