

## A City in Ruin

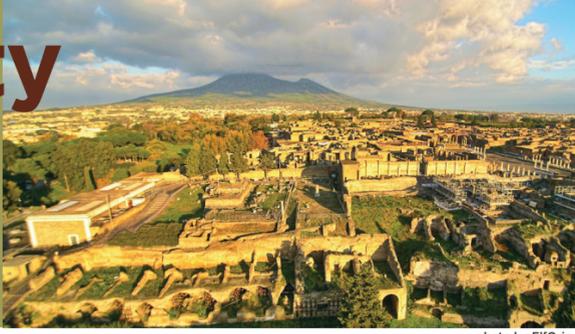


photo by ElfGrin

On a regular day like this more than 1,900 years ago, citizens of a city in Italy were going about their business when a mountain about six miles away rumbled and then exploded.

Let's learn about the city of Pompeii (pom-PAY) and Mount Vesuvius (veh-SOO-vee-us), the volcano that buried the city and many of its inhabitants on Aug. 24, A.D. 79\*.

### Signs of trouble

Living so close to Mount Vesuvius, citizens of Pompeii were used to feeling earthquakes. In fact, in A.D. 62, a strong earthquake caused many buildings to fall down and streets to buckle. Builders, plumbers and slaves repaired much of the damage over the next 17 years.

In the days before Aug. 24, people in Pompeii felt small tremors, or vibrations. Hanging lamps swung. Water stopped flowing from the aqueduct, a pipe for moving water. Birds flew away from the area.

### The explosion

When Mount Vesuvius exploded, a large, dark cloud rose up from it. A man who lived across the Bay of Naples from Pompeii, Pliny the Elder, saw the cloud and wanted to get a closer look. He ordered his servants to prepare a boat and began sailing across the bay.

\*A.D. stands for *anno Domini*, which means "the year of our Lord" in Latin. When we use it with a year, it refers to the time after Jesus Christ was born.

B.C. stands for "before Christ." Some people say B.C.E. (before common era) and C.E. (common era) instead.

### Mini View:

These are the ruins of Pompeii as they look today. You can see Mount Vesuvius in the background.

His nephew, Pliny the Younger, wrote these observations about the explosion:

"Ash was falling ... (B)road sheets of flame were lighting up many parts of Vesuvius. ... (P)eople tied pillows on top of their heads as protection against the shower of rock. It was daylight ... but there the darkness was darker and thicker than any night."

### Buried cities

In Pompeii and nearby cities, ash and rocks rained down from Mount Vesuvius. Pompeii was buried in about 20 feet of the debris, or rubble. The city of Herculaneum, between Pompeii and Naples, was completely buried.

Experts think about 20,000 people lived in Pompeii at the time of the eruption. Only about 2,000 bodies were found when scientists began excavating (EX-cav-ting), or digging, in the area.

Survivors of the volcano probably returned fairly soon to Pompeii and tried to dig for valuables buried in their homes or businesses. When they dug deep, they may have released poisonous gases. These vapors probably killed some of the survivors.



photo by Graham Hobster/Phobby

Archaeologists have uncovered much of the city of Pompeii, where visitors can walk along the streets and see stores and homes.

### A scientific job

In 1860, the king of Italy turned over the excavation of Pompeii to an archaeologist named Guiseppe Fiorelli. (Archaeologists study the habits and ways of ancient people through the things they leave behind.)



photo courtesy Department of Image Collections, National Gallery of Art Library, Washington, D.C.

This plaster cast of a man and a vase he was probably carrying was made in the 1800s. The casts were detailed enough to show facial expressions and clothing details.

### A city preserved

The ash that fell from Mount Vesuvius hardened, something like cement, after many years. As the bodies of people and animals decayed, the hardened ash around them kept its shape. It was lightweight enough that it didn't crush the remains.

Fiorelli discovered he could pour liquid plaster into the cavity, or opening, where the person's skin and clothing used to be. This way he could create a detailed cast, or model, of how the person looked when he or she died.

## Resources



### On the Web:

- [pompeionline.net/pompeii](http://pompeionline.net/pompeii)
- [bit.ly/MPPompeii](http://bit.ly/MPPompeii)

### At the library:

- "What Happened to Pompeii?" by Charlie Samuels
- "Secrets of Pompeii" by Tim O'Shei

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## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of Pompeii are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

AQUEDUCT,  
ARCHAEOLOGIST, ASH,  
CAST, CAVITY, CITY,  
DEBRIS, EARTHQUAKE,  
EXCAVATE, ITALY,  
KING, NAPLES, PLINY,  
POMPEII, RUBBLE,  
TREMOR, VAPORS,  
VESUVIUS, VOLCANO.

H J A S H A Q U E D U C T Y R  
D Y C L C A V I T Y G N I K O  
E L E K A U Q H T R A E U P M  
B A Y N I L P H S R O P A V E  
R T S I G O L O E A H C R A R  
I I A F I P O M P E I I T Q T  
S S E L P A N E X C A V A T E  
V H E R V E S U V I U S O X R  
I E L B B U R I S C A S T Z N  
H B C K Y T I C O N A C L O V



## Mini Jokes



**Veronica:** What is the opposite of a volcano?  
**Vic:** A volca-yes!

## Eco Note



More than 260 dolphins have become stranded since February on Gulf of Mexico beaches from Louisiana to the Florida panhandle. The U.S. environment agency NOAA declared the marine mammal deaths an "unusual mortality event." The agency says it is unclear what has caused the deaths, which are three times greater in number than average. Some experts believe the deaths could be from the lingering effects of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

## For later:

Look in your newspapers for news articles about active volcanoes.

**Teachers:** For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: [bit.ly/MPstandards](http://bit.ly/MPstandards). And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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## Cook's Corner

### Sweet Lemon Carrots

#### You'll need:

- 1 (16-ounce) package baby carrots
- 2 teaspoons butter

- 3 slices lemon
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar



\* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

#### What to do:

1. Bring 3 cups of water to boil in a large nonstick saucepan. Add carrots and return to boil.
2. Reduce heat to medium and cook uncovered for 8 to 9 minutes until carrots are tender.
3. Drain carrots well and set aside. Melt butter in same pan.
4. Return carrots to pan; add lemon slices and sprinkle with brown sugar. Stir to coat carrots.
5. Cover, reduce heat to low, and cook for an additional 3 minutes. Serves 4.

## ROOTONYM

by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

1. Covered over with dirt (6-letter adjective)

□ □ □ □ □ □

2. Below the surface of the ground (11-letter adjective)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

3. A vent in the Earth's crust where melted or hot rock and steam emerge (7-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

4. A shaking or trembling of a portion of the Earth (10-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

1. Rocks and ash \_\_\_\_\_ the city, covering it up.
2. The entrance to an \_\_\_\_\_ cave was totally closed.
3. In the picture, Tomas saw fiery red lava inside the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. When the \_\_\_\_\_ started, even the sidewalk moved.

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