

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 50 MINS

Volcanic Eruptions

Students read first-person accounts of volcanic eruptions and illustrate the eruptions in order to compare and contrast them.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

Earth Science, Geography, Physical Geography

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OVERVIEW

Students read first-person accounts of volcanic eruptions and illustrate the eruptions in order to compare and contrast them.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/volcanic-eruptions/>

DIRECTIONS

1. Activate students' prior knowledge about volcanoes.

Ask: What do you already know about volcanoes from books, television, movies, or personal experience? Write students' responses on the board and compare and contrast them. Then explain to students that there are about 1,500 potentially active volcanoes in the world; 65 of them are in the United States. Tell students that a volcano is classified as active if it is capable of erupting, or sending out rocks, ash, and lava in a sudden explosion.

2. Have students read first-person accounts of volcanic eruptions.

Distribute a copy of the worksheet First-Person Accounts of Volcanic Eruptions to each student. Have students read the two descriptions carefully and circle or highlight the words and phrases in each that describe characteristics of the eruptions. Have students trade worksheets with a partner and compare the words and phrases they noted. Ask: *What is being described?*

3. Have pairs illustrate the first-person accounts.

Ask half the pairs to illustrate one first-person account and half the pairs to illustrate the other. Tell students to include the volcano, observer, and all details mentioned in the account. Then have volunteers from each pair describe what is happening in their illustration. Compare illustrations for the two different first-person accounts. Ask:

- *Do all volcanoes look the same? If not, how do you think they differ?*
- *Do all volcanoes erupt in the same way? What can be different about eruptions?*
- *Are the dangers from all volcanoes the same? Explain.*

Modification

Read aloud the first-person accounts for auditory learners or struggling readers.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Earth Science

Geography

- Physical Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- describe volcanic eruptions in first-person accounts they read
- explain the similarities and differences between the volcanic eruptions

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Reading

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Remembering
 - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
 - Acquiring Geographic Information
 - Organizing Geographic Information

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 7:

The physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth's surface

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS

- (5-8) Standard D-1:

Structure of the earth system

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Colored pencils
- Highlighters
- Markers
- Pencils
- Pens

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Small-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Volcanoes are natural hazards in many parts of the world, and throughout human history. Different types of volcanoes erupt in different ways. You can read written accounts of volcanic eruptions to understand the dangers of volcanoes.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- [Types of Volcanic Eruptions](#)

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
active volcano	<i>noun</i>	volcano that has had a recorded eruption since the last glacial period, about 10,000 years ago.
erupt	<i>verb</i>	to explode or suddenly eject material.
eruption	<i>noun</i>	release of material from an opening in the Earth's crust.

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
volcano	<i>noun</i>	an opening in the Earth's crust, through which lava, ash, and gases erupt, and also the cone built by eruptions.

For Further Exploration

Websites

- [PBS: Savage Earth—Out of The Inferno: Volcanoes](#)
- [National Geographic News: Hawaii's "Gentle" Volcano More Dangerous Than Thought](#)



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