



Volcanoes

LC2 Science By: Mrs. Bernsdorff



Day 5

Pompeii

The City of Pompeii

Pompeii was a small town near Naples, Italy. The town was near the Mediterranean Sea and about five miles from Mt. Vesuvius. Pompeii was a hot spot for the rich and famous of ancient Rome. Historians believe that about 12,000 people lived in the city. Pompeii was filled with beautiful houses, factories, and cafes. Pompeians even enjoyed indoor plumbing and grand outdoor theaters. Fresh fish, olives, and bread could be bought at the open market. In many ways, Pompeii was the perfect place to build a home!



Mt. Vesuvius

Geologists believe that Mt. Vesuvius is hundreds of thousands of years old. The volcano had not been active in thousands of years. Pompeians believed it was a safe place to build a city. In addition, the soil at the base of the volcano was fertile and perfect for growing crops. Historians have found ancient documents describing an earthquake that occurred in 63 A.D., only sixteen years before one of the most famous eruptions in history.

The Big Day

In August of 79 A.D., thousands of Pompeians began their day as normal. Men went to work. Women began their household chores. Children began daily lessons.

As the day went on, the volcano grew angry. Black smoke began billowing from the crater. In moments, a thick cloud of dust poured over the town like a blanket. The dust cloud rose 12,000 miles into the sky. Ash could be seen from hundreds of miles away. Some citizens understood nature's warning and left Pompeii. Some, however, ignored the warning and stayed in their beloved town.

It wasn't long before the town was covered in darkness. More ash wheezed from the volcano. It became hard to breathe. Buildings tumbled from the weight of the dust. Suddenly, a river of molten rock poured from Mt. Vesuvius. The volcano spit out chunks of rock. Poisonous gas filled the air and stopped Pompeians in their tracks. Lava burst into the town of Pompeii at 450 miles per hour. It swallowed roads, buildings, and families living in the ancient city. Rivers of molten rock poured into the sea and prevented rescue ships from coming ashore. By midnight, over 2,000 people were buried under millions of tons of ash and debris. Earthquakes and tsunamis followed the massive eruption. Pompeii and several nearby towns were destroyed.

A boy known as Pliny the Younger stood on the roof of his mother's house in the nearby town of Cape Misenum. The boy watched as Pompeii was overcome by the volcano. Pliny the Younger wrote letters that explained what happened on that dreadful day. His letters, which are nearly 2,000 years old, have helped historians understand the events that took so many lives.

Uncovering the Disaster

The story of Pompeii was a mystery until explorers uncovered the site in 1748. They carefully removed over 15 feet of dust, rock, and debris. Archeologists have found hundreds of bodies perfectly preserved in the ancient dirt. Scientists have been able to learn about life in ancient Rome by working through the remains. Pottery, paintings, coins, lanterns, furniture, and even a charm bracelet have all discovered at the dig site.

During World War II, soldiers were stationed at the Pompeii Airfield a few miles from Mt. Vesuvius. They experienced many small eruptions over the course of two weeks. Soldiers wore steel pots on their heads as debris flew from the mountain. Tents collapsed under the weight of the ash. They finally left the area. Mt. Vesuvius has had hundreds of small eruptions since 1944. It is still considered one of the most dangerous volcanoes in the world.



Name _____

Pompeii

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Pompeii Questions

1. What is the main idea of the heading The City of Pompeii?

- a. Pompeii was dangerously close to the volcano.
- b. Pompeii was a great place to live.
- c. People ignored the warning signs that Mt. Vesuvius would erupt.
- d. Pompeii was built during ancient Roman times.

2. Which details show readers that Pompeii was a good place to build a town? Choose the two best answers.

- a. The town was near the Mediterranean Sea.
- b. Historians believe that about 12,000 people lived in the city.
- c. In addition, the soil at the base of the volcano was fertile and perfect for growing crops.
- d. Geologists believe that Mt. Vesuvius is hundreds of thousands of years old.

3. Why does the author include this example of personification in the passage?

As the day went on, the volcano grew angry.

- a. to show that the volcano did not erupt until the afternoon
- b. to show that people believed the eruption occurred because the gods were angry
- c. to show that people believed that the volcano had magical powers
- d. to show that the volcano was dangerous

4. What can readers learn from this sentence?

Lava burst into the town of Pompeii at 450 miles per hour.

- a. The ash was more dangerous than the lava.
- b. Ash and dust made it difficult to breathe.
- c. The lava was very hot and burned down buildings.
- d. By this point, Pompeians had no chance of escaping.

5. Which sentence helps readers visualize the ash coming from Mt. Vesuvius?

- a. In moments, a thick cloud of dust poured over the town like a blanket.
- b. Rivers of molten rock poured into the sea.
- c. As the day went on, the volcano grew angry.
- d. Pompeii and several nearby towns were destroyed.

6. Why is information about Pliny the Younger included in this passage?

- a. to show readers why it is important to write notes and letters
- b. to show readers how historians learned about the eruption of Pompeii
- c. to encourage readers to become scientists
- d. to encourage readers to learn more about volcanoes

7. How is the information organized in the heading The Big Day?

- a. The information is organized in sequence, or time order.
- b. The information compares ancient Pompeii to modern Pompeii.
- c. The information shows the cause and effect relationship to explain why the volcano erupted.
- d. The information describes how many Pompeians left town and were saved.

8. Under which heading would you place this fact?

There were many towns located closer to Mt. Vesuvius than Pompeii. Pompeii experienced the most damage because of the way the wind was blowing that day.

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|------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. The City of Pompeii | b. Mt. Vesuvius |
| c. The Big Day | d. Uncovering the Disaster |

9. Which words from the passage have a similar meaning?

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| a. safe, dangerous | b. ash, dust |
| c. earthquake, tsunami | d. uncover, preserve |

10. Which caption best matches the last photograph from the article?

- a. Pompeians kept many belongings in giant warehouses.
- b. Soldiers helped to uncover remains during World War II.
- c. Archeologists have uncovered hundreds of artifacts from the site.
- d. Many buildings collapsed under the weight of ash and debris.

Name Mrs. Bernsdorff

Pompeii

1 B

2 A & C

3 D

4 D

5 A

6 B

7 A

8 C

9 B

10 C