

# The Lost City of Pompeii

Pompeii was a thriving, bustling city during the time of the ancient Roman Empire. It is located in Italy, in the region of Campania, near Naples. Today, it is one of the most significant historical sites in the world and key to helping archaeologists understand aspects of Roman civilisation.

## Life in Pompeii

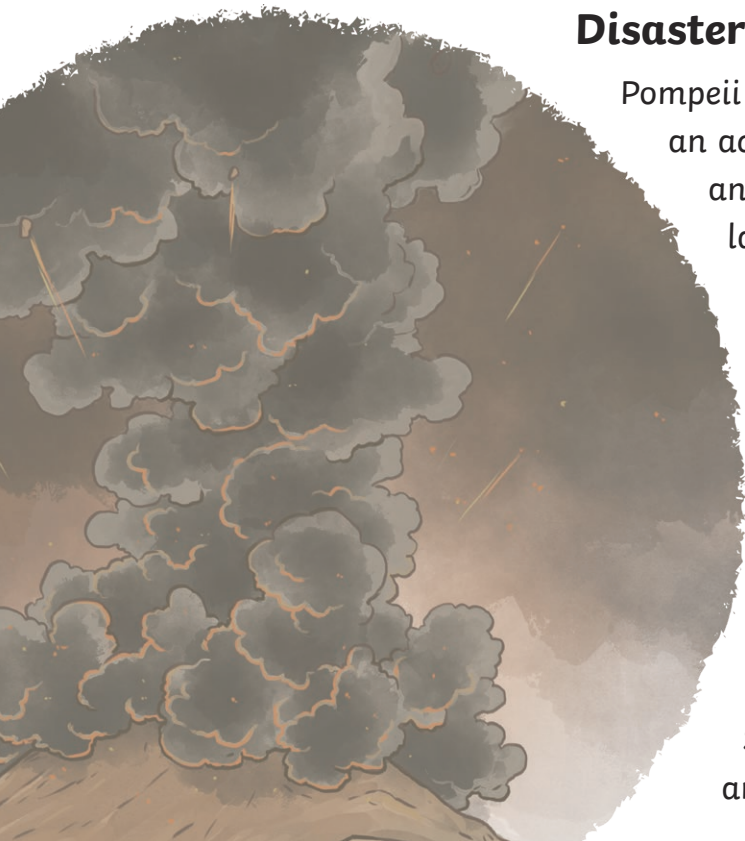
Originally founded by Greek settlers in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, Pompeii became an attractive vacation spot for Romans after it had fallen under the control of the Roman Empire in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. It was also popular with farmers as the volcanic soil was extremely fertile for growing crops. The town was filled with elegant houses and villas, taverns, bath houses, marketplaces and shops. There was also an aqueduct to provide water and an amphitheatre which could seat around 20,000 spectators.



## Disaster Strikes

Pompeii sat in the looming shadow of Mount Vesuvius, an active volcano. The city was used to earthquakes and smaller eruptions happening regularly. A large earthquake in AD 62 caused widespread destruction and was a warning of the future devastation to come.

In AD 79, Vesuvius catastrophically erupted. The level of destruction was immense and the city was rapidly covered in clouds of ash and lava. Around 2000 people were killed in Pompeii and it is believed around 16,000 people lost their lives overall, including in the nearby towns of Herculaneum, Oplontis, Stabiae and other villas and farms in the nearby area. The eruption lasted for two days altogether,



during which time the volcano spluttered out numerous stones and large amounts of ash, lava and volcanic gases. In some areas, the ash piled up to 6 metres deep. Pliny the Younger (a local lawyer and author) wrote about his view of the eruption from the town of Misenum, around 20 miles away, commenting on how dark the sky was.

