

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Vocabulary:

## "Mountain of Doom"

Go to Scope  
Online to listen  
to the words  
and definitions  
read aloud.

- 1. calamity (kuh-LAM-ih-tee)** *noun*; A calamity is an event that causes great damage or distress, often suddenly. A plane crash in which many people die is a calamity. A hurricane that causes terrible destruction is also a calamity.
- 2. consolation (kon-suh-LEY-shuhn)** *noun*; The verb *console* (kuhn-SOHL) means "to comfort in a time of grief or distress." A consolation is something that consoles—that makes you feel less sad or disappointed. If you're upset because your best friend is moving away, it might be a consolation to know that you'll get to see each other at summer camp. Anytime you're sad, a hug from someone you love can be a consolation.
- 3. dormant (DAWR-muhnt)** *adjective*; Something that is dormant is not currently active but is able to become active. A dormant volcano is a volcano that is not erupting right now but is expected to erupt at some point in the future. Many trees and plants become dormant during the winter: They stop growing and may lose their leaves, but they are not dead; they will start to grow again in the spring.
- 4. excavate (EKS-kuh-veyt)** *verb*; Excavating has to do with digging. *Excavate* can mean "to uncover something by digging and removing the earth that covers it." In the video, workers are excavating ancient ruins in Egypt.  
  
*Excavate* can also mean "to hollow something out or make a large hole in something." Before building a house, the construction crew might excavate the ground for the building's foundation. Or, *excavate* can mean "to make something by digging or hollowing out." Workers might excavate a tunnel through a mountain.
- 5. imminent (IM-uh-nuhnt)** *adjective*; Something that is imminent is about to happen—that is, it will be happening very soon. If you see clouds like the ones in the photo, you can be sure that a storm is imminent.
- 6. lumber (LUHM-ber)** *noun or verb*; As a noun, lumber refers to wooden boards or logs that have been cut for use. As a verb, *lumber* means "to move in a slow, heavy, awkward way." Think of the way a bear walks—that's lumbering.

**7. mosaic (moh-ZEY-ik)** *noun*; A mosaic is a kind of decoration made by arranging small pieces of colored glass, stone, or tile into a pattern or picture. You set the small pieces into a soft material that then hardens to hold them in place.

**8. pungent (PUHN-juhnt)** *verb*; Something that is pungent has a strong, sharp taste or smell. Garlic, ginger, and onions are pungent. If your sneakers have a pungent odor, it's time to wash them!

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**Directions:** In the space below or on the back of this page, list any other words from the article whose definitions you are not sure about. For each word, use context clues to try to figure out the meaning. Then look up the word in a few different dictionaries. Discuss the meaning of the word with your teacher or peers. Then write a definition for the word and one example sentence using the word.

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# Close-Reading Questions

## "Mountain of Doom"

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1. Why do you think author Lauren Tarshis decided to address the reader directly? (author's craft, point of view)

2. Identify sensory details that Tarshis uses in the first paragraph. (author's craft)

3. What information does Tarshis include to help readers better understand the time and place in which her story takes place? (setting)

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# Critical-Thinking Questions

## "Mountain of Doom" and "My Journey to Pompeii"

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1. What interested or surprised you about Tarshis's writing process?
2. In the final section of "Mountain of Doom," Tarshis writes that Pompeii was "lost to time." How does her article present a different idea?
3. Consider what Tarshis says in the interview about why it's important to learn about the distant past. What are some other reasons?
4. Think about how Tarshis brings the story of Pompeii to life. What are some techniques she uses that you want to try in your own writing? Answers will vary.

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## Preparing to Write

# Bringing the Story to Life

Follow the directions in the boxes below to help you organize the ideas and details you will use in your response to the writing prompt on page 21.

### Descriptive Language

One way author Lauren Tarshis helps the reader understand what it was like to be in Pompeii the day Mount Vesuvius erupted is by using descriptive language: vivid words and sensory details that help the reader imagine what people saw, heard, smelled, tasted, or felt.

