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Written by Don Long  
Edited by Alison Auch  
Designed by ThinkSpace Design  
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# Crash!

A major crash has just happened. People are panicking. Reporters are rushing to cover the story. Millions of lives are shattered. Yet emergency services are nowhere to be seen – and no one has died. What on earth is going on?



There *has* been a crash, but maybe not the kind you were expecting. This is a stock market crash, and often these are more destructive than real accidents.

## What's a Stock Market?

Some companies are owned by just one person. There are probably stores near you that are like this. The person who helps you may even be the owner.



### Fast Fact

“Stock” and “share” are two words for the same thing: a share in the ownership of a company.

However, large companies are often owned by a lot of people, sometimes even millions of people. The ownership of these companies is divided up into **shares**. Each owner owns one or more shares in the company. Turn the page to see an example of shared ownership.