

DISASTER STRIKES

UNFAMILIAR NAMES

Pliny - Plin-ee

Pompeii - Pom-pay

Tacitus - Tass-i-tus

Vesuvius - Ves-oo-vee-us



Pliny

In the first century AD, in the period of the Roman Empire, Vesuvius had been dormant for hundreds of years. The mountain was green as farmers grew fig and olive trees on the slopes of the volcano and the local people had become used to the tremors of earthquakes from time to time.

In the summer of AD 79 there had been more rumbling than usual but in the town of Pompeii and in the whole area surrounding the volcano, most people went about their daily business.

One of them, a boy called Pliny, was 17 at the time. When the volcano erupted, he watched from a nearby town as the earth shook and a black cloud descended over the area. Pliny's uncle, the commander of a nearby naval port, also saw the unusual cloud forming above Mount Vesuvius. He was not content to stand by and watch. He wanted to get a closer look and set off to investigate with a scribe to whom he could dictate his observations.

As he was leaving, he received a message from his friend Rectina asking if he would help her. So he set out with several ships to observe the volcano and try to rescue the people. Years later, Tacitus, a historian, was collecting information about the

event. Pliny wrote to him giving a vivid account of what he had seen and heard. Not only was he an eye-witness to the disaster, but Pliny also heard the stories told by survivors, some of whom had been rescued by his uncle. The following is an extract from Pliny's letter to Tacitus:

As my uncle was leaving the house, he was handed a message from Rectina, whose house was at the foot of the mountain and whose escape was impossible except by boat. She was terrified of the danger threatening her and implored him to rescue her from her fate. He changed his plans, and what he had begun in a spirit of inquiry, he completed as a hero.

He gave orders for the ships to be launched and went on board himself with the intention of bringing help to many more people besides Rectina, for this lovely stretch of coast was thickly populated. He hurried to the place which everyone else was hastily leaving, steering his course straight for the danger zone. He was entirely fearless, describing each moment of the eruption to be noted down exactly as he observed it. Ashes were already falling, hotter and thicker as the ships drew near, followed by bits of pumice and blackened stones, charred and cracked by the flames.

Then, suddenly they were in shallow water, and the shore was blocked by the rubble from the mountain.

For a moment my uncle wondered whether to turn back, but when the helmsman advised this, my uncle refused, telling him that Fortune stood by the courageous ...

translated from Latin

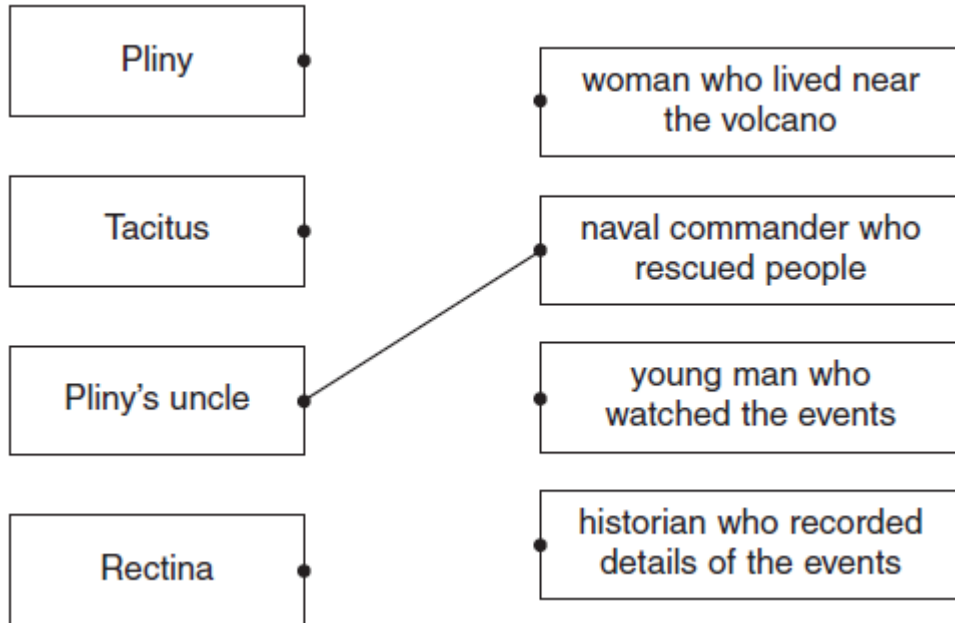
Later in his letter to Tacitus, Pliny records that his uncle died in the eruption.



