



## Earthquakes Vocabulary Lesson

Hi. Welcome to the vocabulary lesson for the conversation “Earthquakes.” In this conversation Joe and I are talking about different earthquakes that we’ve both experienced.

So let’s start with the conversation.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Joe starts off by saying, “Hey...”**

*Now, hey.... This is just a filler word. It really has no meaning here except for Joe trying to get my attention.*

**Joe goes on to say, “check this out.”**

*Check this out. Check this out means listen to this. Check this out. An example of check this out would be: Scott said, “Check this out. I got two free tickets to the Rolling Stones concert.” Check this out.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “Y’know what Eric asked me when I got into work this morning?”**

*Y’know. This is short for you know. You won’t see this in written English but you will hear it in conversational English. Y’know.*

**And then I say, “I have no idea, what’d he ask?”**

*I have no idea, or have no idea. It means do not know. I do not know. For example: I have no idea how I’m going to make time each day to exercise. Have no idea.*

**And then Joe says, “He asked me if I felt the earthquake last night.”**

*Earthquake. This is when the ground shakes from natural causes.*

**And then I say, “Earthquake? You’ve gotta be kidding, I didn’t feel an earthquake.”**

*You’ve gotta be kidding. Now gotta is short for got to. You’ve got to be kidding. This is something else you’ll hear in conversational English but you won’t see it in written English. You’ve gotta be kidding. What this means is you cannot be serious. You’ve gotta be kidding. For example: When I told my mother that I had won \$2 million, she said, “You’ve gotta be kidding.”*

**And then Joe says, “I know, that’s what I said. He told me it actually woke him up last night.”**

*Actually here is just really filler. It has no meaning. It’s not even needed in this sentence.*



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**And then Joe goes on to say, “Y’know...” And then I say, “What?” And Joe says, “yeah...”**

*Yeah is casual or informal for yes.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “it was like...”**

*Like is just filler here. It also has no meaning. It’s not even needed in this sentence.*

**And Joe says, “it went, it happened at like, uh...”**

*Uh. This is filler as well. It has no meaning.*

**And he goes on to say, “4:42 in the morning. So we must’ve been sleeping. But I mean...”**

*I mean. This is filler so it also has no meaning. It’s not needed in this sentence.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “it’s possible that, y’know, even if we had been awake we might not have felt it because, y’know, maybe it, uh, wasn’t felt, y’know, this far north. But, uh, I, I mean I thought he was pullin’ my leg when he first talked about it.”**

*Pullin’ my leg. First of all, pullin’ is short for pulling. So you won’t see pullin’ in written English but you would hear it more in conversational English. Pullin’ my leg. Now this means making a joke by lying to someone and pretending the lie is true. Pullin’ my leg. For example: When Chris said that he won \$200,000 in Las Vegas, I thought he was pullin’ my leg. Pullin’ my leg.*

**And then I go on to say, “Well...”**

*Well is just filler. It’s a filler word. It doesn’t have any meaning.*

**And then I say, “I guess it’s not so far-fetched...”**

*Far-fetched. This means unbelievable. Far-fetched. For example: When Chris said that he won \$200,000 in Las Vegas, I thought it sounded far-fetched. Far-fetched.*

**And I go on to say, “considering...”**

*Considering meaning since.*

**“we live on a major fault line here.”**



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*Major fault line. A fault line is an area where a lot of earthquakes happen.*

**Then Joe says, “Yeah, but actually I think this earthquake was, uh, on a different fault line, um, because, y’know, Eric lives, uh, just, uh, south of San Jose...”**

*Now when I say um, you’ll hear um in a lot of conversations. But it’s not something that you would ever see in written English. But you’ll hear um, uh, a lot in conversations. San Jose. This is a city south of San Francisco.*

**And then I go on to say, “Yeah.” And then Joe says, “and, uh, the earthquake he said was due east of San Jose...”**

*Due east. This is exactly east of someplace. Due east. For example: Sacramento is a city that is due east of San Francisco. Due east.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “so he was obviously...”**

*Or he was definitely.*

**“a lot closer to the epicenter than we were.”**

*Epicenter. This is the middle of an earthquake. Epicenter. An example of epicenter would be: The epicenter of the earthquake was Los Angeles. So there was a lot of damage in that city. Epicenter.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “So, I d-, I’m not even sure it was felt here.” And I say, “Yeah, that makes sense. Well, y’know, I’ve experienced quite a few earthquakes in the past several years but I’ve been living here a little over two years...”**

*Or a little more than two years.*

**And I say, “I’ve, I think I’ve only experienced one here. It was really strange, too, I was, um, each, I should say each earthquake has been a completely different experience. But the one I, the one I felt here, I was standing outside a restaurant talking to AJ and another friend and all of a sudden it just felt like...”**

*All of a sudden. This is right away with no warning. All of a sudden. For example: I was driving my car when all of a sudden someone hit me. It happened so fast. All of a sudden.*

