**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Class period:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**9/15/14**

**Disaster in Haiti**

An island neighbor of the U.S. struggles after a devastating earthquake

By [Jill Lederman](http://www.scholastic.com/browse/contributor.jsp?id=3747852)| January 15 , 2010

Scholastic News

Map: Jim McMahon

People in the nation of Haiti are struggling to recover after a powerful earthquake caused massive destruction there on January 12, 2010. Tens of thousands of people in the Caribbean nation were killed, and many more were injured. The Presidential Palace, which is like the White House here in the U.S., was among the many government buildings that collapsed. Hospitals were destroyed, as were countless homes. The disaster added more suffering to people already struggling to cope with everyday life. Haiti is one of the poorest nations in the world.

International aid groups are rushing to provide food, water, and medical aid to Haiti. People worldwide are donating money to help. Many nations, including the U.S., are sending aid as well as money. The U.S. is sending troops to help with rescue and relief efforts, and to police the streets. “This is a time when we are reminded of the common humanity that we all share,” U.S. President Barack Obama said.

**Worst Earthquake in Caribbean in Centuries**

The earthquake’s **epicenter**—the point on the Earth’s surface directly above where it happened—was about 10 miles from Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince. Experts say it was the worst earthquake in the region in more than 200 years.

The earthquake had a magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter scale, which is very high. More than 30 aftershocks, or smaller earthquakes, came after the big quake.

**What Caused the Quake?**The earthquake in Haiti occurred on a long **fault**, or crack in the Earth’s surface, that goes across the island. This underground crack separates two giant **tectonic plates**, or slabs of rock that make up Earth’s outer layer. Along the fault, the plates slowly grind past one another in opposite directions. But this movement isn’t smooth. The plates’ edges get stuck for long periods of time. Eventually, they may suddenly jerk free. That sudden movement is what triggers an earthquake.

**Worries About Loved Ones**

Some Americans have a special concern about the situation in Haiti—family and friends. Hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. are from Haiti. They are anxiously seeking news of loved ones. And like other Americans, they are working to help Haiti recover from this disaster.