### The Lost City Is Found

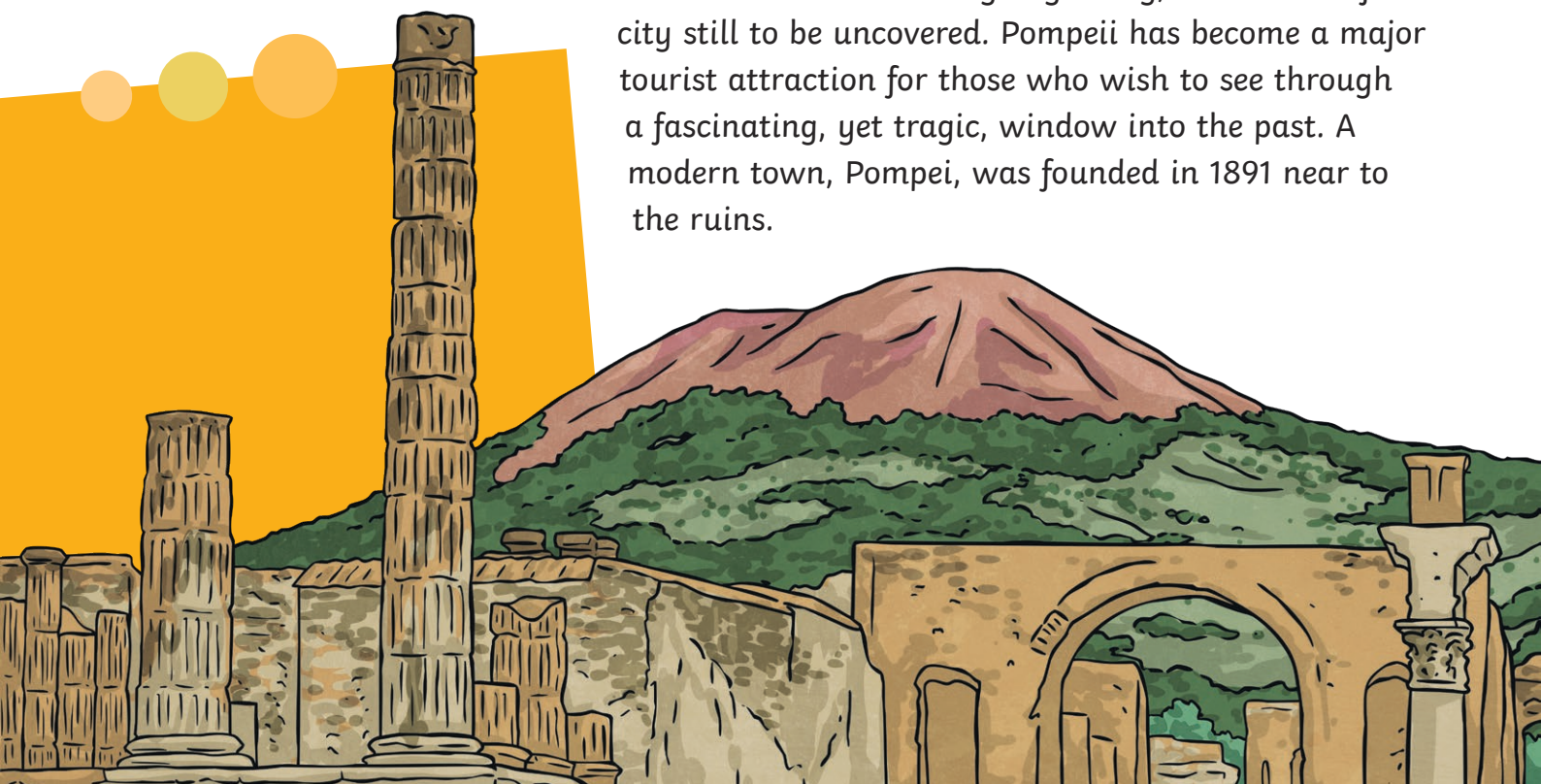
The ruins of Pompeii laid undiscovered for almost 2000 years. In 1738, a group of workmen digging foundations for a palace made amazing finds. Because of this, a Spanish engineer began excavations in 1748 and Pompeii was uncovered for the first time since the disaster, although the city was not identified until 1763, when an inscription was uncovered with the city's name. They discovered that the volcanic ash had preserved the city remarkably and the place was almost exactly as it had been on the day of its destruction.

Buildings, pottery and household goods, including jars of fruit and loaves of bread, were preserved. The people caught in the eruption were also preserved, allowing archaeologists a rare insight into what life had been like in the town.

The discovery of the ruins led to an increased interest about the classical era from the public, with some art and buildings being created in the Roman style.

The excavation is still ongoing today, with areas of the city still to be uncovered. Pompeii has become a major tourist attraction for those who wish to see through a fascinating, yet tragic, window into the past. A modern town, Pompei, was founded in 1891 near to the ruins.

