

Ancient Romans

POMPEII & MOUNT VESUVIUS

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ACTIVITY



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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

A Roman writer, lawyer and philosopher, known as Pliny the Younger, witnessed the eruption of Mount Vesuvius from across the Bay of Naples. His uncle, Pliny the Elder left to rescue people from the towns along the coast in his boat. Pliny the Elder never returned, but his companions told Pliny the younger the story. Pliny wrote letters to the Roman historian Tacitus, describing the event. These accounts gave historians a lot of information about what happened during the eruption.

Using the interview notes, write and article about the eruption.

POMPEII NEWS

Headline (The title of the story)

Sub Head (Subtitle)

Photo (Draw a Picture)

Byline (By Your Name)

Article (Lead with the most important information)

↓

Caption (Explain the photo)

↓

↓

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2

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POMPEII NEWS

MOUNT VESUVIUS ERUPTS!

Pliny the Elder dies in a daring rescue attempt.

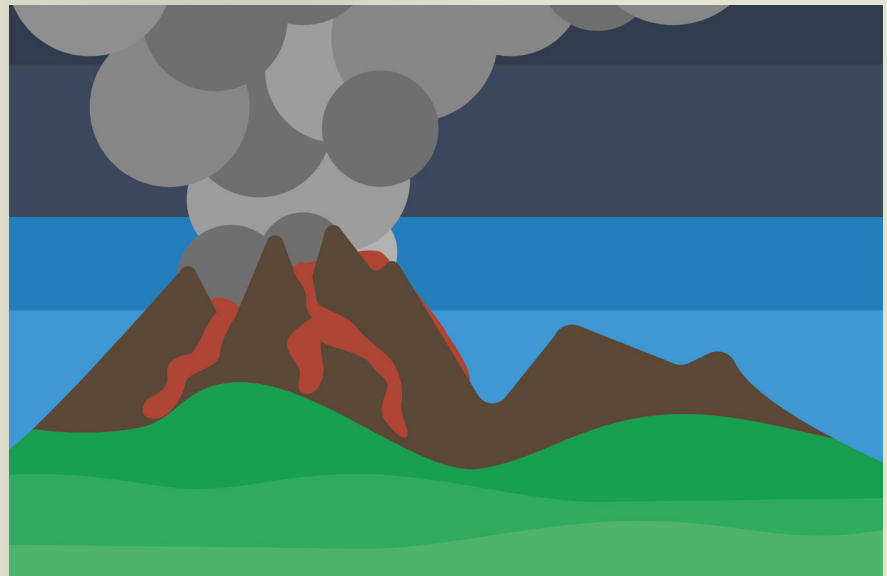
By Cornelius Tacitus

The fertile Mount Vesuvius erupted at 1 pm on August 24th. After seeing the cloud of ashes and cinder, Pliny the Elder led a rescue mission.

"Pliny the Elder is so noble and generous, I knew he would help," said Rectina, the wife of Bassus. Bassus was stranded at their villa.

When burning stones started falling on the ship, Pliny realized they wouldn't make it across the bay. The helmsman said he told Pliny the Elder they should turn back, but Pliny said, "fortune favors the bold" and decided to rescue Pomponianus.

"We loaded our ships but the sea was too rough to set sail so you can imagine how



At 1 pm on August 24th, Mount Vesuvius erupted, making a cloud of ash and cinders.

relieved I was to see Pliny the Elder," said Pomponianus.

The ashes filled the courtyard overnight and the next morning the crew argued about whether they should try and escape. Pliny said he came up with an escape plan.

"Pomponianus and my crew were freaking out but I was totally cool. I decided we should escape through the fields. So we tied pillows to our heads and ran while stones

and cinders fell from the sky," said the ghost of Pliny the Elder.

They tried to escape in boats but the waves were too high. Pliny died, possibly from breathing in smoke and ashes. He was 55 years old.

The ghost of Pliny the Elder confirms that he is dead.

"It's a tragedy," said the helmsman.

A

Write a news story about Pliny the Elder's rescue attempt.

What is important?
What is interesting?
What can be left out?

B

Write a news story about the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

What is important?
What is interesting?
What can be left out?

C

Write an opinion piece about Pliny the Elder's rescue attempt.

What is important?
What is interesting?
What can be left out?

D

Write an opinion piece about Pliny the Younger.

What is important?
What is interesting?
What can be left out?

These notes are used with Task Cards



General Notes

Date of eruption: Aug 24, 79 CE

Time: 1pm (first eruption)

Location: Mt. Vesuvius

Biggest town affected:

Pompeii (population 13,000)

Tremors were normal in the area around Mt. Vesuvius before the eruption.

About 2000 people died

Before the eruption, no one knew Mt. Vesuvius was a volcano. (There were towns and vineyards on the slopes of the mountain.)

1

Interview

PLINY THE YOUNGER

"Dude, there was a huge cloud coming from the top of the mountain. I guess it kind of looked like a massive pine tree, going up into the sky, with branches spreading out from the top."

"Sometimes it was totally bright with cinders, sometimes it was dark with earth."

"My uncle went to check it out."

"What did I do? I went back to my book."

"It's normal to read during an emergency, right?"