1. List sentences or paragraphs from the article that contain vivid language and sensory details. Explain what each sentence or paragraph helps the reader imagine or understand. We provided one example for you. Find at least three more. Be sure to include page numbers to show where each example comes from.

- Tarshis writes, "The main street teems with people—women swishing by in long robes, men in tunics, children with leather sandals that slap against the hot stone streets. Vendors shout for your attention, offering slices of juicy melon and sizzling hunks of roasted meat. A parrot calls out from the shoulder of a shopkeeper. 'Salve!' he squawks—'hello' in Latin, the language of the Roman Empire" (18). This description helps the reader imagine the ancient city of Pompeii—its warmth, what people wore and ate, the smells and sounds of the bustling streets. These details also help the reader understand the contrast between what life was like before and after the eruption that no one knew was about to happen.

**Point of View**

Another way Tarshis helps readers understand what it was like to be in Pompeii the day Vesuvius erupted is by using second-person point of view and addressing readers as though they were in Pompeii during the eruption.

2. List examples of Tarshis's use of second person. How does each example help readers understand what experiencing the eruption was like? (Think about how the article would be different if Tarshis had not addressed readers directly.)

**Research**

The research Tarshis conducted played an important role in helping her bring the story to life.

3. How did Tarshis's research help her? What kind of information did she include to help readers better understand the time and place in which her story takes place? Use details from "My Journey to Pompeii" and "Mountain of Doom" to support your answer.

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# Video Discussion Questions

## "Behind the Scenes: Mountain of Doom"

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### Before Reading "Mountain of Doom"

1. In the first section of the video (0:10-0:48), what details help you understand why the eruption of Mount Vesuvius was such a terrible disaster? Consider the narration, sounds, and visuals.
2. Author Lauren Tarshis says that her favorite way to research is to travel to the place that she is writing about (1:11). Why might traveling to the place you are writing about be helpful to an author doing research for an article?
3. According to the video, what did archaeologists find when they dug up the city of Pompeii? Why were these discoveries important?

### After Reading "Mountain of Doom"

4. Consider the questions Tarshis asks at 5:30 in the video. What point of view is the story written from? Why might Tarshis have written it this way?



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## Paired Texts Quiz

**Directions:** Read “Mountain of Doom” and “My Journey to Pompeii.” Then answer the questions below.

- The main purpose of “Mountain of Doom” is to**
  - teach readers about one of the worst disasters of the ancient world.
  - explain why volcanoes erupt.
  - teach readers about an author’s writing process.
  - give a detailed history of the Roman Empire.
- In the introduction, author Lauren Tarshis writes that the main street in Pompeii “teems with people.” Based on context clues, *teem* most closely means**
  - to lack.
  - to overflow.
  - to fail.
  - to surprise.
- The map on page 18 supports the idea that in 79 A.D., Rome was**
  - beautiful.
  - full of farms.
  - powerful.
  - dangerous.
- How does Tarshis support the idea that Pompeii was modern? Choose TWO answers.**
  - by including photos of casts
  - by describing Rome’s water system
  - by providing examples of institutions that existed then, such as libraries and theaters
  - by explaining that the people of Pompeii thought Jupiter was angry with them
- On page 18, Tarshis writes, “There is not even a word for volcano in Latin.” This line emphasizes the fact that the people of Pompeii**
  - feared volcanic eruptions.
  - had a lot of knowledge about volcanoes.
  - knew and thought very little about volcanoes.
  - spoke Latin.
- In the interview “My Journey to Pompeii,” Tarshis describes Vesuvius as a “mountain raining down death and destruction.” Which section from “Mountain of Doom” develops this idea?**
  - the introduction
  - “A Boiling Avalanche”
  - “A Vanished World”
  - the sidebar “Unlocking the Secrets of Pompeii”

## Constructed-Response Questions

**Directions:** Write your answers in a well-organized response.

- In the interview, Tarshis says, “I also knew that my article would be designed to give a lot of sensory detail.” Give examples of sensory details she uses and explain what they help readers understand.
- Consider the sidebar “Unlocking the Secrets of Pompeii.” What does it add to the reader’s understanding of how life in ancient Rome compares with life today?