*"It was daylight now elsewhere in the world, but there the darkness was darker and thicker than any night."*



# Questions

1. In which country is Pompeii located? Tick one.

- Rome
- Greece
- Italy
- The UK

2. Which of the following does the text **not** mention being in Pompeii? Tick one.

- marketplaces
- taverns
- amphitheatre
- museums

3. Fill in the missing words.

The level of destruction was \_\_\_\_\_ and the city was  
\_\_\_\_\_ covered in clouds of ash and lava.

4. Name **two** of the other towns that were caught in the eruption as well as Pompeii.

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5. When was the modern town of Pompei founded?

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6. Look at the section called **Disaster Strikes**.

Why do you think the word 'looming' has been used to describe Mount Vesuvius?

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7. Why do you think it wasn't until 1763 that the ruins were identified as being Pompeii? Explain your answer.

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8. Why do you think it is remarkable that Pompeii was so well preserved? Explain your answer.

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# Answers

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- Rome
- Greece
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- The UK

2. Which of the following does the text **not** mention being in Pompeii? Tick one.

- marketplaces
- taverns
- amphitheatre
- museums**

3. Fill in the missing words.

The level of destruction was **immense** and the city was **rapidly** covered in clouds of ash and lava.

4. Name **two** of the other towns that were caught in the eruption as well as Pompeii.

**Accept any two of the following: Herculaneum; Oplontis; Stabiae.**

5. When was the modern town of Pompei founded?

**The modern town of Pompei was founded in 1891.**

6. Look at the section called **Disaster Strikes**.

Why do you think the word 'looming' has been used to describe Mount Vesuvius?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the word 'looming' has been used to make Mount Vesuvius seem threatening, like a dark presence looking over the city.**

7. Why do you think it wasn't until 1763 that the ruins were identified as being Pompeii? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the reason it wasn't until 1763 that the ruins were identified as being Pompeii was because it wasn't until they had uncovered the inscription that they knew for certain what the place they had discovered was called. The city had been completely hidden and there were no known parts elsewhere to link to it. There are ruins all over where the Roman Empire spread and so the ruins could have been a number of places.**

8. Why do you think it is remarkable that Pompeii was so well preserved? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that it is remarkable how well things have been preserved at Pompeii because the disaster happened almost 2000 years ago. You would have expected that the remains of the city would have decayed or would have been damaged during that time.**

# The Lost City of Pompeii

Pompeii was a thriving, bustling city during the time of the ancient Roman Empire. It is located in Italy, in the region of Campania, near Naples. Today, it is one of the most significant historical sites in the world and key to helping archaeologists understand aspects of Roman civilisation.

## Life in Pompeii

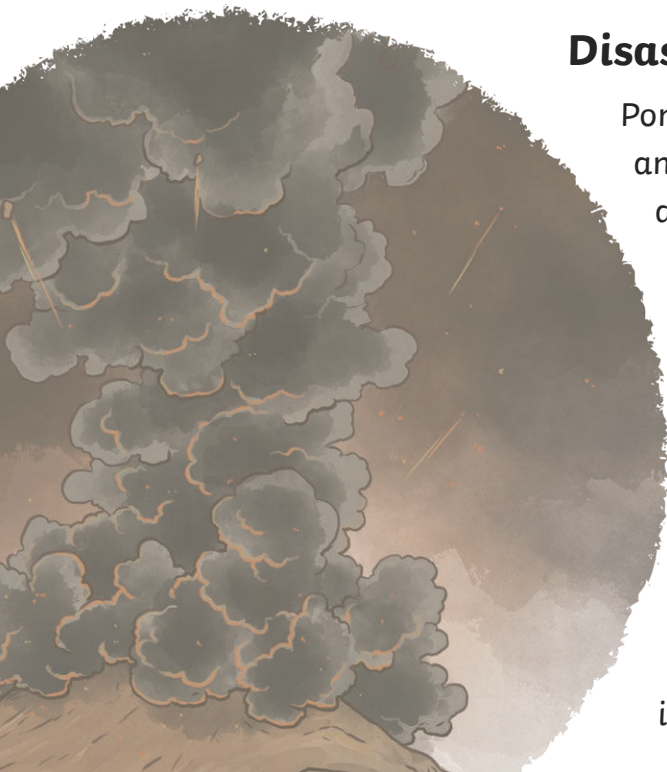
Originally founded by a group of Greek settlers called the Oscans in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, Pompeii was an important trade centre for merchants around the Mediterranean. Later, it became an attractive vacation spot for Romans after it had fallen under the control of the Roman Empire in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. It was also an ideal agricultural spot as the volcanic soil was extremely fertile for growing crops. The town was filled with elegant houses and villas, taverns, bath houses, marketplaces and shops. There was also an aqueduct to provide water and an amphitheatre which could seat around 20,000 spectators.