**So I say, “all of a sudden it just felt like this shift.”**



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*Or change.*

**“It’s really hard to explain, but it made me think of, like, a cartoon...”**

*A cartoon is just animation.*

**And I go on to say, “like how, in the cartoon, like buildings might just shift to the right and then shift right back.” And Joe says, “Yeah, without falling.” And I say, “Yeah, without falling. And I, I had no idea what was going on for a few minutes afterwards. And then I realized...”**

*Or I understood.*

**“oh that must have been an earthquake.” And Joe says, “Yeah, you know what I usually notice...”**

*Or he’s saying what I normally see.*

**“the times that I’ve been at home, here...” And I say, “Yeah.” And Joe says, “and, uh, there’s been an earthquake. It’s almost as if there’s this really big train, or like a gigantic Mack truck going by.”**

*Gigantic means very big or large. And Mack truck... This is just a kind of truck.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “And, uh, suddenly...”**

*Or right away.*

**“I start to hear the heater shaking. And, um, it’s like, the noise is like, uh, is loud for like a second...”**

*A second is a short time. 60 seconds makes one minute so it’s a very short time.*

**And Joe says, “and then it’s gone, so...” And then I say, “That’s so...” And Joe says, “it’s really weird...”**

*Weird, or strange.*

**He goes on to say, “y’know, it’s almost like the first couple’a times I felt it...”**

*Couple’a. This is short for couple of. So you won’t see this in written English but you’ll hear it in conversational English. Couple’a. Couple meaning two.*



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**So Joe's saying, "the first couple'a times I felt it, I wasn't even aware it was an earthquake while it was happening."**

*So he's saying, I wasn't even aware. I didn't even know it was an earthquake while it was happening.*

**And then I say, "Well, that's so funny..."**

*Now when I say that's so funny, I'm not saying it's really funny. I'm saying this because something Joe said was the same experience that I had. And that experience being not knowing there was an earthquake while it was happening. He experienced that and I experienced it. So I'm saying wow, that's so funny. Like that's so funny we both experienced this.*

**And I go on to say, "that's so funny you say that because one that I experienced in Bangkok, it actually was after the tsunami..."**

*And I'm talking about the tsunami that hit Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, southeast India in December 2004.*

**And I go on to say, "and so later I found out that it was..."**

*So. Here this is a filler word. It has no meaning.*

**And I say, "it was, um, aftershock from the tsunami."**

*Aftershock. This is an earthquake that happens right after another earthquake. Aftershock. An example of aftershock would be: When I felt the aftershock of the earthquake, I ran outside. Aftershock.*

**And I go on to say, "But anyway, I was in a building up on the ninth floor and suddenly, uh, there was all this rattling."**

*Rattling is a kind of noise.*

**And I go on to say, "And I'm thinking to myself, it, it just, it, it was so irrational."**

*Irrational. I'm saying, it wasn't clear.*

**And I go on to say, "I'm thinking to myself, god..."**

*God is just showing emotion like I don't believe. I don't believe I'm hearing this.*

**And I say, "there's like a train going by and I can't believe that this building is shaking so much from**



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the train.” And I laugh, “It... And of course a train wouldn’t have made a building, or at least me up on the ninth floor, feel something to that effect.”

*Or feel something that much.*

And I go on to say, “And I think it happened about two times. And it... That one wasn’t until several...”

*Several or many.*

“several days later when I was talking to people and they were like, oh didja feel the earthquake?”

*Didja. This is something you will hear in conversational English. It’s short for did you. You won’t see that in written English though.*

And I go on to say, “Then it dawned on me, oh, that was an earthquake. It was...”

*It dawned on me. This means I remembered or I realized. It dawned on me.*

And then Joe says, “Yeah, I know. It’s, uh, it’s crazy...”

*Or he’s saying it’s unbelievable.*

“how when you’re not used to feeling them you can think it’s something else.” And I say, “Yeah, yeah totally.”

*Totally here means definitely. For example: Sonia said that she totally felt the earthquake last night. Totally.*

And then Joe says, “I mean, I’ve been livin’ here for a while now...”

*Livin’. This is short for living. Again, you won’t see livin’ in written English but you’ll hear it in conversational English. So he says, I’ve been livin’ here for a while now. A while means a long time. A while. An example of a while is: I have been an English teacher for a while. A while.*

And Joe goes on to say, “and I’ve definitely felt my share of earthquakes.”

*So he is saying I definitely felt a lot of earthquakes.*

And Joe says, “I mean, y’know, when you live here it’s a given...”



