

# Volcanoes

What is a Volcano? Volcanoes are mountains, but they aren't typical mountains. Volcanoes are formed when magma (hot, liquid rock) rises up from beneath and leaks into the Earth's crust, or surface level. It forms a pool beneath the surface called a magma chamber. As this pool gets bigger, it swells the earth on top of it upwards and outwards.

The term volcano comes from Vulcan, the Roman God of fire and metalworking; so it was originally believed that smoke and fire from volcanoes was evidence that Vulcan was doing his metalwork inside of them. A small island was named Vulcano because of its many volcanoes.

Volcanoes erupt when the pressure of the magma beneath the surface becomes too great for the rock above it to contain, for at this point the magma breaks through the surface- sometimes in a great explosion- at which point it is called lava.

The temperature inside a volcano is very hot. Scientists say it can get as hot as 2,120°F (3848°C). Molten rock turns an orange-yellow color when it reaches 900°F, yet when it cools to 630°F the color becomes dark to bright cherry red.



## Story Questions

1. What does the word **evidence** mean as used in the passage?

- a) argument      b) proof      c) instruction      d) plan

2. What does a volcanic eruption depend on?

- a) It depends on the amount of air pressure around the volcano.  
b) It depends on the amount of past action from the volcano.  
c) It depends on the pressure of the magma against the surface above it.  
d) It depends on how many years it has been since it last erupted.

3. Which paragraph helps answer the previous question?

- a) first paragraph      b) fourth paragraph      c) second paragraph  
d) third paragraph

4. Which of the following statements is a fact about volcanos?

- a) Volcanoes are made from erosion.  
b) Volcanoes are mountains.  
c) Volcanoes have a vent which is connected to a molten rock.  
d) The temperature inside a volcano is warm.