

A FORCE OF NATURE

nobody can control

What is the most devastating natural disaster that could occur in your country? Perhaps earthquakes and hurricanes aren't likely to strike where you live. Nobody, however, can feel completely safe from the effects of volcanoes. There are some with the potential to erupt so

5 fiercely as to cause terrible loss of life in distant regions, as well as lasting disruption to farming and travel across the globe. Volcanic eruptions whose effects have been felt thousands of miles away have taken place once every hundred years or so in the last few centuries.

10 In 1783, an Icelandic volcano called Laki erupted in spectacular fashion, with lava shooting almost a mile into the sky. The enormous eruption created poisonous clouds that blocked out the sun as far south as England, where around 10,000 people died as a result of breathing problems and adverse weather conditions. Crops failed because of the lack of sunlight and acid rain caused by the eruption. Across the Atlantic,

15 in New Orleans, conditions became so wintry that the Mississippi River froze. On Iceland itself, a quarter of the population, that is 9,000 people, died in a famine caused by Laki's eruption.

In August 1883, there was a disastrous eruption on the other side of the world. For months there had been increasing volcanic activity on the

20 island of Krakatoa in the Indian Ocean. Nobody was prepared for what came next. There were four colossal explosions on one day, the last of which destroyed most of the island and caused tsunamis that killed 36,000 people on the nearby islands of Java and Sumatra. The eruption was so loud that people who were 2,000 miles from Krakatoa could hear

25 it. The eruption changed not only the geography of the region, but it also altered the skies around the world. Sea voyagers reported seeing green sunrises, and sunsets on land and sea were much redder than usual because so much dust had been sent into the atmosphere.

In the modern world, volcanic ash can cause the engines of an airliner to

30 fail. In June 1982, during a British Airways flight between Malaysia and Australia, all the plane's engines cut out. The captain and crew didn't lose hope that a high-speed crash into the Indian Ocean could be avoided. For 15 minutes, they desperately fought to stop the plane losing height,

35 then, thankfully, the engines re-ignited. However, when the plane arrived at Jakarta Airport, the runway was barely visible due to airborne volcanic ash.



That drama was caused by a relatively small volcano on Java, so it's little wonder that flights were cancelled across Europe after Iceland's much larger Mount Eyjafjallajökull erupted in 2010. It's a sobering thought that in the 21st century an eruption on the scale of the 18th century Laki one would make flying impossible for months.



Reading

Read the text and for questions 1-6 decide which answer A, B, C or D is correct. ...

- 1 The writer believes that ...
 - A people don't know enough about volcanoes.
 - B people should fear earthquakes more.
 - C every volcano can kill people far away.
 - D volcanoes can have an impact on us all.
- 2 According to the text, the most serious volcanic eruptions happen ...
 - A once a year.
 - B once in a hundred years.
 - C once in a few hundred years.
 - D once in a thousand years.
- 3 Laki's 1783 eruption led to ...
 - A communication problems.
 - B the destruction of buildings.
 - C the evacuation of Iceland.
 - D mass hunger.
- 4 The Krakatoa eruption ...
 - A happened without warning.
 - B was heard on the other side of the world.
 - C destroyed the island of Java.
 - D caused deadly tidal waves.
- 5 What was a lasting effect of the Krakatoa eruption?
 - A It gave people mental health problems.
 - B It made the region more rainy.
 - C It attracted tourists to the region.
 - D It changed air quality.
- 6 Another problem the pilot faced was that the ...
 - A Indian Ocean couldn't be avoided.
 - B airport was closed.
 - C runway was obscured.
 - D plane's engines never re-ignited.

(602-17)

Vocabulary

Fill in: ...

exploitation

dependent

declare

outline

evaluate

casualties

blizzard

- 1 There were a number of [] when the hotel collapsed during the earthquake. ...
- 2 The islanders are [] on food deliveries from outside. ...
- 3 [] of natural resources puts the ecosystem of an area in danger. ...
- 4 The [] caused a power cut and blocked some roads. ...
- 5 I will [] the main points in my speech before going into more detail. ...
- 6 The government might [] a state of emergency after a natural disaster. ...
- 7 It is impossible to accurately [] the effects of global warming. ...