

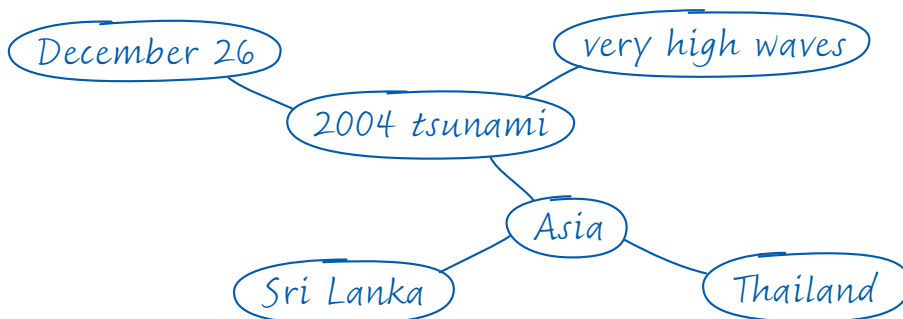
# UNIT 2



Simeulue Island

## 1 PRE-READING

What do you know about the tsunami of 2004? Share what you know with the class. Your teacher will write the information on the board and organize it in an idea map. See below how one class began their idea map.



# The *Semong* (The Tsunami)

On the island of Simeulue in Indonesia, an old woman was telling a story to her grandchildren. “Once upon a time,” she began, “there was a little girl named Kiro. Kiro lived in our village a long time ago—before you were born, before your parents were born, even before I was born. One day Kiro was in her house, helping her mother in the kitchen. Suddenly the ground began to shake. It shook and shook. It shook so hard that Kiro and her mother couldn’t stand up, and they fell to the floor. All around them, dishes and pots were falling from the shelves and crashing to the floor. Finally, the shaking stopped. Kiro and her mother got up and walked out of their house.”

“Then what happened, Grandma?” the children asked, although they knew what happened next. They had heard the story many times before.

“Kiro looked toward the beach,” the grandmother continued, “and she saw something she had never seen before. All the water was leaving the beach. It was going out toward the sea. Where there once had been a narrow beach, there was a wide beach. Beautiful, colorful fish were lying all over the beach. Some people were picking up the fish and putting them in baskets. Other people were standing on the beach looking out at the water. But Kiro remembered the story her grandmother had told her. So she yelled to the people.”

Here the grandmother paused. “Do you remember what Kiro yelled?” she asked her grandchildren.

“Run!” the children answered.

“That’s right. Kiro yelled, ‘Run! *Semong!*’ Do you remember what a *semong* is?”

“A big wave!” the children answered.

“Yes,” the old woman said. “A very big wave. Bigger than a boy. Bigger than a girl. Bigger than a house. Bigger than a palm tree.”

She continued the story.

“Run! *Semong!*” Kiro yelled. People put down their baskets of fish. They picked up their children. They ran to the hills behind our village. Then the *semong* came. A wall of water came toward the village. The water covered the beach

and covered the houses and covered the trees. But all the people were safe because they were standing on the hills. And that is the story of Kiro and the *semong*.”

Why was the old woman telling her grandchildren this story? She was warning them. In 1907, a tsunami—a giant wave—had hit their island, and many people had died. She wanted the children to be ready if another tsunami came.

Another tsunami did come to Simeulue. On the morning of December 26, 2004, an earthquake in the Indian Ocean created huge waves. The waves came first to Simeulue, the island closest to the earthquake.

A 33-year-old man named Suhardin, who lives on the coast of Simeulue, told a reporter about his experience. He said his grandmother had told him stories about the *semong*. But he didn’t think about his grandmother’s stories when he felt the earthquake. Nothing had happened after an earthquake three years ago. Why would there be a *semong* after this earthquake? But then a man ran past him yelling, “*Semong! Semong!*” Suhardin thought about his grandmother and decided to climb one of the hills behind his village.

When he got to the top of the hill, hundreds of people were already there, and more people were climbing the steep hill. Some were helping old people up the hill, and some were carrying small children. Before long, everyone in the village was on top of the hill, looking out toward the sea. For thirty minutes, nothing happened. Then, just as Suhardin was thinking about walking back down the hill, the water along the coast rushed out to the sea. After that, the first wave came: A wall of water over 30 feet (10 meters) high crashed on the shore below. Suhardin watched the water take his whole village out to sea.

The tsunami of 2004 hit fourteen countries, and more than 280,000 people died. But on the island of Simeulue, with 75,000 people, only seven died. Why did so many people on Simeulue survive?

They survived for two reasons. First, they survived because Simeulue’s hills are close to the

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coast. When the tsunami came, people could run to safety. People in other places were not so lucky; they had no nearby hills to run to. Second, they survived because they remembered the stories the old people told about the *semong*, stories that warned them to run to the hills after an earthquake.

