

Nature's fury

Mount St. Helens, a volcano in Clark County, Washington State, erupted on Monday morning. The disaster has caused at least ten deaths as well as massive destruction in that region of the state.

The mountain was hit by two earthquakes just before half past eight. Then, at eight thirty-two, the top of the mountain was blown off by an explosion that was heard two hundred miles away. Huge blocks of ice and rock fell onto the surrounding area and the mountain was left 1300 feet shorter. Then the tremendous heat inside was released. Hot ash and gas came out of the mountain, causing a lightning storm as it rose into the air. White ash, along with steam and thick mud, continue to pour from the giant crater left by the explosion.

At each stage of this dramatic eruption people have been killed. The explosion caused the first casualties; several people were injured or died due to the force and heat of it. Then the hot ash started fires which have burned vast areas of forest, causing more deaths. Fortunately, fire-fighters have managed to put most of them out. The volcanic cloud was so large and dark that it was said to have turned day to night, forcing airports to close temporarily. One more life was lost as a pilot flew his airplane into the cloud and hit electricity cables. Mud from the volcano is running down the mountainside and filling rivers, causing flooding. People living nearby have been forced to leave their homes as the water continues to rise.

Rescue workers have picked up casualties and survivors by helicopter, and are moving them away from the dangerous areas. More victims are expected to be found during the next few days. One witness said that it had been like the end of the world. "I really thought we were all going to die," Jerry Irvine said. "I've never been so terrified in my life."

Scientists say that the top of the mountain had been growing by five feet per day for several weeks before the explosion. They say that ash and mud could continue to pour out of St. Helens for up to fifteen years. Meanwhile the people of Clark County are learning to cope with nature's fury.

It will be quite some time before things get back to normal for the residents of the area. At present, no public services are working apart from the emergency services. Rescue efforts are continuing today in an attempt to find any more survivors. Despite extreme difficulties and dangerous conditions, it is hoped that the rescue operation will be carried out successfully. "Hope has not been lost. We'll all do our best," a member of a rescue team reported.

A statement estimating the cost of the damage is expected to be issued later this week.

33. When the volcano erupted, the top of the mountain

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| A. was broken into pieces. | D. turned into mud. |
| B. hadn't changed. | E. grew taller. |
| C. landed two hundred miles away. | |

34. The first people to die were killed by

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| A. the hot ash. | D. the lightning storm. |
| B. the forest fires. | E. the thick mud. |
| C. the explosion. | |

35. The volcanic cloud

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| A. damaged houses. | D. wasn't very big. |
| B. damaged many airplanes. | E. made everything very dark. |
| C. damaged the forest. | |

36. People had to leave their homes as ...

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| A. the mountain fell on their homes. | D. their houses were replaced |
| B. there was flooding in the area. | E. their houses were burnt. |
| C. they had no electricity. | |

37. Before the eruption ...

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| A. the people of Clark County had learnt how to cope with a volcano. |
| B. scientists had been making the mountain bigger. |
| C. they did nothing. |
| D. ash and mud had been pouring out of St. Helens for fifteen years. |
| E. the mountain had been getting taller. |

38. Recently, ...

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| A. no services have be run. | D. emergency hospitals have been destroyed. |
| B. only hospitals have been in service. | E. a service centre has been opened. |
| C. rescue workers have moved to other places. | |

39. The word "casualties" in paragraph 4 is closest in meaning to:

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| A. creatures | B. witnesses | C. survivors | D. victims | E. inhabitants |
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40. A member of the rescue team reported, ...

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| A. "Belief hasn't been lost. We'll all do our best." |
| B. "Hope has been lost. We can do nothing to support." |
| C. "Much work needed to be done. We'll do our best." |
| D. "The cost of the damage is expected to be issued later this week." |
| E. "There is nothing to do. All things around here are damaged." |