

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## First-Person Accounts of Volcanic Eruptions

Read both of the first-person accounts of volcanic eruptions below. Circle or highlight the words and phrases from each that describe characteristics of the eruptions.

**1. Pliny the Younger describes Pliny the Elder's experience with Mt. Vesuvius in Pompeii, Italy, A.D. 79. Pliny the Younger, 61-113 A.D., witnessed the eruption of Vesuvius during the Roman Empire.**

"The cloud was shaped like an umbrella pine, with a long trunk that branched at the top. It was so remarkable, my uncle wanted to study it closer. He ordered a boat to be prepared. Fearlessly, he headed across the bay, straight for danger, all the while making notes of the movements and shapes of the clouds. Soon, ashes were falling; hot and dense. Next came pumice stones, black and scorched by fire. He came ashore near his friend's villa and hoping to calm him by his own composure, my uncle asked to bathe and rest.

Soon the courtyard outside his room filled with ash. The buildings swayed with heavy tremors. The sky turned blacker than night. Then flames and sulphur fumes sent everyone into flight. He asked for water, then stood up and suddenly collapsed; his breath choked by the thickening fog. Daylight came three days later." (Letter 9.14)

**2. Samuel Clemens wrote a newspaper article about Kilauea Volcano as Mark Twain. The text below is an excerpt of the full article, which was published in the Sacramento, CA, *Daily Union* on November 16, 1866.**

"Through the glasses, the little fountains scattered about looked very beautiful. They boiled, and coughed, and spluttered, and discharged sprays of stringy red fire—of about the consistency of mush, for instance—from ten to fifteen feet into the air, along with a shower of brilliant white sparks—a quaint and unnatural mingling of goutts of blood and snow flakes!"

"I could see the North Lake lying out on the black floor away off in the outer edge of our panorama, and knitted to it by a webwork of lava streams. . . ."

"I forgot to say that the noise made by the bubbling lava is not great, heard as we heard it from our lofty perch. It makes three distinct sounds—a rushing, a hissing, and a coughing or puffing sound; and if you stand on the brink and close your eyes it is no trick at all to imagine that you are sweeping down a river on a large low pressure steamer, and that you hear the hissing of the steam about her boilers, the puffing from her escape pipes and the churning rush of the water abaft her wheels. . . ."



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