

VOLCANOES: Blasts of Power

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In Hawaiian legends, Pele, the goddess of Volcanoes was searching for a home in the Hawaiian Islands. As she moved down the chain of islands, she dug pits. Finally, she reached the volcano Kilauea where she made her home.

She was a busy goddess! There are over 10 volcanoes in the Hawaiian Islands. A volcano is a crack in the earth's crust. It forms when pressure builds underground. Then hot gasses escape. The heat is so strong that rocks melt inside the earth. They rise

to the surface and become a fiery liquid called "lava". One beach in Hawaii has black sand that was formed from lava.

One Sunday morning at Mount St. Helens in Washington state, the birds did not sing. They sensed something was about to happen. The quiet was broken at 8:32 a.m., when the mountain exploded! Mount St. Helens was really a volcano that had been dormant, or asleep, for over 120 years. It erupted on May 18, 1980 in a powerful blast.

VOLCANOES

The northeast side of Mount St. Helens collapsed. It buried 26 lakes. Then, night came in the middle of the day. Clouds of ash blackened the skies up to 200 miles away. People wore face masks outside. They shoveled the ash as though it were snow.

The force of the blast leveled all trees for 11 miles. About 65 people died, along with millions of birds and wild animals. They choked on the thick, hot ash. Some were hit by flying boulders. Others were burned.

With over 100 volcanoes, Alaska has more volcanoes than any other state.

On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions:

Finding Facts/Reading for Details

1. What is a volcano?
2. Write the sentence that tells why birds became quiet one Sunday morning at Mount St. Helens.
3. How many volcanoes are there on the Hawaiian Islands?

Cause and Effect

4. What caused night to come in the middle of the day?
5. What effect did the volcano's explosion have on the mountainside?

Vocabulary

6. What word in the third paragraph means "broke out or exploded"?
7. What word means the opposite of "active"?

Fact or Opinion

8. Once a volcano erupts, it will probably never erupt again. Is this a fact or an opinion?

Drawing Conclusions

9. How can hot lava become black sand?

BONUS

What famous volcano erupted in Italy in the year 79 and buried an entire city?