1. The following are the people who were mentioned in *Disaster Strikes*.

Draw lines to match the names with the correct descriptions.

One has been done for you.



1 mark

2. Look again at Pliny's account of his uncle's journey.

The events are described below, but they are in the wrong order.

Number them 1 - 5 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

The first one has been done for you.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ordered launching of ships | <input type="text"/> |
| received letter from Rectina | <input type="text" value="1"/> |
| came close to land | <input type="text"/> |
| refused to listen to advice | <input type="text"/> |
| journeyed into danger zone | <input type="text"/> |

2 marks

3. Look at the information about Mount Vesuvius in AD 79. (page 1)

How do you know that life was peaceful in the area?

1 mark

4. Find and **copy** two phrases, one from page 1 and one from page 2, to show that Pliny's uncle wanted to study the volcano.

(a) Evidence from page 1:

1 mark

(b) Evidence from page 2:

1 mark

5. What dangers made the helmsman want to turn back?

Give **two** examples:

1. _____

2. _____

2 marks

6. Pliny's uncle received a written message from Rectina stating her problem and asking for his help.

What do you think Rectina wrote?

Using the information you have read, write Rectina's message below.

Dear Friend,

3 marks

7. Some people think that Pliny's uncle was a brave but foolish leader. What do you think?

brave

foolish

brave and
foolish

Explain your answer using parts of the information to help you.

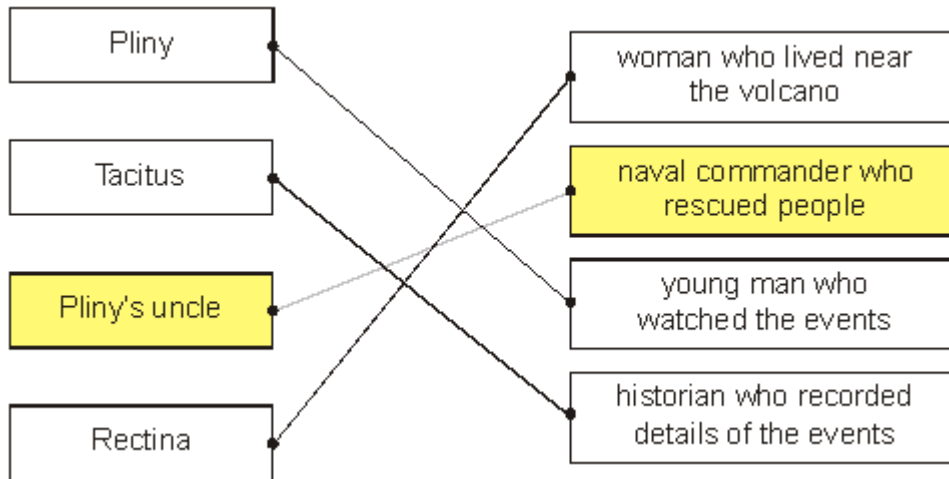
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3 marks

Mark schemes

Q2.

1. Award **1 mark** for matching all three pairs correctly.



1 mark

2. Award **2 marks** for all four stages correctly numbered.

Award **1 mark** for two or three stages correctly numbered.

- ordered launching of ships **2**
- received letter from Rectina **1**
- came close to land **4**
- refused to listen to advice **5**
- journeyed into danger zone **3**

up to 2 marks

3. Award **1 mark** for any of the following pieces of information:

- Vesuvius had been dormant for hundreds of years
- the mountain was green / the slopes were cultivated
- people had become used to the tremors
- people were just going about their daily business.

Also accept reference to farming / farmers growing fig and/or olive trees.

1 mark

4. (a) Award **1 mark** for one of the following, which may be quoted as part of a longer phrase:

- ... closer look ...
- ... set off to investigate ...
- ... to dictate his observations ...
- ... to observe the volcano

Minor errors in copying should not be penalised.

Do not accept:

- ... collecting information ...
- ... not content to stand by and watch

1 mark

(b) Award **1 mark** for one of the following, which may be quoted as part of a longer phrase:

- ... begun in a spirit of inquiry ...
- ... describing each moment of the eruption ...
- ... to be noted down ...
- ... as he observed it

Minor errors in copying should not be penalised.

