

ENGLISH · Y4

Explanation — Year 4

WAGOLL: How Volcanoes Erupt

The Model Text

HOW VOLCANOES ERUPT Volcanoes are some of the most powerful and exciting features of our planet. But have you ever wondered exactly how they work? Deep inside the Earth, far below where we live, the rock is so hot that some of it melts. This melted rock is called magma. Because magma is lighter than the solid rock around it, it slowly rises upwards. Over thousands of years, the magma collects in a chamber underneath the surface, like a giant balloon filling with hot liquid. As more magma gathers, the pressure inside the chamber increases. Eventually, the pressure becomes so great that it forces the magma to push upwards through cracks in the rock. When the magma finally reaches the surface, it bursts out — and a volcano erupts! Once magma escapes from the volcano, it is called lava. Lava can flow slowly, like thick orange syrup, or burst out in fiery fountains. As lava cools down, it hardens into solid rock. This is why volcanoes grow taller over time — every eruption adds another layer. Sometimes, instead of flowing lava, a volcano sends out hot gases, ash and tiny pieces of rock. This kind of eruption is the most dangerous of all. The cloud of ash can darken the sky for days and travel many kilometres from the volcano. In conclusion, volcanoes are nature's way of releasing the heat and pressure that builds up inside our planet. Although they can be dangerous, they also create new land and remind us of the powerful forces hidden beneath our feet.

Notated features

What makes this a strong Y4 explanation?

- TITLE: phrased as 'How...' (key feature of explanation)
- OPENING QUESTION: 'have you ever wondered...?' — engages reader
- PRESENT TENSE for general truths: 'Volcanoes are...' 'Magma rises...'



- CAUSE-AND-EFFECT LANGUAGE: 'Because,' 'As more magma gathers,' 'Eventually,' 'When the magma finally...,' 'As lava cools...'
- SEQUENCING: each paragraph leads to the next stage
- TECHNICAL VOCABULARY: 'magma,' 'chamber,' 'eruption,' 'lava'
- DEFINITIONS within the text: 'This melted rock is called magma.'
- SIMILES to help understanding: 'like a giant balloon,' 'like thick orange syrup'
- FORMAL TONE: third person, factual
- CONCLUSION: 'In conclusion...' summarises the explanation and adds reflection

Writing prompt

Write your own explanation text. Choose: How does the water cycle work? How does a plant grow from a seed? How does day turn to night? Include: a 'How...' title, an opening question, cause-and-effect language ('Because,' 'When,' 'As'), three technical vocabulary words with definitions, and a conclusion paragraph.

