

Write one important fact from each paragraph in this space.

Science Shorts -6

Types of Volcanoes

How do volcanoes form? A volcano forms when magma (melted rock deep in the earth), gases and rocks erupt through openings in the earth's crust. The magma that erupts out of the volcano onto the earth is called lava.

There are three types of volcanoes. The first type is called a composite volcano. This type is explosive. When it explodes, lava, ash and gases shoot out of an opening in it. Hardened lava and ash build up over the years. They can form mountains that are quite tall but when it rains on the mountain, the lava and ash are weathered and eroded and the weathered materials are washed down the mountain into the valleys. You can find these types of volcanoes in the states of Washington and Oregon.

Some volcanoes do not shoot lava up in the air. The lava pours out of it instead. When the lava gets to the surface of the earth, it moves like a thick river. This type of volcano is called a shield volcano. The lava flows slowly over the land. It destroys anything in its path. The lava moves slowly enough for people who live nearby to leave safely. Then, the lava flow slows down, cools off and turns into rock. Then the weathering and erosion begin. Weathering of lava allows people to collect pieces of lava. When the weathered lava is washed down the mountain over time the land becomes very fertile and lots of plants will grow there. You can find these types of volcanoes in Hawaii.

The third type of volcano forms quickly and is smaller. It is called a cinder cone volcano. These volcanoes are not very tall. They explode one time quickly. When the cinder cones erupt, they force out ash, gases and lava in tiny bits. You can find these types of volcanoes in Arizona.

Volcanoes have been forming for thousands of years. Some are still active. This means that they have erupted in the last 10,000 years and could erupt again. Others are dormant or extinct. Dormant volcanoes show no signs of activity. Many scientists think they could erupt again some day. Those that are extinct have not had any signs of activity in the last 10,000 years. They probably will not erupt again.

No volcanoes are as tall as they use to be. After the eruption stops and the lava cools, natural earth processes such as weathering and erosion break up the lava and wash it away. These processes keep the earth in balance.

