

Earthquake Legends & "Wordologies"

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The following earthquake legends are taken from the FEMA for Kids page of the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency Web site (<http://www.fema.gov/kids/kidlink.htm>). The Disaster Area link has information and explanations about earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, hurricanes and other natural disasters.

India: The Earth is held up by four elephants that stand on the back of a turtle. The turtle is balanced on top of a cobra. When any of these animals move, the Earth trembles and shakes.

Latvia: A god named Drebkuhls carries the Earth in his arms as he walks through the heavens. When he's having a bad day, he might handle his burden a little roughly. Then the Earth will feel the shaking.

West Africa: The Earth is a flat disk, held up on one side by an enormous mountain and on the other by a giant. The giant's wife holds up the sky. The Earth trembles when he stops to hug her.

Romania: The world rests on the divine pillars of faith, hope, and charity. When the deeds of human beings make one of the pillars weak, the Earth shakes.

Mozambique: The Earth is a living creature, and it has the same kinds of problems people have. Sometimes it gets sick with fever and chills and we can feel its shaking.

East Africa: A giant fish carries a stone on his back. A cow stands on the stone, balancing the Earth on one of her horns. From time to time, her neck begins to ache, and she tosses the globe from one horn to the other.

Colombia: When the Earth was first made, it rested firmly on three large beams of wood. But one day the god Chibchacum decided that it would be fun to see the plain of Bogota under water. He flooded the land, and for his punishment he is forced to carry the world on his shoulders. Sometimes he's angry and stomps, shaking the Earth.

West Africa: A giant carries the Earth on his head. All the plants that grow on the Earth are his hair, and people and animals are the insects that crawl through his hair. He usually sits and faces the east, but once in a while he turns to the west and then back to the east, with a jolt that is felt as an earthquake.

quake in one's boots—to be afraid

Stop quaking in your boots, Jim. We are not hiring a new employee to replace you.

down to earth—friendly, frank, and practical

Although he is the president of the company, he is down to earth when it comes to getting the job done.

from the ground up—from the beginning; from start to finish

I dedicated myself from the ground up to complete the magazine on time.

cover a lot of ground—to deal with much information

We covered a lot of ground during the three-hour business meeting.

keep one's feet on the ground—to get firmly established

The new secretary just started and has already gotten her feet on the ground.

rock solid—dependable

The new boss spoke about how rock solid Jane can be; she does the work of three people.

between a rock and a hard place—in a very difficult situation

My supervisor did not prepare me for the meeting, so I was between a rock and a hard place when they started asking me questions.

over the hill—too old to do something

When my grandfather turned 80, he felt like he was over the hill.

in deep water (also in hot water)—in a dangerous or vulnerable situation

I was in deep water when I deleted the document by mistake.

water under the bridge—a closed or finished matter

After they signed the new contract, our prior disagreements were water under the bridge.

get one's second wind—to be rejuvenated; to become more active or productive

Although I was very tired after scanning the first 10 chapters into the computer, I got my second wind and finished the final 10 chapters without falling asleep.

take the wind out of someone's sails—to challenge someone's boasting; to disappoint

We tried Bob's proposed solution to fix the computer, but it failed miserably. That took the wind out of his sails.

on cloud nine—very happy

She was on cloud nine after she received her promotion.

head in the clouds—oblivious; unaware of what is going on

During the staff meeting, Bob had his head in the clouds. Afterward, he had no idea what we had been discussing.

kick up a storm—to become a nuisance; to make a disturbance

Jim really kicked up a storm at the conference reception we had in Miami, so on the trip home everyone was angry at him.

take by storm—to favorably impress or overwhelm

The new football star has taken the team by storm. He's scored six goals in his first four matches!

under the weather—not feeling well

I am a bit under the weather today, so I may see a doctor.