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## Paired Texts Quiz

**Directions:** Read “Mountain of Doom” and “My Journey to Pompeii.” Then answer the questions below.

- The main purpose of “Mountain of Doom” is to \_\_\_\_\_, whereas the main purpose of “My Journey to Pompeii” is to \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (A) teach readers about one of the worst disasters of the ancient world; share an author’s writing process  
 (B) detail the history of the Roman Empire; explain why volcanoes erupt  
 (C) introduce readers to the field of archaeology; describe ancient Pompeii  
 (D) describe pyroclastic flow; detail the eruption of Mount Vesuvius
- In the first paragraph of “Mountain of Doom,” author Lauren Tarshis writes that the main street in Pompeii “teems with people.” Based on context clues, what is the definition of *teem*?  
 (A) to be without or not have enough  
 (B) to be full of or swarming with  
 (C) to produce a lot of noise  
 (D) to feel surprise or shock
- Tarshis characterizes the Roman Empire at the time of Mount Vesuvius’s eruption in 79 A.D. as  
 (A) small and peaceful.  
 (B) poor and struggling.  
 (C) powerful and advanced.  
 (D) dangerous and unstable.
- Which provide the BEST support for your answer to question 3? Choose TWO answers.  
 (A) photos of casts made by archaeologists  
 (B) the description of Roman water systems  
 (C) the map of the Roman Empire  
 (D) Pliny the Younger’s eyewitness account
- On page 18, Tarshis writes, “There is not even a word for volcano in Latin.” What purpose does this detail serve?  
 (A) It provides background information about the language spoken in Pompeii.  
 (B) It compares and contrasts English and Latin.  
 (C) It shows how little the people of Pompeii knew about volcanoes.  
 (D) It helps the reader understand why the eruption of Vesuvius was not surprising.
- In “My Journey to Pompeii,” Tarshis describes Vesuvius as a “mountain raining down death and destruction.” Which section from “Mountain of Doom” develops this idea?  
 (A) the introduction  
 (B) “A Boiling Avalanche”  
 (C) the map of the Roman Empire  
 (D) the sidebar “Unlocking the Secrets of Pompeii”

## Constructed-Response Questions

**Directions:** Write your answers in a well-organized response.

- How does Tarshis help readers feel as if they are in Pompeii during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius? Identify at least two techniques she uses. Support your answer with text evidence.
- How does the sidebar “Unlocking the Secrets of Pompeii” contribute to the article?

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# Finding and Using Text Evidence

**Directions:** Read "Mountain of Doom" and "My Journey to Pompeii." Then complete the activity below.

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**1. Imagine that you are writing a paragraph explaining how a lack of knowledge about volcanoes led to the people of Pompeii's downfall.**

**A. Which of the following would be the BEST topic sentence for your paragraph?**

- Ⓐ The eruption of Mount Vesuvius destroyed the city of Pompeii.
- Ⓑ There were many warning signs that Mount Vesuvius might soon erupt.
- Ⓒ Due to their lack of understanding of volcanoes, the people of Pompeii did not recognize the many warning signs signaling that Mount Vesuvius might soon erupt.

**B. Which information from the article BEST supports the sentence you chose in part A?**

- Ⓐ "Nobody understands that the terrible smell is sulfurous gas, part of the explosive brew simmering inside Vesuvius." (p. 18)
- Ⓑ "Over the next few hours, millions of tons of ash and rock fall on the city." (p. 20)
- Ⓒ "For months, magma has been rising through the center of the volcano. Pressure is building. A catastrophic eruption is coming." (p. 18)

**C. Which of the following BEST explains why the text evidence you chose in part B is relevant?**

- Ⓐ It shows how Pompeii was destroyed.
- Ⓑ It provides an example of a warning sign that the people of Pompeii were unaware of because they did not know about volcanoes and how they work.
- Ⓒ It explains what happens before a volcano erupts.