## Disaster Strikes

Pompeii sat in the looming shadow of Mount Vesuvius, an active volcano. The city was used to earthquakes and smaller eruptions happening regularly and so when a large earthquake in AD 62 caused widespread destruction, it was seen as nothing out of the ordinary rather than a warning of the future devastation to come.

In AD 79, Vesuvius catastrophically erupted. The level of destruction was immense and the city was rapidly covered in clouds of ash and lava. Around 2000 people were killed in Pompeii and it is believed around 16,000 people lost their lives overall, including in the nearby towns of Herculaneum, Oplontis, Stabiae



and other villas and farms in the nearby area. The eruption lasted for two days altogether, during which time the volcano spluttered out numerous stones and large amounts of ash, lava and volcanic gases. In some areas, the ash piled up to 6 metres deep. Pliny the Younger (a local lawyer and author) wrote about his view of the eruption from the town of Misenum, around 20 miles away, commenting on how dark the sky was.

### The Lost City Is Found

The ruins of Pompeii laid undiscovered for almost 2000 years. In 1738, a group of workmen digging foundations for a palace for the King of Naples made amazing finds. Because of this, a Spanish engineer began excavations in 1748 and Pompeii was uncovered for the first time since the disaster, although the city was not identified until 1763, when an inscription was uncovered with the city's name. They discovered that the volcanic ash had preserved the city remarkably and the place was almost exactly as it had been on the day of its destruction.

The discovery of the ruins led to an increased interest about the classical era from the public, with some art and buildings being created in the Roman style.

In 1860, excavations were formally organised and finds were carefully catalogued and documented by archaeologists. Buildings, pottery and household goods, including jars of fruit and loaves of bread, were preserved. The people caught in the eruption were also preserved, allowing archaeologists a rare insight into what life had been like in the town. The

excavation is still ongoing today, with areas of the city still to be uncovered.

Pompeii has become a major tourist attraction for those who wish to see through a fascinating, yet tragic, window into the past. A modern town, Pompei, was founded in 1891 near to the ruins.

Vesuvius itself remains active. It last erupted in 1944 and is being closely monitored for any potential activity to make sure that people nearby can be quickly evacuated in case of an eruption.

*"It was daylight now elsewhere in the world, but there the darkness was darker and thicker than any night."*





# Questions

1. Which Italian city is Pompeii close to? Tick one.

- Rome  
 Naples  
 Florence  
 Milan

2. Match up the year to the correct event.

AD 62

AD 79

AD 1748

Mount Vesuvius erupts and destroys Pompeii.

The ruins of Pompeii begin to be uncovered.

An earthquake causes enormous damage to Pompeii.

3. Look at the opening paragraph.

Find and copy one word that means 'busy'.

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4. Name **two** objects found preserved in the ruins of Pompeii.

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

5. Who gave an account of how the sky looked from the town of Misenum during the eruption?

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6. Look at the section called **Disaster Strikes**.

Why do you think the author used the word 'looming' to describe Mount Vesuvius? Explain your answer.

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7. Why do you think it wasn't until 1763 that the ruins were identified as being Pompeii? Explain your answer.

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8. Why do you think it is remarkable how things have been preserved in Pompeii? Explain your answer.

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9. Would you like to visit the ruins of Pompeii? Explain your answer.

