Name: _____ Date: _____

How Volcanoes Form

Grades 5-6 | Nonfiction

1 Deep beneath our feet, Earth is incredibly hot. In some places, rock melts into a thick, glowing liquid called magma. Because magma is lighter than the solid rock around it, it slowly rises toward the surface.

2 Earth's outer layer is broken into giant pieces called tectonic plates. These plates move very slowly, only a few centimeters each year. Most volcanoes form where plates pull apart or push together. Where they pull apart, magma rises to fill the gap. Where one plate slides beneath another, it melts and forms new magma.

3 When pressure builds up underground, magma bursts through openings in Earth's crust. Once it reaches the surface, it is called lava. Eruptions can also blast out clouds of ash, gas and rock.

4 Each eruption adds new layers of cooled lava and ash, and over thousands of years a mountain can grow. Some volcanoes erupt gently with rivers of lava, while others explode violently.

5 Many of the world's active volcanoes lie around the edges of the Pacific Ocean, in an area called the Ring of Fire. Scientists called volcanologists watch these volcanoes closely, measuring earthquakes, gases and changes in the ground to warn people before an eruption.

Draw something you learned from this text.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Questions: How Volcanoes Form

Read the passage again if you need to. Circle the best answer.

1. What is magma called once it reaches the surface?
   - (a) Ash
   - (b) Lava
   - (c) Crust
   - (d) Plate

2. Why does magma rise toward the surface?
   - (a) It is lighter than the solid rock around it
   - (b) Wind pulls it up
   - (c) Plates push it down
   - (d) It is cold

3. Where do most volcanoes form?
   - (a) In the middle of deserts
   - (b) Where tectonic plates pull apart or push together
   - (c) Only on islands
   - (d) Near the North Pole

4. What is the Ring of Fire?
   - (a) A volcano in Hawaii
   - (b) An area of many volcanoes around the Pacific Ocean
   - (c) A layer inside Earth
   - (d) A kind of lava

5. Why is it important for volcanologists to watch volcanoes?

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Reading Comprehension: Answer Key

How Volcanoes Form

1. b) Lava
2. a) It is lighter than the solid rock around it
3. b) Where tectonic plates pull apart or push together
4. b) An area of many volcanoes around the Pacific Ocean
5. Sample answer: They measure earthquakes, gases and ground changes so they can warn people before an eruption and keep them safe.