

POMPEII



Imagine if magic dust was shaken over these people and this scene became frozen in time for 2000 years. Do you think after 2000 years, people looking at this scene could tell how we live today? Could they talk about the clothes we wear and the games children play?

Do you think in 2000 years time, people will know what yo-yos are or what a gameboy is? Will they know about football and hurling? Do you think people will travel in cars like we do today 2000 years from now? They will see the types of homes we have, but what do you think these people could learn about us from these homes?

The people of Pompeii, a city in the south of Italy, did not realise when they awoke on 23 August AD 79 that their beautiful city would become frozen in time for almost 2000 years.



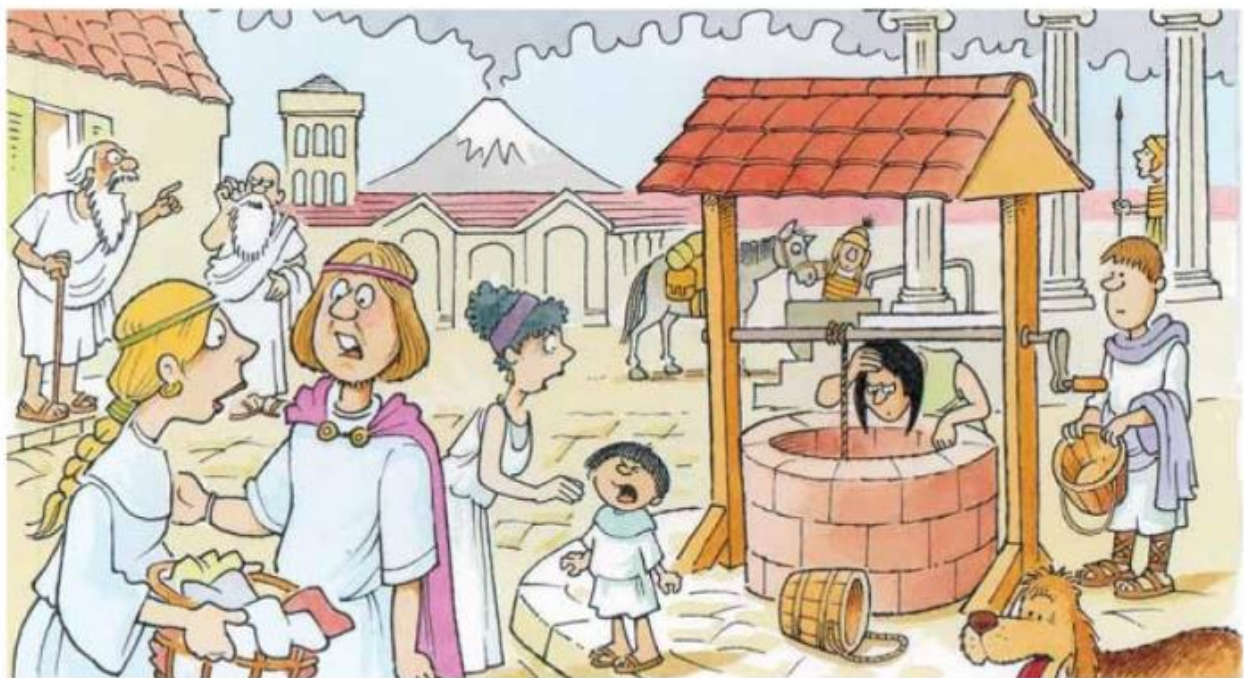


Pompeii was just one of a number of cities built around Mount Vesuvius in Italy. Mount Vesuvius is a volcano. The soil around volcanoes is **fertile** and very good for growing crops. Mount Vesuvius provided excellent growing conditions for a wide range of crops, especially grapes.



On that fateful day in AD 79, the 20 000 people who lived in Pompeii were going about their daily lives. Pompeii was like many other busy Roman cities.

People were moving about, buying and selling goods, eating and drinking and sharing news and friendly talk. At that time, Pompeii was a wealthy trading city in the Bay of Naples.



The people of Pompeii had often seen wisps of smoke coming out of the top of Mount Vesuvius, but they did not pay much attention to this. In AD 62, the ground around Vesuvius shook and a number of the buildings in Pompeii were damaged. Even then, the people did not panic. Early in August AD 79, the wells in the city became dry. The people still did not think there was anything to fear, although water was scarce.