Notes

PLINY THE YOUNGER

18 years old

He was taken in by Pliny the Elder when his dad died

Lives with his uncle and his mother in a town across the bay from Pompeii

Studying to be a lawyer

Changed his name from Gaius Caecilius Cilo to Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus

2

Interview

THE GHOST OF PLINY THE ELDER

"I was reading when my sister-in-law told me there was a strange cloud in the sky. I had a look and saw that it was very strange indeed. I decided to get a boat and check it out."

"I asked Pliny the Younger if he wanted to come with me, but he said he would rather not."

"That's when the message came from Rectina that her husband was in danger. Being the courageous sort, I decided to rescue her husband, and anyone else who needed saving, and I ordered the galleys to sea."

These notes are used with Task Cards



Notes

PLINY THE ELDER

Full name is Gaius Plinius Secundus but known as Pliny the Elder

55 years old

Wrote the world's first encyclopedia called Natural History

Commander of a Roman naval fleet

Never married

Adopted his nephew Pliny the Younger

3

Interview

RECTINA WIFE OF BASSUS

"My husband Bassus was staying in our villa at the foot of Mt. Vesuvius."

"I saw the cloud and knew my husband was in danger, so I sent a note to Pliny the Elder because he was the commander of the fleet."

"Pliny the Elder is so noble and generous, I knew he would help."

4

Interview Notes

THE GHOST OF PLINY THE ELDER

"I sailed right into danger. I don't want to say that I'm fearless, but it was kind of brave. Then cinders and burning stones started falling on my vessel. And the sea started to retreat. And large pieces of the mountain started falling."

"Even in this time of peril, I was not afraid. We could not make it across the bay, but we could still rescue my dear friend Pomponianus."

5

Interview

THE HELMSMAN

"The sea was pulling back from the shore and I was afraid we would run aground."

"I told Pliny the Elder we should head back, but he said - 'Fortune favors the brave!' so we went to see Pomponianus."

"Maybe we should have turned back."

These notes are used with Task Cards

A **B** **C**

6

Interview
POMPONIANUS

"We loaded our ships but the sea was too rough to set sail so you can imagine how relieved I was to see Pliny the Elder."

"He gave me a hug and told me to keep my spirits up."

"When I pointed out the flames he said it was just the empty villages burning. So we had dinner and tried to be cheerful."

"I went to bed but I couldn't sleep because Pliny snores too loud, so I stayed up with Pliny's men."

7

Interview
POMPONIANUS

"Pliny woke up and we saw the courtyard was full of stones and ashes."

"We knew if we stayed longer we would be trapped and we were starting to panic."

"The crew argued about whether to take cover in the house or run away."

"Pliny was cool and collected. He said we should leave and came up with a plan."

8

Interview
THE GHOST OF PLINY THE ELDER

"Pomponianus and my crew were freaking out but I was totally cool. I decided we should escape through the fields. So we tied pillows to our heads and ran while stones and cinders fell from the sky."

"It was still daytime, but it was dark as night."

"We tried to get the boats in the sea, but the waves were too high."

"The rest is fuzzy, I think there were flames and the smell of sulfur. I know I died though."

"How do I know? Because I'm a ghost, you numb-skull!"

9

Interview
THE HELMSMAN

"We couldn't sleep because we were so anxious - and because of Pliny's snores."

"Pliny got up and we made it to the ships but the sea was too rough to sail."

"Pliny the Elder was in bad shape. We think he inhaled too much smoke and ashes"

"We laid him on a sail cloth and brought him water. He told us to leave without him but we said no. He tried to stand and fell over, he was dead."

"It's a tragedy."

These notes are used with Task Cards

A **B** **D**

10

Interview

PLINY THE YOUNGER'S MOM

"That night there were bad tremors. Things were things falling over."

"I grabbed Pliny and we hid in the courtyard. Can you believe he still had his nose stuck in a book? Even while the buildings shook."

"Still, I didn't want to leave without Pliny the Elder. I told my son to escape without me but he refused and took my hand. We fled together."

11

Interview

PLINY THE YOUNGER

"I was, like, totally into my book and my mom was all freaking out so we left the house. I tried to read while we hid in the courtyard but the falling stones were making a terrible racket."

"Then I realized how bad things were and we ran away from the town, towards the shore."

"I saw the sea roll back, leaving a load of sea creatures flopping around on the beach."

"There was a black cloud broken with sheet lightning and zigzag flashes."

12

Interview

PLINY THE YOUNGER

"I was glad I got mom to come with me because things got worse."

"Night came, not like when it's cloudy or when there is no moon, but like when a room is shut up with all the lights out."

"People were screaming, calling for their parents, calling for their children. Some were afraid of dying, some wanted to die. Some lifted their hands to the gods."

"Many were convinced that there were no gods, that the final endless night had taken over the world"

13

Interview

PLINY THE YOUNGER

"I thought I was dying with the world itself."

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Headline

Sub Head

Photo

Byline

Article

Caption

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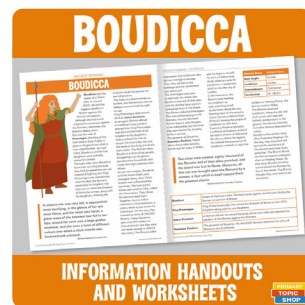
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