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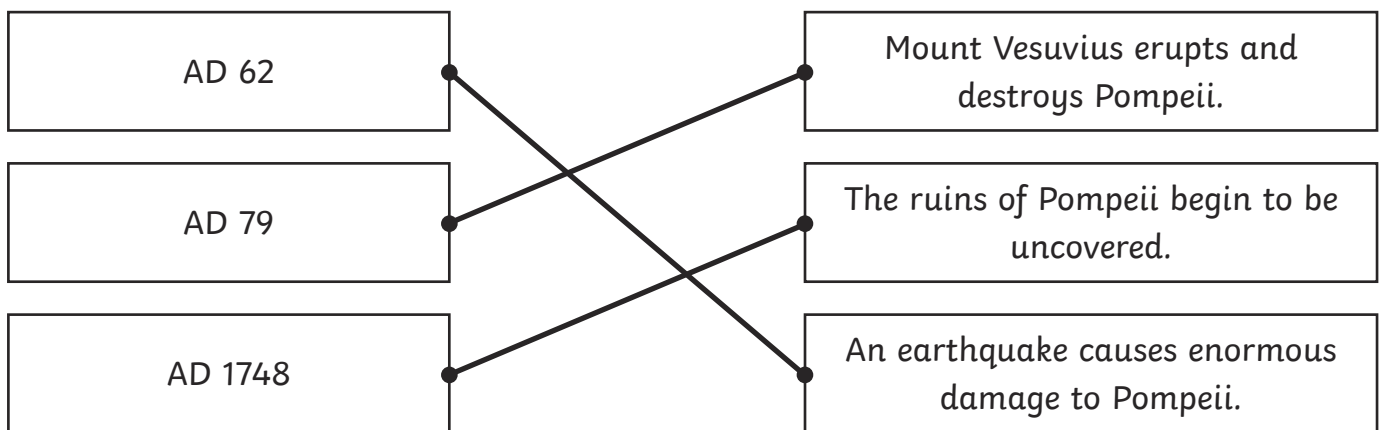
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# Answers

1. Which Italian city is Pompeii close to? Tick one.

- Rome  
 **Naples**  
 Florence  
 Milan

2. Match up the year to the correct event.



3. Look at the opening paragraph.

Find and copy one word that means 'busy'.

**bustling**

4. Name **two** objects found preserved in the ruins of Pompeii.

**Accept any two of the following: buildings; pottery; household goods; jars of fruit; loaves of bread; people.**

5. Who gave an account of how the sky looked from the town of Misenum during the eruption?

**Pliny the Younger (a local lawyer and author) gave an account of how the sky looked during the eruption.**

6. Look at the section called **Disaster Strikes**.

Why do you think the author used the word 'looming' to describe Mount Vesuvius? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the word 'looming' has been used to make Mount Vesuvius seem threatening, like a dark presence looking over the city.**

7. Why do you think it wasn't until 1763 that the ruins were identified as being Pompeii? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the reason it wasn't until 1763 that the ruins were identified as being Pompeii was because it wasn't until they had uncovered the inscription that they knew for certain what the place they had discovered was called. The city had been completely hidden and there were no known parts elsewhere to link to it. There are ruins all over where the Roman Empire spread and so the ruins could have been a number of places.**

8. Why do you think it is remarkable how things have been preserved in Pompeii? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that it is remarkable how well things have been preserved at Pompeii because the disaster happened almost 2000 years ago. You would have expected that the remains of the city would have decayed or would have been damaged during that time.**

9. Would you like to visit the ruins of Pompeii? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Yes, I would like to visit Pompeii as it is an important archaeological site which has taught us a lot about the Romans. It is also a place where you can see unique preserved buildings and objects.**

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## Life in Pompeii

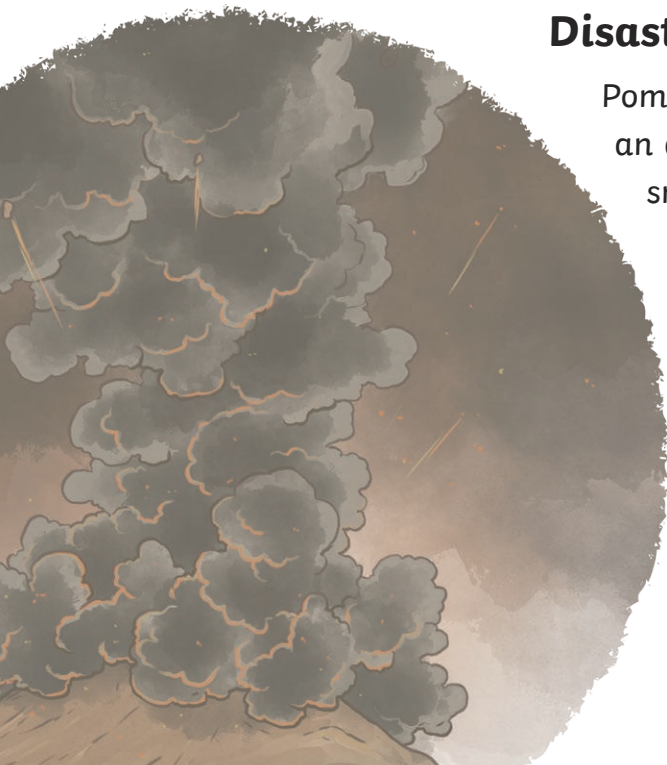
Originally founded by a group of Greek settlers called the Oscans in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, Pompeii was an important trade centre for merchants around the Mediterranean. Later, it became an attractive vacation spot for Romans after it had fallen under the control of the Roman Empire in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. It was also an ideal agricultural spot as the volcanic soil was extremely fertile for growing crops, such as grapes and olives. The town was filled with elegant houses and villas, taverns, bath houses, marketplaces and shops, as well as important temples to gods including Jupiter. There was also an aqueduct to provide water and an amphitheatre which could seat around 20,000 spectators.