However, on 24 August, Mount Vesuvius, one of the most famous volcanoes in the world, **erupted**. Burning ash, red-hot dust, cinders and rocks were blown high into the sky. The very top of the mountain blew off. So much smoke and dust flew into the sky that the sun was blocked out.

Suddenly, day turned to night as everywhere went dark.

People screamed and ran in terror. For more than 24 hours, Mount Vesuvius continued to erupt, shooting hot ash into the air. The city was covered in ash, cinders, dust and stones.

When the ash cooled, the city of Pompeii had completely disappeared.

It lay buried beneath a huge pile of solid ash and rock almost four metres thick.



The city was hidden for almost 1700 years. In 1748, a man digging in his garden found one of the old walls of the town. Pompeii had been rediscovered.

All the stones and dust have now been carefully removed and the remains of Pompeii have been revealed. Under the ash, everything in Pompeii remained as it was at the time of the eruption. Many of the buildings were preserved. It was as if the city had been frozen in time for almost 2000 years.

As a result, **archaeologists** have found clues as to how these people lived in this great city 2000 years ago.



The excavated ruins of Pompeii

Several colourful **frescoes** were found on walls in the larger houses, which were called **villas**. Many of these villas also had beautiful **mosaics** on their floors. Wealthy people probably lived in these villas.



There was a very advanced freshwater system in the city.

The water came from a local river and was supplied to the villas, but not to the smaller houses.

Water was also supplied to the public baths and to a number of public fountains.

Amazingly, the people of Pompeii had a method of supplying water to places using lead pipes.

Lead causes lead poisoning, so many people must have died when this system was introduced.

However, when archaeologists examined the pipes,

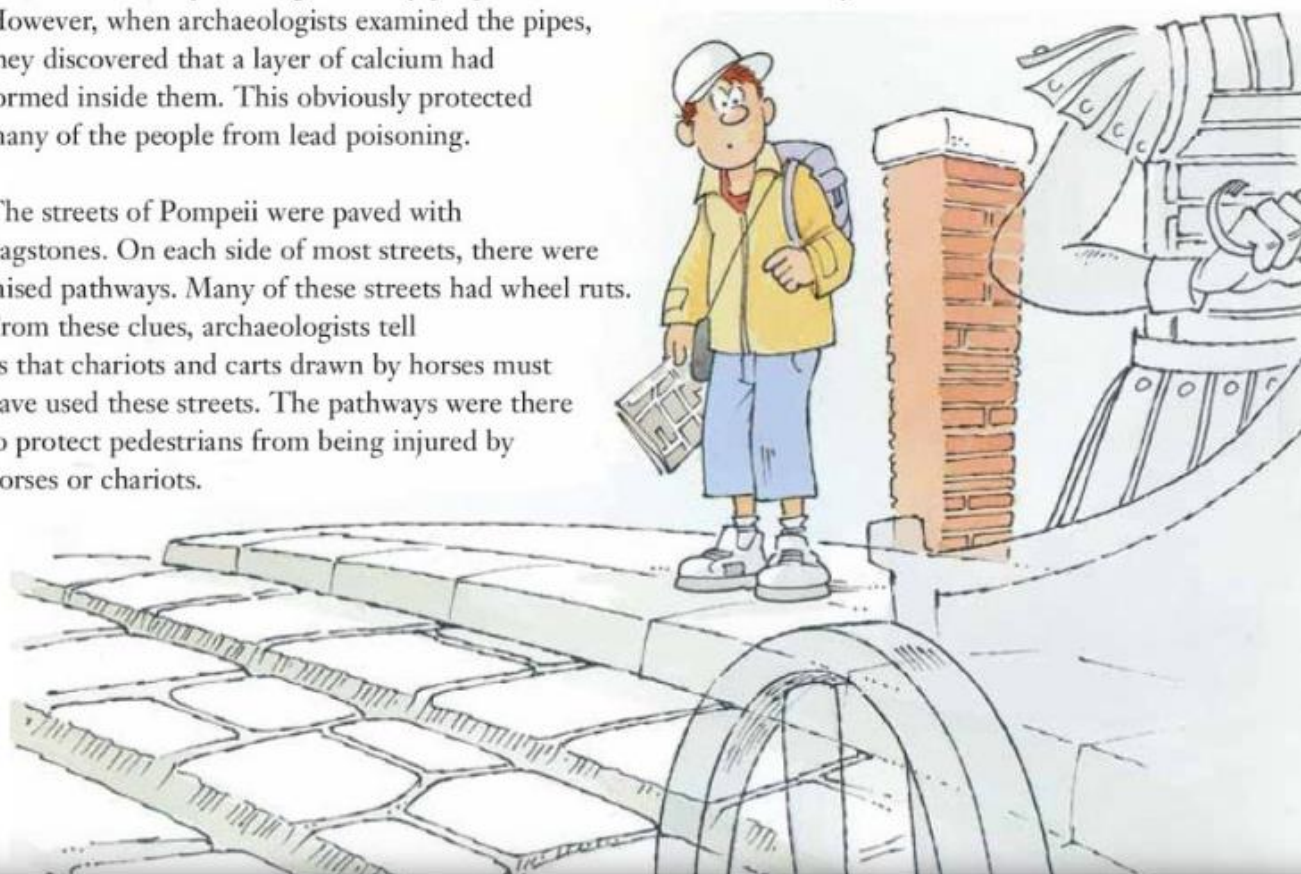
they discovered that a layer of calcium had