The people of Simeulue hope another tsunami never comes to their island. But just in case, they will tell their grandchildren the story of the *semong*. Someday the story could save their grandchildren's lives, just as the story saved theirs.

## 2 VOCABULARY

### LOOKING AT THE STORY

Complete the sentences with the words below.

coast	island	survived	whole
crashed	paused	village	wide
huge	steep	warn	yelled

1. There is water all around Simeulue. It is an island.
2. Only 500 people lived in Kiro's \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The dishes and pots made a loud noise when they \_\_\_\_\_ to the floor.
4. The beach near Kiro's village was narrow, but after the water left, it was \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Kiro's grandmother stopped in her story because she wanted to be sure the children understood the word *semong*. She \_\_\_\_\_ for a minute and asked them, "Do you remember what a *semong* is?"
6. Everyone on the beach heard Kiro because she spoke loudly. "Run!" she \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The grandmother wanted the children to be ready if another dangerous tsunami came. She wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ them.
8. The first wave was over 30 feet (10 meters) high. It was \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Suhardin didn't live in the center of the island; he lived close to the water, on the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. It was difficult for old people and children to climb the hill behind Suhardin's village because the hill was \_\_\_\_\_.
11. The water covered everything in Suhardin's village—houses and shops, bicycles and cars. The water took the \_\_\_\_\_ village out to sea.
12. Simeulue had 75,000 people. Seven people died, and 74,993 \_\_\_\_\_.

## LOOKING AT A NEW CONTEXT

**A** Choose five words from the list of words on page 14 that you want to remember. Use each word in your own sentence. Write your sentences on the lines below. Here, for example, is a sentence one student wrote using the word *huge*.

*I saw a huge bear at the zoo.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**B** Test your memory of the new words: Cross out the five words so that you can't read them. For example:

*I saw a ~~huge~~ bear at the zoo.*

**C** When you are finished with the exercises in this unit, come back to this exercise. Can you remember the words you crossed out?

**D** Sometimes you can write a word in a way that helps you remember it. Choose one of these words from the story: *crash, huge, island, pause, steep*. Write it in the box below in a way that helps you remember it. For example, you can write the word *wide* this way:

