

## Year 6 Reading

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

LO: To retrieve and record from a non-fiction text.



**Your Task:** Below you will see a non-fiction text about Mount Vesuvius and the History of Pompeii. After reading the texts fill in the missing gaps in the sentences using the information from the text.

### **Success Criteria:**

1. Read the text carefully, identifying key information.
2. Read each sentence with the missing word/words.
3. Skim and scan through the text to find the answer.
4. Re write the full sentence.

1. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius killed many lives in \_\_\_\_\_. The area was left covered in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. After many years, \_\_\_\_\_, revealing fascinating findings of what had happened on the day Mount Vesuvius erupted.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ were used like moulds, which archaeologist used to help piece together clues about life in Pompeii.
4. Scientist have been able to work out what the Romans were growing by \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ are one of the most visited archaeological destinations in the world, welcoming over \_\_\_\_\_ a year.
6. Some believe that a dog named Delta \_\_\_\_\_.
7. An eye-witness, \_\_\_\_\_, has given an account of what life was like at that time.
8. Pliny and his family had witnessed the fatal events in Pompeii and had written a letter to \_\_\_\_\_ who was a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Pliny the elder died in an attempt to \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Although Mount Vesuvius had not erupted in centuries before the destruction in 79AD, in \_\_\_\_\_ it did erupt causing \_\_\_\_\_ to lose \_\_\_\_\_.

**Extension:** Write 5 questions that you would like to ask about Pompeii on the day of the volcanic eruption.

## Investigating Pompeii and Vesuvius

In the year AD 79, Mount Vesuvius famously erupted, causing devastation to the nearby Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Buildings were destroyed and many lives were lost. The entire area was covered in layers of ash and other volcanic debris. Many years later, the remains of the buildings were uncovered. Among them, some fascinating discoveries have emerged from that fateful day.

The bodies of the buried victims have decomposed over time, leaving just skeletons behind. However, they also left hollow cavities in the space that they occupied, with compacted earth and volcanic ash all around. Archaeologists filled the spaces with plaster, using them like moulds, and allowed the plaster to harden. By doing so, they have been able to create three-dimensional replicas of those who perished. Experts are now able to examine the final poses of the people of Pompeii and the resulting plaster casts have helped experts to piece together clues about life in the ancient cities.

As well as the people who succumbed to the disaster that day, similar evidence has been found of animals. One particular dog appeared to have been wearing a collar and was chained up to a post – this suggests that it was probably kept as a pet or guard dog. A famous plaster cast shows the dog in the position in which it perished: lying on its back with its legs in the air.

Furthermore, plaster casts of the spaces occupied by plant and tree roots in the soil have been formed. By analysing the size and shape of the moulded root casts, scientists have been able to identify what types of plant Romans were growing in the soil at the time.

The remains at Pompeii, now a huge modern tourist destination, receive over 3 million visitors a year and attract bigger crowds every year. The well-preserved ancient buildings make this one of the most visited archaeological sites in the world.

### **Delta – Truth or Myth?**

Some sources mention evidence of another dog being discovered, lying above the body of a child. Speculation has evolved that suggests that the faithful dog died while trying to shield the young boy from the volcanic ash and pumice. A collar is also said to have been found with the name 'Delta' engraved upon it.

Delta, informally dubbed 'the hero dog of Pompeii', has been linked with an owner named Severinus, with stories suggesting that the dog had already saved the life of its owner on several previous occasions. The tales of Delta have inspired modern fiction such as the story of 'The Pack of Pompeii', in which a dog of the same name features.



## Investigating Pompeii and Vesuvius

### An Eye-Witness Account

Pliny the Younger was a Roman author whose letters have given experts valuable insights into various aspects of Roman life. One of these is the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and the events that followed. Pliny and his family witnessed the events of almost two thousand years ago. He later wrote them down in a letter to a historian, called Tacitus. The accounts include his uncle's fateful efforts to save people on the day of the eruption.

The writing has been translated into English, so different versions have slightly different wording. Pliny described a trembling of the earth and tottering buildings, which led to his family attempting to escape from the area to avoid imminent danger. Women and children were heard screaming and shrieking as showers of ash rained down on them. Meanwhile, Pliny's uncle (Pliny the Elder) took a boat to study the erupting volcano more closely. Upon receiving a message from a stranded local woman named Rectina, he changed his course in a valiant effort to save her. Sadly, he died in his attempt.

### Mount Vesuvius Facts and Figures

Also known as **Vesuvius** or the Italian **Vesuvio**.

**Last recorded height:** 1281m (since 1944)

**Eruption history:** The volcano had not erupted for centuries before the AD 79 disaster. However, many recorded eruptions have occurred in the centuries between the years 1600 and 2000. The last of these was in 1944. One of the biggest was in 1631 when around 3,000 people were killed.

**Local population:** More than 2 million people are said to live in the vicinity of Mount Vesuvius, either on its lower slopes or in the surrounding area.



Mount Vesuvius is located in the Campania region of Italy, near the Bay of Naples.