Do not accept:

- ... hurried to the danger zone

1 mark

5. Award **1 mark** for each acceptable reason up to a maximum of **2 marks**.

Acceptable responses refer to physical consequences of the eruption, eg:

- *in shallow water*
- *the shore was blocked / they got stuck in the rubble*
- *the ash / stones / pumice falling from the sky / hotter / thicker*
- *the ship could have caught fire.*

Also accept hot ash / cloud of ash.

Do not accept non-text based answers, eg: *the volcano / eruption / flames / lava*, or partial answers with no development, eg: *stones / ash / rubble*.

up to 2 marks

6. Points to be included:

- eruption
- danger to Rectina (may be implicitly included in 'eruption' details)

- call for help.

Award **3 marks** for responses that include all three elements and provide a fuller explanation for at least one of them, by giving more detail about the nature of the danger to Rectina or about how Pliny's uncle can help, eg:

- *this is very frightening, as I look at the volcano at this minute, it is bursting at the seams! People are in trouble shouting, screaming, dying. Please help to save these people's lives. They are relying on you. The volcano is nearly on us. Your friend, RECTINA*
- *as you know my house is at the foot of the mountain. If the volcano erupts I will be one of the first to be killed. Will you come and rescue me? By boat is the only way. From Rectina*
- *I'm really scared here. I am in the foot of the volcano. Rubble and ashes are falling over here. I need to escape. I am terrified. It is impossible to escape from here. Everything is dark. Lava is pouring out. I need help.*

Award **2 marks** for responses that mention the three essential elements of the situation, **or** that give a full explanation of two of them without mentioning the third, eg:

- *please come and help because I'm at the foot of the Volcano Vesuvius and it's puffing out black smoke and I think it's erupting*
- *I am stuck. My house is at the foot of a mountain and the volcano's erupted. I need your help. Help me escape. Come quickly! Rectina*
- *I am trapped because the volcano is erupting. Help!*
- *as I live at the bottom of the mountain escape is nearly impossible. The only way of escape is by boat. I know you are commander of the port and you have ships. Please save me. Rectina.*

Award **1 mark** for calls for help that state the general nature of the danger but omit to mention an essential aspect of the situation, eg:

- *I am stuck at the bottom of the volcano. Please come and save me*
- *please come and rescue me from this terrifying place. There is nowhere for me to escape to.*

Also award **1 mark** for responses which are heavily dependent upon the wording of the stimulus text, eg:

- *I am terrified of the danger threatening me, I implore you to come and rescue me from my fate.*

up to 3 marks

7. Award **3 marks** for answers that provide well-justified and developed descriptions of bravery and/or foolishness and that reveal detailed examination of the text, eg:

- *brave to risk his life to rescue others and to try and learn more about the effects of a volcano, and brave to be going into the thick of the danger when everyone else was running away*
- *he took on the challenge of rescuing Rectina and went into the place when everyone was leaving. He even went on when ashes and bits of pumice were falling*

and carried on when the helmsman advised not to

- *foolish because he seemed to set off without thinking that the stone and ash would be boiling so he might get burnt to death. He ignored all the advice and charged in*
- *he was brave because he charged into the 'danger zone' where everyone was fleeing, and also because he saw the thick black cloud forming and changed his course to save others. Yet he was foolish because he charged in not knowing what to expect. He died for this reason*
- *I think he was brave because he went to observe the volcano but also to save the people. I think he was foolish to think that he could rescue everyone, but also because he refused to go back when it got extremely dangerous.*

Award **2 marks** for responses that offer at least two relevant pieces of textual evidence, eg:

- *Pliny's uncle was very brave to rescue all those people. It was not foolish to go and help and those people would turn in their graves to hear 'foolish' said about him*
- *foolish because he risked his life going into the volcano but brave because he went to save Rectina*
- *brave to go into the danger zone and to do it to save other people*
- *he is brave because he went to save his friend and investigate the volcano. But he is also foolish because volcanoes are really dangerous.*

Award **1 mark** for undeveloped / simple responses which make some comment about his bravery / foolishness, eg:

- *brave because he went into the volcano*
- *brave to save people as many people would just run about*
- *foolish because he was going to the erupting volcano.*

up to 3 marks