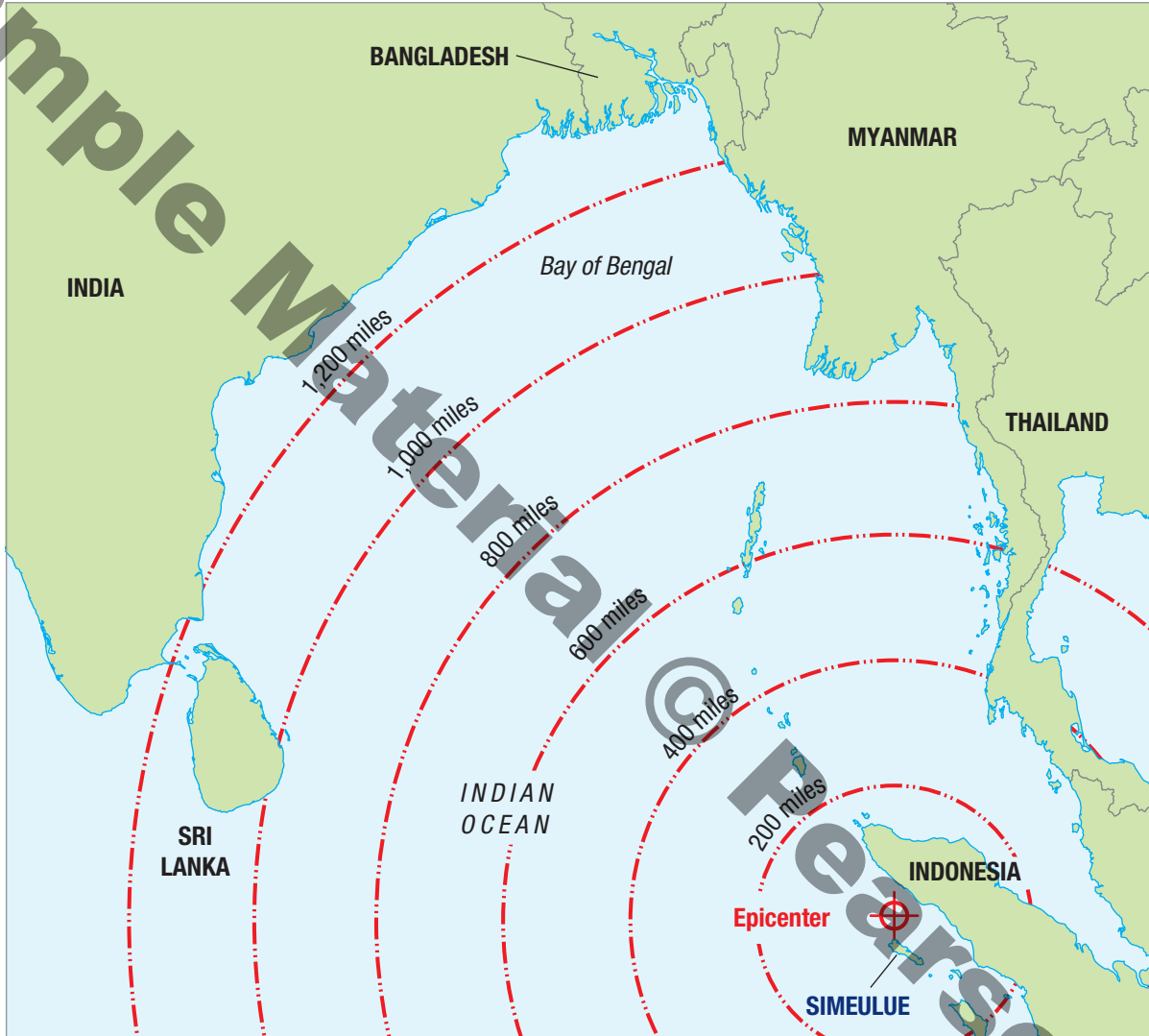
*W I D E*

**E** Now write your word in the same way on the board and share your idea with the class.

### 3 COMPREHENSION/READING SKILLS

#### UNDERSTANDING THE MAIN IDEA

Imagine this: You and a friend are looking at the map below. How would you explain to your friend why almost everyone on the island of Simeulue survived? Write your explanation on the lines.



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## UNDERSTANDING DETAILS

**A** Read the sentences with information from the story. One word in each sentence is not correct. Find the word and cross it out. Write the correct word.

1. The old woman in the story lived on an island in ~~Thailand~~ <sup>Indonesia</sup>.
2. She told her grandchildren a story about a girl named Sinta.
3. In 1950, a tsunami killed many people in Simeulue.
4. The 2004 earthquake was on the morning of January 26.
5. An earthquake in the Pacific Ocean created huge waves.

**B** Now write three sentences with information from the story, but change one word in each sentence so that the information is not correct.

6. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**C** Give your sentences to a classmate. Your classmate will find the incorrect word in each sentence, cross it out, and write the correct word. When your classmate is finished, check the corrections.

## RETELLING A STORY

Imagine this: It is many years from now. Suhardin, the man in the story, is an old man with grandchildren. Like the grandmother at the beginning of the story, Suhardin wants to warn his grandchildren. He tells them about his 2004 tsunami experience. Complete his story on your own paper. Write the story in words a child could understand.

*When I was a little boy, my grandmother told me stories about the semong. "If there is an earthquake," my grandmother told me, "run to the hills!" But when I felt the earthquake in 2004, I didn't think about my grandmother's stories. I didn't run. But then a man ran past me. He was yelling, . . .*

## 4 DISCUSSION

**A** Work as a class to make a list of natural disasters (for example, tsunamis and hurricanes). Your teacher will write your list on the board.

**B** Copy the words in the spaces along the top of the chart below. On the left side of the chart, write the names of your classmates' countries.

Country	tsunamis	hurricanes									

**C** Walk around the room and find a person from each country. Ask your classmates if the natural disasters written at the top of the chart happen in their countries. Check (✓) your classmates' "yes" answers.

**D** Ask your classmates for more information about their "yes" answers.

## 5 WRITING

The old woman told a story to warn her grandchildren about a tsunami. All over the world, people tell stories that warn of danger or teach a lesson.

**A** Write a story that warns of danger or teaches a lesson. It can be a story that people in your country tell, a story from your personal life, or a story that you made up. Here is what one student wrote.

*When I lived in California, there were earthquakes sometimes. One day when there was an earthquake, my friend was at home with her baby. She ran to the baby's bed, picked up the baby, and ran to a doorway. She stood in the doorway and held the baby. A piece of the ceiling fell down on the baby's bed. So if there is an earthquake, stand in a doorway.*

**B** Have you ever experienced a natural disaster? Write about your experience. Here is what one student wrote.

*Costa Rica is a small country, but it has eight volcanoes. Currently three of them are active, so we have many earthquakes.*

*I remember one (among many) really well because my brother Eduardo was visiting us then. We lived in a second-floor apartment with wood floors. Eduardo is a big man, and when he walked across the floor, the floor made a noise. I told him three times, "Eduardo, don't make so much noise when you walk. It bothers the people living below us." He told me, "I'm not making noise." Then we realized an earthquake was causing the floor to make noise. A few minutes later, we had a much stronger earthquake, and everything started shaking and falling down.*