formed inside them. This obviously protected

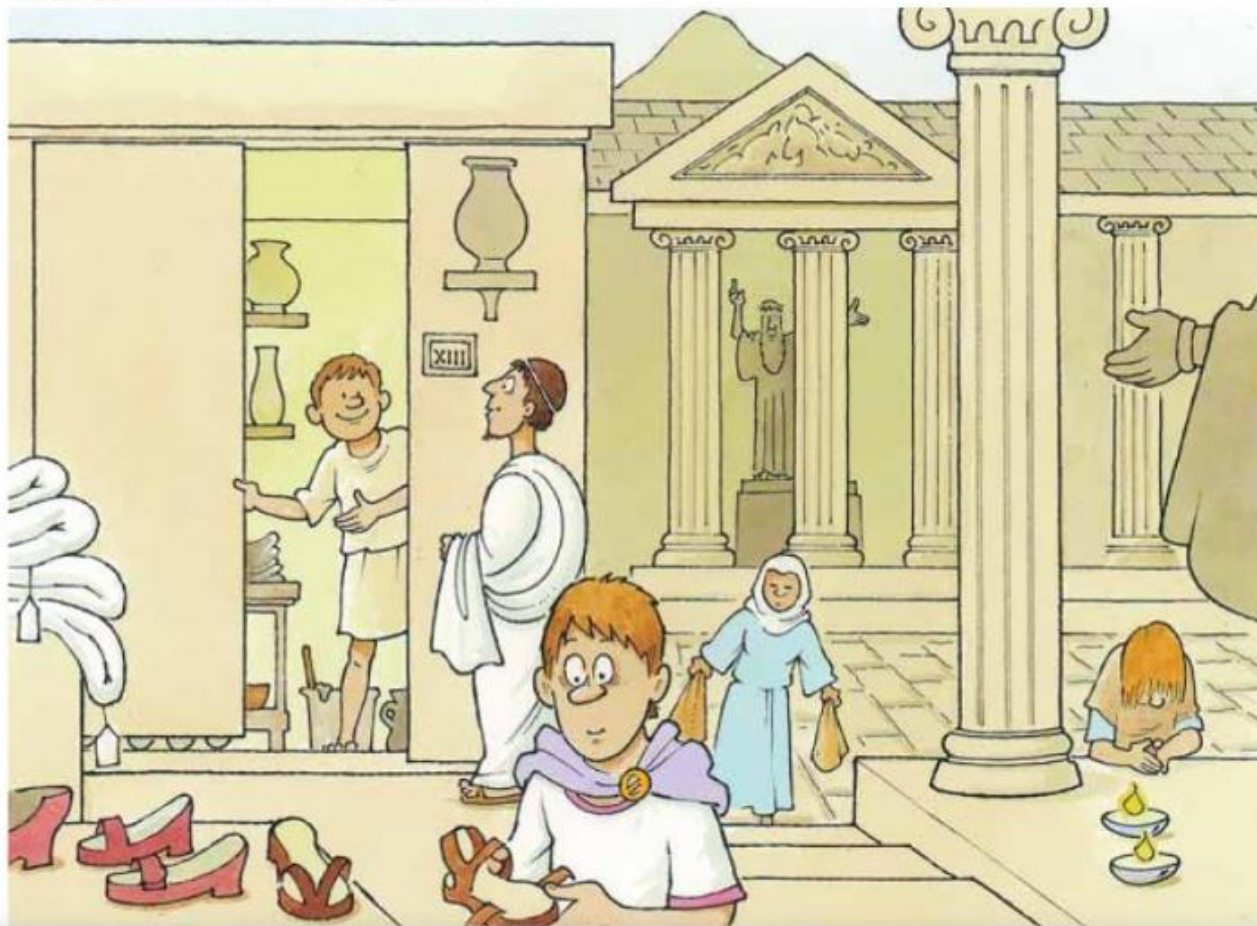
many of the people from lead poisoning.

