

## TOEFL Junior : Reading Comprehension Test 3

Read the passage . 60 - 100 minutes

### Destructive Eruptions in Ancient Italian Cities

Mount Vesuvius, a volcano located between the ancient Italian cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, has received much attention because of its frequent and destructive eruptions. The most famous of these eruptions occurred in A.D. 79.

The volcano had been inactive for centuries. There was little warning of the coming eruption, although one account unearthed by archaeologists says that a hard rain and a strong wind had disturbed the celestial calm during the preceding night. Early the next morning, the volcano poured a huge river of molten rock down upon Herculaneum, completely burying the city and filling the harbor with coagulated lava.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the mountain, cinders, stone and ash rained down on Pompeii

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In addition to making these investigations, archaeologists have been able to study the skeletons of victims by using distilled water to wash away the volcanic ash. By strengthening the brittle bones with acrylic paint, scientists have been able to examine the skeletons and draw conclusions about the diet and habits of the residents. Finally, the excavations at both Pompeii and Herculaneum have yielded many examples of classical art, such as jewelry made of bronze, which is an alloy of copper and tin. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius and its tragic consequences have provided everyone with a wealth of data about the effects that volcanoes can have on the surrounding area. Today, volcanologists can locate and predict eruptions, saving lives and preventing the destruction of other cities and cultures.

INSTRUCTION:

Read the questions carefully and refer to the text above then choose the best answer:

1. Herculaneum and its harbor were buried under \_\_\_\_\_ lava.

- A. liquid
- B. solid
- C. flowing
- D. gas
- E. Answer not available

2. The poisonous gases were not \_\_\_\_\_ in the air.

- A. able to float
- B. visible
- C. able to evaporate
- D. invisible
- E. able to condense

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- C. Scientists who study ash
- D. Scientists who study animal behavior
- E. Answer not available in article

5. Scientists have used \_\_\_\_\_ water to wash away volcanic ash from the skeletons of victims.

- A. bottled
- B. volcanic
- C. purified
- D. sea
- E. fountain

## Answers and Explanations

- 1. B:** "Coagulated" means solidified. Liquid (A) is an opposite of solid. Flowing (C) assumes a liquid, not solid, state. Gas (D) is another opposite of solid. (Three states of matter, like volcanic material, are liquid, solid, and gaseous.)
- 2. A:** "Buoyant" means able to float. The passage indicates this by indicating that the gases therefore, sank toward earth and suffocated people. Buoyant does not mean visible (B) or possible to see. Able to float/buoyant does not mean able to evaporate (C). Evaporation means turning to vapor, which only liquids can do. Gases are already vapors. Buoyant does not mean invisible (D) or unseen. Able to float does not mean able to condense (E), i.e. turn from vapor to liquid.
- 3. B:** "Dissect" means to cut apart for study. It does not mean to describe in detail (A), to photograph (C), or to chart (D) a specimen.

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