

*Essential Question: Can fracking cause earthquakes?*

- Describe the process of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”)
- Explain why our energy needs encourage the United States to pursue controversial solutions like fracking
- Explain what earthquakes are and describe the mechanism by which fracking could create earthquakes.

**Vocabulary Terms:**

**“Fracking” (hydraulic fracturing)** – the use of pressurized water to separate rock formations and extract gas.

**Natural gas** – an energy source that occurs naturally composed of many compounds.

**Seismic (earthquake) waves** – waves moving through the earth following earthquakes.

**Richter scale** – a number assigned to the strength of an earthquake.

This story explores whether fracking pollutes underground aquifers and causes earthquakes. It looks at a class action lawsuit in Arkansas.

1. How are earthquakes in Arkansas being detected?
2. What is it about fracking that could cause earthquakes?
3. Why is it difficult to determine whether or not these earthquakes are caused by fracking?

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