The streets of Pompeii were paved with flagstones. On each side of most streets, there were raised pathways. Many of these streets had wheel ruts.

From these clues, archaeologists tell us that chariots and carts drawn by horses must have used these streets. The pathways were there to protect pedestrians from being injured by horses or chariots.



The Forum was the centre of activity in Pompeii. This included a number of temples to honour the gods. It also had a very advanced marketplace with shops selling a wide variety of goods. Some of these shops appear to have had sliding doors.



Pieces of jewellery and pottery, as well as many marble statues, have been found in the city. Archaeologists were puzzled to find hollow shapes in the ground. However, when these hollows were filled with plaster, they revealed the shapes of people's bodies. These were exactly as they had been on the terrible day of the eruption. Each of these clues gives a glimpse of life in a city of the Roman Empire in AD 79.

Even though it was a terrible disaster for the people of Pompeii, the remains of their city provide us with important information about life in the Roman Empire.



The Basilica in Pompeii as it is today

Key Vocabulary in this Chapter

Fertile: Fertile land has rich soil which is good for agriculture.

Erupted: When a volcano erupts, it throws hot, molten magma and ash into the air.

Archaeologists: These are people who carefully dig in a historical site to discover information about the past.

Frescoes: From the Italian word meaning fresh.

A fresco is painted directly onto a freshly-plastered ceiling or wall.

Mosaics: Tiny pieces of coloured stone, stuck to a wall or floor, in a pattern.

Activity A

1. In what country is Pompeii? _____
2. What is the name of the volcano that is close to Pompeii? _____
3. Why do you think people built Pompeii close to a volcano? _____

4. For how long was Pompeii hidden? _____
5. What did the people of Pompeii use to supply water to some places? _____
6. When was Pompeii rediscovered? _____
7. With what were the streets of Pompeii paved? _____
8. What decorations were on the floors of some of the villas? _____
9. What decorations were on the walls of some of the villas? _____
10. Why is Pompeii studied carefully by historians and archaeologists? _____

Pick either YELLOW or BLUE to answer 😊

In your history copybook, draw a picture of Mount Vesuvius erupting.
Imagine you were writing for a newspaper in AD 79.
Think of a headline you would use to announce the disappearance of Pompeii.
Write a short report on what occurred on 23 August AD 79.

Imagine you are the person who first discovers the ruins of Pompeii.
Write a short account about how you feel when you realise you have discovered such a treasure.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dY_3ggKg0Bc&list=PLI28cDv8T0QDkfnVapKabMYifmCQ9ddvv a timeline of events for Pompeii

Further information on volcanoes here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Jxeh-yAXek>

<https://www.dkfindout.com/us/history/ancient-rome/pompeii/> - a nice interactive resource

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/history/pompeii/>

<https://www.twinkl.ie/resource/t-t-27419-make-your-own-volcano-science-activity> if you would like to link with Science and make your own volcano – suitable for outside as it can be quite messy!

Planning Your Newspaper Report

Introduction

Briefly sum up what happened. Try to grab the reader's attention.

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Main Story

Tell the reader exactly what happened. Include facts, quotes and eyewitness accounts.

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Conclusion

What can we expect to happen next?

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