## Disaster Strikes

Pompeii sat in the looming shadow of Mount Vesuvius, an active volcano. The city was used to earthquakes and smaller eruptions happening regularly and so when a large earthquake in AD 62 caused widespread destruction, it was seen as nothing out of the ordinary rather than a warning of the future devastation to come.

In AD 79, Vesuvius catastrophically erupted. The level of destruction was immense and the city was rapidly covered in clouds of ash and lava. Around 2000 people were killed in Pompeii and it is believed around 16,000 people lost their lives overall, including in the nearby towns of



Herculaneum, Oplontis, Stabiae and other villas and farms in the nearby area. The eruption lasted for two days altogether, during which time the volcano spluttered out numerous stones and large amounts of ash, lava and volcanic gases. In some areas, the ash piled up to 6 metres deep. Pliny the Younger (a local lawyer and author) wrote about his view of the eruption from the town of Misenum, around 20 miles away, commenting on how dark the sky was.

“It was daylight now elsewhere in the world, but there the darkness was darker and thicker than any night.”

## The Lost City Is Found

The ruins of Pompeii laid undiscovered for almost 2000 years. The very first evidence of Pompeian ruins were located in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century but were not identified as belonging to the city. In 1709, some ruins of the town Herculaneum were also discovered but not identified. In 1738, a group of workmen digging foundations for a palace for the King of Naples made amazing finds. Because of this, a Spanish engineer began excavations in 1748 and Pompeii was uncovered for the first time since the disaster, although the city was not identified until 1763, when an inscription was uncovered with the city's name. They discovered that the volcanic ash had preserved the city remarkably and the place was almost exactly as it had been on the day of its destruction.

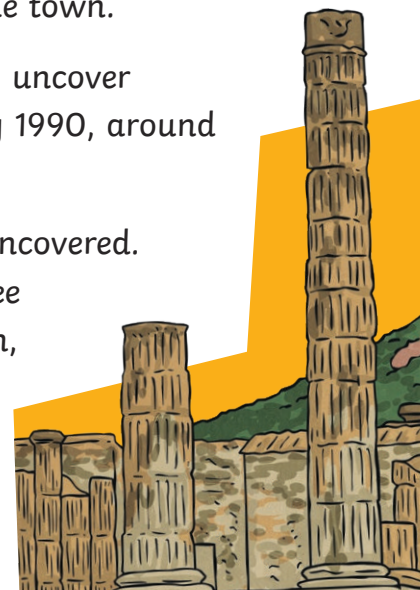
The discovery of the ruins led to an increased interest about the classical era from the public, with some art and buildings being created in the Roman style.

In 1860, excavations were formally organised and finds were carefully catalogued and documented by archaeologists. Buildings, pottery and household goods, including jars of fruit and loaves of bread, were preserved. The people caught in the eruption were also preserved, allowing archaeologists a rare insight into what life had been like in the town.

After a pause in excavations during the Second World War, the effort to uncover Pompeii was ramped up intensively and large areas were uncovered. By 1990, around two-thirds of the city had been excavated.

The excavation is still ongoing today, with areas of the site still to be uncovered. Pompeii has become a major tourist attraction for those who wish to see through a fascinating, yet tragic, window into the past. A modern town, Pompei, was founded in 1891 near to the ruins.

Vesuvius itself remains active. It last erupted in 1944 and is closely monitored for any potential activity to make sure that people nearby can be quickly evacuated in case of an eruption.



# Questions

1. When was Pompeii first settled? Tick one.

- 8<sup>th</sup> century BC  
 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC  
 AD 79  
 AD 1891

2. Match up the year to the correct event.

AD 62

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Mount Vesuvius erupts and destroys Pompeii.

The ruins of Pompeii begin to be uncovered.

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3. Look at the opening paragraph.