**2. Choose the ONE piece of text evidence from the article that best supports the statement below. Then complete the sentence to explain your choice.**

**Pompeii was surprisingly modern in many ways.**

- Ⓐ "People hide in their homes, believing that this strange storm of ash and rock will soon end." (p. 20)
- Ⓑ "Vendors shout for your attention, offering slices of juicy melon and sizzling hunks of roasted meat." (p. 18)
- Ⓒ "Nowhere else in the world has such a sophisticated system of aqueducts—underground tunnels that deliver fresh water to fountains, bathhouses, and homes." (p. 18)

I chose \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. A. Choose the THREE pieces of text evidence from the article that BEST support the statement below.**

**The eruption of Mount Vesuvius was violent and destructive.**

- Ⓐ "As the volcano loses energy, the molten rock and ash mix together to create boiling waves that rush down the mountain at 180 miles per hour." (p. 20)
- Ⓑ "It's just a big mountain, silent and still, its gentle slopes covered with trees and vineyards." (p. 18)
- Ⓒ "In the weeks that follow, people search Pompeii for survivors. There are none." (p. 20)
- Ⓓ "Over the next few hours, millions of tons of ash and rock fall on the city." (p. 20)
- Ⓔ "Vesuvius sits atop a crack in Earth's crust—the hard, rocky layer that covers the surface of our planet like the shell of an egg." (p. 18)

**B. Select one piece of INCORRECT evidence from above and explain why it does NOT support the statement.**

Evidence \_\_\_\_ does not support the statement because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Choose the paragraph that correctly uses text evidence from the article “Mountain of Doom” in the form of a quotation.**

- Ⓐ Studying the ruins of Pompeii has helped us learn about ancient Roman life. In her article “Mountain of Doom,” author Lauren Tarshis writes, “[Archaeologists] even found the remains of a basket of eggs and a bowl of chicken soup” (20). In other words, archaeologists discovered what ancient Romans ate by studying the ruins of Pompeii.
- Ⓑ Studying the ruins of Pompeii has helped us learn about ancient Roman life. In her article “Mountain of Doom,” author Lauren Tarshis writes, “[Archaeologists] even found the remains of a basket of eggs and a bowl of chicken soup” (20).
- Ⓒ Studying the ruins of Pompeii has helped us learn about ancient Roman life. “[Archaeologists] even found the remains of a basket of eggs and a bowl of chicken soup” (20). In other words, archaeologists discovered what ancient Romans ate by studying the ruins of Pompeii.

Explain why the two answers you did NOT choose are incorrect: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Choose the paragraph that correctly uses text evidence from the interview “My Journey to Pompeii” in the form of a paraphrase.**

- Ⓐ Writing an article about a historical topic requires extensive research. Author Lauren Tarshis read books, watched videos, interviewed experts, and went to museums to help her write an article about the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.
- Ⓑ Writing an article about a historical topic requires extensive research. In the interview “My Journey to Pompeii,” author Lauren Tarshis explains that not only did she read books, watch videos, interview experts, and go to museums, she also traveled to Pompeii to help her write an article about the eruption of Mount Vesuvius (21). In other words, she had to draw on many different sources to gather enough information for her story.
- Ⓒ Writing an article about a historical topic requires extensive research. In the interview, “My Journey to Pompeii” author Lauren Tarshis says, “As a researcher, you can learn a ton by watching videos, reading books, interviewing experts, and going to museums” (21). In other words, she had to draw on many different sources to gather enough information for her story.