*When the earthquake was over, my brother said, "Let's go see the damage the earthquake did." I told him, "Eduardo, let's not go because we might have another earthquake." But he insisted, so we went. When we walked through the streets, we saw many signs and cables on the ground. The walls of some buildings had fallen down. A man told us that he had been ready to get into his car when the earthquake happened and the wall of a building fell down on it.*

*Days later, friends told me that they had been in a supermarket and could hear glass breaking as jars of food crashed to the floor.*

*That earthquake caused a lot of damage.*



## CHALLENGE

Many popular vacation spots are in the area hit by the 2004 tsunami, so some of the people who experienced it were tourists. The following are three stories of people who were on vacation when the tsunami hit. They are first-person accounts—that is, the people told the stories in their own words.

**A** Read the stories.

### 1 Jillian Searle

**Home country:** Australia

**Age:** 32 (in 2004)

**Occupation:** Homemaker

My husband and I were on vacation in Phuket, Thailand,<sup>1</sup> with our two sons: Lachie, who was five, and Blake, who was two. We were all relaxing at the hotel pool. My husband had just left—he'd gone back up to our room to get some clothes for Blake. I saw a big wall of water coming straight for us, and I just started running. I had both my boys in my arms, one in each arm, and we started going under. I knew that if I held on to both, we would all die. I just thought I'd better let go of Lachie, the oldest. He was squeezing me and saying, "Don't let go of me,

Mummy." I saw a teenage girl nearby. "Grab him!" I screamed to her as I let go of Lachie's hand. She grabbed hold of him for a moment, but she had to let go because she was going under. And then I couldn't see Lachie.

After the water receded, my husband and I looked for Lachie. I was screaming trying to find him. We thought he was dead. I remember telling my husband, "There is no way I can live my life knowing that I took his hand off mine." We looked for about two hours, and then we found him with a hotel security guard. He'd kept his head above water by holding onto a door in the hotel lobby.

We are so lucky. I'm just thankful I still have my two kids with me.

### 2 Stephen Boulton

**Home country:** Scotland

**Age:** 34 (in 2004)

**Occupation:** Plumber and volunteer firefighter

I was celebrating my 34th birthday with my wife and three children—they were 12, 4, and 2—at a resort in the Maldives.<sup>2</sup> We were on the pier when suddenly the tide came in. Before we knew it, the water was up to our chests. It was so strong that we knew if we fell, it would pull us under. My wife and I grabbed our kids and waded through horrendous currents back to our hotel. When we turned around to look at the pier, we saw that it was gone.

After about five minutes, the tide went back

out as far as you could see, as if someone pulled the plug. I didn't like what I was seeing. We climbed up a palm tree with the younger kids on our backs. I tied each child to a branch of the tree with beach towels. Then the second wave came. It was like the whole sea was heading our way. It sped past within inches of our feet. After the water receded, I climbed down to help the injured, but my family stayed up in the tree for a couple of hours, just to be on the safe side.

I never thought for a second we wouldn't be OK. From the moment it all started going crazy, I worked out every possible scenario—and solutions. That's just the way I am.

1 Phuket Island is off the west coast of Thailand. It is 310 miles (500 kilometers) from the epicenter of the earthquake.

2 The Republic of Maldives is an island nation southwest of India. It consists of 1,192 islands, 200 of which are inhabited. It is 1,400 miles (2,252 kilometers) west of the epicenter of the earthquake.

### 3 Tilly Smith

**Home country:** England  
**Age:** 10 (in 2004)  
**Occupation:** Student

I was on holiday with my parents and little sister in Phuket, Thailand. We were on the beach, and the water started to go funny. There were bubbles, and then the tide went out all of a sudden. I recognized what was happening and had a feeling there was going to be a tsunami. Just two weeks before, our geography teacher had taught us about earthquakes and how they cause tsunamis.

He told us that after the sea sucked backwards, a tsunami would come in five or ten minutes. When the water went back, I said, "Mummy, we must get off the beach *now*." My mum wanted to look at what was going on, but when I told her about tsunamis, she had second thoughts. We ran off the beach as fast as we could. My parents warned the other people on the beach—there were about 100 people there—and they all ran, too. We went up to the third floor of our hotel. A few minutes later, the tsunami came. After the wave came, I said to Mummy, "I told you."

**B** Look at the photos. They illustrate scenes in the stories. Which photo goes best with which story? Write the number of the story on the line below the photo.



a. \_\_\_\_\_



b. \_\_\_\_\_



c. \_\_\_\_\_

**C** Read the newspaper headlines. Which headline goes with which story? Write the number of the story next to the correct headline.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Family Saved by Their Towels
- \_\_\_\_\_ Geography Lesson Saves Family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Which Child to Save?