Find and copy one word that means 'successful'.

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4. Name **two** objects found preserved in the ruins of Pompeii.

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

5. Who gave an account of how the sky looked from the town of Misenum during the eruption and what was their occupation?

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6. Why do you think the author used the word 'looming' to describe Mount Vesuvius? Explain your answer.

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7. Why do you think it wasn't until 1763 that the ruins were identified as being Pompeii? Explain your answer.

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8. Why do you think it is remarkable how things have been preserved in Pompeii? Explain your answer.

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9. Why do you think excavations were paused during the Second World War?

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10. Tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

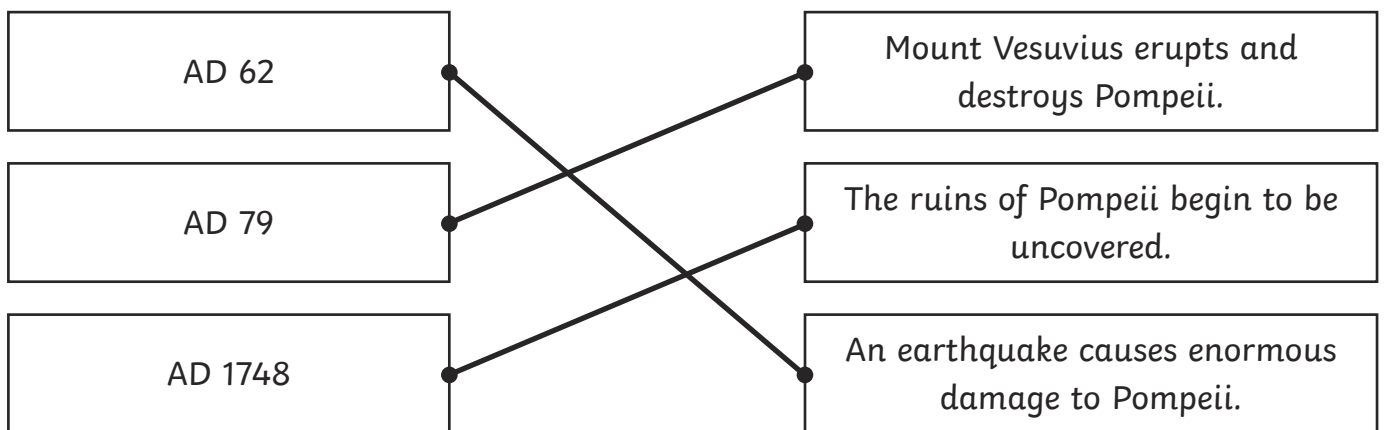
	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
Pompeii was a good location for agriculture.		
The citizens of Pompeii were not used to volcanic eruptions.		
The ash in Pompeii was 10 metres deep in some places.		
By 1990, around two-thirds of Pompeii had been excavated.		
Mount Vesuvius is no longer active.		

# Answers

1. When was Pompeii first settled? Tick one.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC  
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2. Match up the year to the correct event.



3. Look at the opening paragraph.

Find and copy one word that means 'successful'.

**thriving**

4. Name **two** objects found preserved in the ruins of Pompeii.

**Accept any two of the following: buildings; pottery; household goods; jars of fruit; loaves of bread; people.**

5. Who gave an account of how the sky looked from the town of Misenum during the eruption and what was their occupation?

**Pliny the Younger (a local lawyer and author) gave an account of how the sky looked during the eruption.**

6. Why do you think the author used the word 'looming' to describe Mount Vesuvius? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the word 'looming' has been used to make Mount Vesuvius seem threatening, like a dark presence looking over the city.**

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**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that it is remarkable how well things have been preserved at Pompeii because the disaster happened almost 2000 years ago. You would have expected that the remains of the city would have decayed or would have been damaged during that time.**

9. Why do you think excavations were paused during the Second World War?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the excavations were paused during the Second World War because it would have been too dangerous to carry on. The people carrying out the excavations may have also had to join the armed forces or work in other more essential jobs during the war.**

10. Tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Pompeii was a good location for agriculture.	✓	
The citizens of Pompeii were not used to volcanic eruptions.		✓
The ash in Pompeii was 10 metres deep in some places.		✓
By 1990, around two-thirds of Pompeii had been excavated.	✓	
Mount Vesuvius is no longer active.		✓

**Award 2 marks** for all **five** correct.

**Award 1 mark** for **four** correct.