

# Living by a stormy beach

Beaches are built by waves. During storms, beaches can be completely overwhelmed by waves.

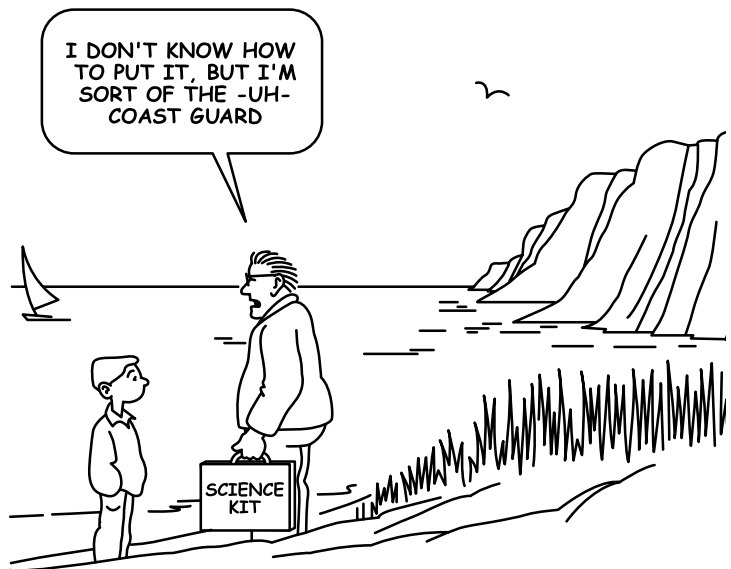
**Q1.** Why would people want to live by a beach?

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**Q2.** What kind of foundations would houses need when built by a beach?

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**Q3.** Can you think of a common building that is built on the beach.

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**Q4.** What is the difference between the parts of the coast where people lived in the past and the parts they want to live in today?

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**Q5.** Look at the cartoon. Can you think of how a scientist can be a kind of coastguard?

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## Answers

1. **Because the sea is attractive and they may want to go swimming, etc.**
2. **Sand is a very soft, loose material that is readily washed away. To get any degree of stability, stilts are needed.**
3. **A pier. Many seaside towns have piers that have buildings on them. However, piers have a high risk of destruction from strong waves, as several recent collapses have demonstrated.**
4. **They wanted sheltered harbours in the past in order to protect their ships and fishing boats. Today they want beaches for leisure.**
5. **A scientist can find out what is happening to the coast and help people to understand the hazards better.**

## Notes

*In this section you get the opportunity to discuss risk. People often put themselves at risk. Sometimes this is due to ignorance (for example, they simply had not considered the difference between the summer waves they had seen while on holiday and the stronger winter waves) or they might not feel the risk is important.*

*In general, people who put themselves at risk also put others at risk and cause extra expense to the community when they have to be rescued. Putting yourself at risk and then expecting others to help you when you get into trouble can be considered an antisocial activity. Yet thousands do it.*

*The only way to prevent people putting themselves at risk is through planning controls. Planning controls, such as the prohibition of development in risk-prone areas, is the result of long term studies of what actually happens and so has a scientific basis.*

*Children might also like to consider that people in the past used the coast in a very different way from today. In the past, the coast was used as a means of earning a living and so people knew the area of the coast where they lived and how to stay alive. Today, with greater discretionary income, people can go to the coast for purely recreational purposes and such people have little knowledge of the risks. Furthermore, the part of the coast they want to use is completely different from in the past. Beaches were of little use to people in the past; they preferred sheltered harbours. Today the reverse is true.*