

Lesson 6: VOLCANOES IN HISTORY



Read about four famous volcanoes. Then choose two and complete a factfile about each of them.

Krakatoa

Krakatoa is a volcano in the island chain of Indonesia in South-East Asia.

Krakatoa last erupted in 1883. Before this, the volcano had not erupted for 200 years. When the eruption started, people did not realise how serious it was and enjoyed the view of steam and gas!

The eruption started on August 26 with an explosion that shot a cloud of black ash and rock about 25 kilometers into the air. The next day, four great eruptions blew two-thirds of the island away. These eruptions were heard as far away as Australia.

Nearby islands were hit by pyroclastic flow - a slow moving river of ash and rock, which in turn caused hurricanes and tsunamis. These burned many people living on near by islands, sank ships and destroyed villages. An estimated 36,000 people died during the two days of the eruption.

Today, Krakatoa has grown into a small island in the hole formed by the 1883 eruption. The volcano is still active and is closely monitored by geologists.



Popocatepetl



Popocatepetl is a volcano in Mexico in Central America, with a height of 5426m above sea level. Popocatépetl is one of the most active volcanoes in Mexico and the most famous, having had more than 15 major eruptions since the arrival of the Spanish in 1519.

The most recent eruption was on 19 March 2019 when fragments of rock shot up to 1km away. The largest recorded eruption was in December 2000. The government was so worried that it evacuated (moved) more than 10,000 people away from the area. Nobody was hurt. The first recorded eruption was in 1363.

Popocatepetl gets its name from the Aztec language and means "smoking mountain".

Vesuvius

Mount Vesuvius is an active volcano located in Italy, the only volcano on mainland Europe. The height of Vesuvius changes each time there is an eruption, but most recently it has been measured at 1281m.

Vesuvius has erupted more than 200 times, the most famous being in 79AD when the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were destroyed. This eruption was so big that it hid the sun, and killed almost all the people living there. Many of the buildings and bodies were preserved in the ash and discovered by archaeologists.

People still live near Mount Vesuvius because the soil is very fertile and is used to grow crops, especially grapes for the famous local wine.



Eyjafjallajökull



Eyjafjallajökull (Aya-fyalla-yurkal) is a volcano located in Iceland, which has about 300 volcanic mountains.

The volcano is 1,651 metres high and usually goes several centuries between eruptions, erupting in 920, 1612, 1821 and 2010. The eruption of Eyjafjallajökull in May 2010 resulted in the grounding of thousands of flights all over Europe. It was the highest level of air travel disruption since World War 2. The ash plume that was created reached a height of 11 km and reached as far as the south coast of England, Germany and parts of western Russia.

Another glacier-covered volcano, Katla, is located about 25 km away from Eyjafjallajökull. In the past, an eruption at Eyjafjallajökull was always followed by an eruption at Katla, although in 2010 the volcano was quiet.

Volcano name: _____

Location: _____

Height: _____

Famous eruptions: _____

Consequences of the eruption: _____

Fun fact: _____

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