Explain why the two answers you did NOT choose are incorrect: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- a topic sentence
- at least one piece of text evidence in the form of a paraphrase or a direct quotation
- a sentence that states how that evidence supports your central idea

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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# Finding Text Evidence

**Directions:** Read "Mountain of Doom." Then complete the activity below.

## 1. Choose the TWO pieces of text evidence from the article that best support the statement below.

**STATEMENT:**

**The eruption of Mount Vesuvius was violent and destructive.**

- Ⓐ "As the volcano loses energy, the molten rock and ash mix together to create boiling waves that rush down the mountain at 180 miles per hour." (p. 20)
- Ⓑ "It's just a big mountain, silent and still, its gentle slopes covered with trees and vineyards." (p. 18)
- Ⓒ "Vesuvius sits atop a crack in Earth's crust—the hard, rocky layer that covers the surface of our planet like the shell of an egg." (p. 18)
- Ⓓ "In the weeks that follow, people search Pompeii for survivors. There are none." (p. 20)

## 2. Choose the ONE piece of text evidence from the article that best supports the statement below. Then complete the sentence to explain your choice.

**STATEMENT:**

**Pompeii was surprisingly modern in many ways.**

- Ⓐ "People hide in their homes, believing that this strange storm of ash and rock will soon end." (p. 20)
- Ⓑ "Nowhere else in the world has such a sophisticated system of aqueducts—underground tunnels that deliver fresh water to fountains, bathhouses, and homes." (p. 18)
- Ⓒ "Vendors shout for your attention, offering slices of juicy melon and sizzling hunks of roasted meat." (p. 18)

I chose \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Read the lines below from the article. Then write a statement that they all support.**

- Ⓐ “Goats and sheep are dropping dead on the mountainside, their lungs seared by poisonous gases.” (p. 18)
- Ⓑ “Nobody understands that the terrible smell is sulfurous gas, part of the explosive brew simmering inside Vesuvius.” (p. 18)
- Ⓒ “Small earthquakes rumble through the city, an indication of growing strain on the land.” (pp. 18–19)

**STATEMENT:**



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# Exploring Mood

Mood is the feeling you get from reading a piece of writing. Another way to describe mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you "walk into" a story, it too has an atmosphere that creates a feeling. Writers create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot.

In this activity, you will consider the mood of the sections "The Volcano" and "A Boiling Avalanche" in author Lauren Tarshis's narrative nonfiction article "Mountain of Doom."

## Mood Words

gloomy, hopeful, peaceful, playful, relaxed, suspenseful, terrifying, urgent, violent

### The Mood

1. Reread the sections "The Volcano" and "A Boiling Avalanche." Choose three words that best describe their mood from the box above, or come up with your own three words. Write the words here:

### Information

2. How does the information Tarshis includes about Mount Vesuvius in the section "The Volcano" help create the mood you identified?

### Point of View

3. How does the point of view Tarshis uses help create the mood? (Think about the way Tarshis addresses the reader. How does this help create the mood you identified?)

### Sensory Details

4. How does Tarshis use sensory details to create an atmosphere that makes the reader feel a certain way? (Think about the descriptive details Tarshis uses to appeal to the reader's sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch.)

### Mood Music

5. Imagine that you are going to make a movie based on Tarshis's telling of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in "Mountain of Doom." What kind of music would you choose to play during the opening credits? You can name a particular song or just describe the type of music you would choose.

**Music:**

**Why I chose this music:**

Note: *Scope* does not accept Google Docs. If you are e-mailing your entry, please send a .pdf or .doc file.

## Vesuvius Contest

Explain how author Lauren Tarshis helps readers understand what it was like to be in Pompeii the day Vesuvius erupted. How did her research help her? Draw on the article, the interview, and the video to support your ideas.

Five winners will get *Eruption!* by Elizabeth Rusch.

### Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ a clearly stated central idea
- ⇒ clarity and good organization
- ⇒ use of information from both texts
- ⇒ grammar, spelling, and punctuation

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

My home phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ My grade: \_\_\_\_\_

My teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_ My teacher's e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

School address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

School phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

My parent or legal guardian consents  
to my participation in this contest.

Parent's or legal guardian's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Include this form with your entry and send both to: [scopemag@scholastic.com](mailto:scopemag@scholastic.com)  
or mail them to: Vesuvius Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

**ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY April 20, 2020!**