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*It's a given. This means there is no doubt. It's a given. For example, when you walk or live in downtown New York, it's a given that you will hear a lot of noise. It's a given.*

**So he goes on to say, "it's a given that you're gonna experience earthquakes."**

*Gonna. This is short for going to. You'll hear gonna in conversations but you won't see it in written English.*

**And then Joe goes on to say, "You just hope that you're not gonna be here for the big one, y'know..."**

*The big one. What he's talking about is, you hope that you're not gonna be here, or around, for a really big earthquake that might hurt or kill a lot of people.*

**And then I laugh and say, "Yeah, right."**

*So I'm saying, yeah, I know. Or I'm just agreeing with Joe.*

**And Joe says, "When I first moved here, it was, uh, about five years after the Loma Prieta earthquake..."**

*Loma Prieta. This is the name of a mountain, where this earthquake he's talking about that happened five years before he moved to San Francisco... The Loma Prieta mountain was at the epicenter or the middle of the earthquake.*

**So he says, "about five years after the Loma Prieta earthquake, which was a very big earthquake here. And, um, there are a lot of people who lived here who I met who had actually been living in the area when the earthquake hit."**

*Or when the earthquake happened.*

**"So it was interesting to get their perspective..."**

*Perspective. What Joe is saying here is what someone thinks about something. Perspective. An example of perspective is: I like to speak with my mother when I have a problem. She always has a different perspective than me. Perspective.*

**And then I say, "Oh."**

*Oh, here is really just filler. It has no meaning. I didn't even have to say that but I just say it. Oh.*

**And then Joe says, "and, uh, it also like made me remember where I was when I heard about the**



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**Loma Prieta earthquake. I was watching the World Series on TV.”**

*World Series. This is the championship games in American baseball. World Series. For example: Joe really likes baseball. One year he went to the World Series even though the tickets were expensive. World Series.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “And, uh, y’know, it was, uh, taking place in San Francisco.”**

*Taking place. This means happening. Happening in San Francisco. Taking place. For example: I remember the Winter Olympics taking place in Japan when I was younger. Taking place.*

**And then Joe says, “So, uh, as I’m watching it suddenly the announcer starts, uh, uh, saying, ‘Wow...”**

*Announcer. This is a person who talks throughout a sports game about what’s happening. Wow. This is just showing emotion such as, I don’t believe it.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “I think we’re feeling an earthquake here.’ And the cameras started shaking.”**

*The TV cameras.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “And, uh, all of a sudden the TV coverage...”**

*The TV coverage of the game.*

**“cut out.”**

*Now. cut out... Here cut out means no longer was able to be seen. The TV coverage of the game cut out. It was no longer able to be seen. For example: The television station cut out during the big rain storm. Cut out.*

**And then Joe says, “So, uh, y’know, I wanted to get a rundown on what happened.”**

*Rundown. This is information. He wanted to get information on what happened. Rundown. An example of rundown would be: I called my mother to get a rundown on how my father was doing. Rundown.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “So I turned to the news station...”**

*Or I changed to the news station.*

**“and, uh, within a few minutes...”**





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*Few meaning three or more.*

**“they were discussing...”**

*Discussing or talking.*

**“they were discussing this gigantic earthquake that had hit San Francisco. And they started showing pictures, uh, maybe thirty minutes later, of these people who were, uh, trying to weed through the rubble of these buildings that had been, like, coming down.”**

*Weed through. This means to look or dig through. Weed through. An example of weed through is: I had to weed through a lot of papers when I did my yearly income taxes for the government. Weed through. So he’s saying there were people trying to weed through the rubble of these buildings. Rubble means parts. The parts of these buildings that had been like coming down or falling down.*

**And Joe says, “so, I mean, it was...” And I say, “Oh, wow.” And Joe says, “it was pretty scary...”**

*Pretty means very here.*

**And Joe says, “I’ll tell you what...”**

*I’ll tell you what. That means that is for sure. I’ll tell you what. An example of I’ll tell you what in this situation would be: I’ll tell you what, I really enjoyed the Thai food we had today. I’ll tell you what.*

**And I say, “Yeah.” And Joe says, “y’know.” And then I say, “Yeah, well, um, you know the three months I was living in Japan I experienced two. Both of those were very different, uh, very different from the one I’d experienced here and also very different from the one in Bangkok. But one of ‘em...”**

*‘Em is just short for them. This is something that you’ll hear in conversational English but not see it in written English.*

**So I say, “But one of ‘em, I was actually up in my apartment which was on the fifth floor of a building. And I was woken up at about 5 o’clock in the morning to the building swaying.”**

*Swaying means moving from one side to the other side.*

**And I go on to say, “And because, uh, earthquakes are like a dime a dozen in Japan...”**

*A dime a dozen. This means very common. A dime a dozen. An example of a dime a dozen would be: I*



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*remember when no one had a cell phone. But today they are a dime a dozen. A dime a dozen.*

**And then I say, “they, they’ve built a lot of their buildings to absorb the shock.”**

*So what I’m saying here... To absorb the shock means the buildings take the shaking from an earthquake much easier. They make their buildings to take the shaking from the earthquake easier. Absorb the shock.*

**And then I say, “So that’s why it was swaying, it was really, it was a very surreal feel.”**

*Surreal. This means unreal. Surreal. For example: I looked at the sky and it was purple. It looked surreal.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Okay, so that is the end of the conversation and this is the end of the vocabulary lesson for the conversation “Earthquakes.” So if you need to, go back and listen to this until you have a basic understanding of the vocabulary. And when you feel ready, go to the mini-story.

Alright, bye bye. See you next time.