

Volcanoes - Fire Mountains

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Volcanoes are powerful openings in the Earth's surface where hot **molten** rock escapes from deep underground. These fire mountains have fascinated and terrified humans for thousands of years throughout history. When a volcano **erupts**, it can shoot lava, ash, and gases high into the sky above. There are about fifteen hundred active volcanoes around the world that could erupt at any time. Scientists called **volcanologists** study these mountains to understand how they work and when they might explode.



Deep beneath every volcano lies a pool of melted rock called **magma** waiting under pressure. When pressure builds up too much, the magma pushes upward through cracks and openings in the earth. Once magma reaches the surface, it is called lava and can flow for miles burning everything nearby. The temperature of lava can reach over two thousand degrees, hot enough to melt steel easily. Some **eruptions** are gentle and slow, while others are violent explosions that destroy entire cities.

Volcanoes have shaped our planet in many important ways over millions of years. The Hawaiian Islands were created entirely by underwater volcanoes rising from the ocean floor. Rich volcanic soil is extremely **fertile** and perfect for growing crops like coffee and grapes. Many hot springs and **geysers** exist because of heat from underground volcanic activity below. Even the air we breathe contains gases that came from ancient volcanic eruptions billions of years ago.

The Pacific Ring of Fire is home to most of the world's active volcanoes today. This **horseshoe-shaped** zone surrounds the Pacific Ocean and includes Japan, Indonesia, and western Americas. Mount Vesuvius in Italy famously destroyed the Roman city of Pompeii in seventy-nine AD completely. More recently, the nineteen eighty Mount St. Helens eruption in Washington caused massive **destruction** across the region. Scientists monitor these dangerous mountains constantly to warn people of possible eruptions ahead.

Living near a volcano can be both **beneficial** and extremely dangerous for local communities. Farmers love the rich soil, but they must always be ready to **evacuate** quickly if needed. Early warning systems help save lives by detecting signs of volcanic activity before eruptions occur suddenly. Communities practice emergency drills so everyone knows exactly what to do during an eruption event. Understanding volcanoes helps us respect their power while enjoying the benefits they provide to our world.

A. Vocabulary

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|--------------------------|--|
| 1. molten ____ | a. hot melted rock beneath Earth's surface |
| 2. erupts ____ | b. severe damage or complete ruin |
| 3. volcanologists ____ | c. hot springs that shoot water into the air |
| 4. magma ____ | d. scientists who study volcanoes |
| 5. eruptions ____ | e. explosions of lava and gas from volcanoes |
| 6. fertile ____ | f. suddenly bursts out with force |
| 7. geysers ____ | g. to leave a dangerous place quickly |
| 8. horseshoe-shaped ____ | h. curved like a letter U |
| 9. destruction ____ | i. melted by extremely high heat |

10. evacuate _____

j. good for growing plants and crops

B. True or False

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. There are about 1,500 active volcanoes in the world. _____ | 2. Lava is hotter than molten steel. _____ | 3. All volcanic eruptions are violent explosions. _____ |
| 4. The Hawaiian Islands were created by volcanoes. _____ | 5. Volcanic soil is bad for growing crops. _____ | 6. Mount Vesuvius destroyed the city of Pompeii. _____ |
| 7. The Ring of Fire is in the Atlantic Ocean. _____ | 8. Scientists cannot detect signs of volcanic activity. _____ | 9. Magma is called lava when it reaches the surface. _____ |

C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: molten, erupts, magma, fertile, geysers, destruction, evacuate

- Volcanoes release hot _____ rock from deep underground.
- When a volcano _____, it can shoot lava high into the sky.
- Deep beneath every volcano lies a pool of melted rock called _____.
- Volcanic soil is extremely _____ and great for growing crops.
- Communities must be ready to _____ quickly if a volcano threatens.

D. Comprehension Questions

- What is the difference between magma and lava?
- How were the Hawaiian Islands created?
- What is the Pacific Ring of Fire?
- What happened to the city of Pompeii in 79 AD?
- Why do farmers like to live near volcanoes despite the danger?

E. Discussion Questions

- Would you want to live near an active volcano? Why or why not?
- How do you think people felt about volcanoes before scientists understood them?
- What should a family do to prepare for a possible volcanic eruption?

Answer Key

A. Vocabulary: 1-i, 2-f, 3-d, 4-a, 5-e, 6-j, 7-c, 8-h, 9-b, 10-g

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-T, 3-F, 4-T, 5-F, 6-T, 7-F, 8-F, 9-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-molten, 2-erupts, 3-magma, 4-fertile, 5-evacuate

D. Comprehension: 1. Magma is underground, lava is on the surface; 2. By underwater volcanoes rising from the ocean floor; 3. A horseshoe-shaped zone around the Pacific Ocean with most active volcanoes; 4. It was destroyed by Mount Vesuvius eruption; 5. Because volcanic soil is very fertile for growing crops