

What Is a Volcano?



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

A volcano is an opening in the surface of a planet or moon. Through it, material hotter than its surroundings escapes from deep inside. This is called an eruption. Some eruptions explode, sending material high into the sky. Others are calmer.

On Earth, melted rock under the ground is called magma. When it comes out onto the surface, it is called lava. Volcanoes can also send out ash and gas. Layers of rock and ash collect around the opening and usually build a mountain.

Magma rises where the big pieces of Earth's crust, called tectonic plates, move apart or push together. It also rises over hot spots, which are hot areas inside Earth.

Active volcanoes have erupted recently or are expected to erupt soon. Dormant volcanoes are not erupting now, but might again someday. Extinct volcanoes will likely never erupt again. Venus and Mars are covered with extinct volcanoes.

1. What is melted rock under the ground called?

2. Which two planets are covered with extinct volcanoes?

3. How does a volcano build a mountain?

4. A volcano has not erupted for hundreds of years, but it might again. Which kind is it? Why?

Answer key

What Is a Volcano?

1. What is melted rock under the ground called?
Magma.
2. Which two planets are covered with extinct volcanoes?
Venus and Mars.
3. How does a volcano build a mountain?
Layers of rock and ash collect around the opening.
4. A volcano has not erupted for hundreds of years, but it might again. Which kind is it? Why?
Sample answer: dormant, because a dormant volcano is not erupting now but might erupt again someday.