



Geography: the language of Europe

Lesson 7: Attività vulcanica in Italia (Volcanic activity in Italy)

Key questions:

- a) What happened during the AD79 eruption of Mount Vesuvius?
- b) How is the 'Vesuvia' relocation programme aiming to reduce hazard impacts?
- c) What are the reasons for and against staying in the 'red zone'?

Starter activity:

The final hours (Geography starter)

Download and watch the video *The house of Julius Polybius* available from the [Archaeology Channel website](#). The clip is about 8 minutes long and shows this palatial house before the eruption, when the eruption started and ash started to rain down, and finally the devastating pyroclastic flow and the aftermath of the eruption.

Students should watch the video, and note down what they can see, hear and feel as the eruption progresses. More able students could develop this into a commentary to accompany the video if desired.

You could also read them an account of the last hours of the family from the [Rogue Classicism website](#).

Student's thoughts and feelings about the event can be discussed as a class.

Monte Vesuvio in Italia (MFL starter)

Students play this interactive wordsearch game to find 18 key Italian terms to do with volcanoes. They should then see how many they can translate, before looking up the remainder in an Italian dictionary.

Answers:

Italia	Italy
Vesuvio	Vesuvius
Monte Somma	The summit mountain
Rischio	Hazard
Baia di Napoli	Bay of Naples
Magma	Magma
Lava	Lava
Eruzione	Eruption
Effetti	Impacts
Pericolo	Danger
Disastro	Disaster
Rischi	Risks
Cenere	Ash
Residui	Debris
Cratere	Craters
Flusso pyroclastic	Pyroclastic flow
Vulcano	Volcano
Evacuamento	Evacuation

Main activity:

Should I stay or should I go?

During the main activity, students can work individually or in pairs. Full instructions and guidelines are provided for them on the *Stay or go?* resource.

Scenario: Students imagine that they are living in modern-day Naples on the slopes of Vesuvius, and have been asked to consider relocation. They are provided with the letter detailing this, which can be read as a class.

They are then given a set of statements which they must organise into pros (reasons to stay) and cons (reasons to go). They can be given a period of time to do this before their thoughts are discussed as a class.

Students should consider their two piles carefully and weigh up their options. Encourage them to think carefully about the risks of staying compared with the benefits of living in the area. They should also think about the costs and benefits of leaving and starting life somewhere else. If they were to stay, remind them that it would be the emergency evacuation plan which would be their only option in the event of an eruption.

Finally, they must formulate their decision into a response to the letter; they must give their final decision and fully justify it, explaining all of their reasoning fully and clearly.

Plenary:

Decisions

Some students can be asked to read out their response letters to the rest of the class.

A class vote could be held to see how many opted for staying and leaving.

Students could be asked to pick their main reason for staying or going as an individual and feed back to the class – any common reasons can then be identified.

Extension ideas:

More able pupils might also like to try [this interactive activity from the NOVA Online website](#) which looks at how the scale of an eruption is measured.

They could also consider how the Vesuvia programme's evacuation and relocation plans could be improved. Some ideas for this are detailed on the fact sheet.