

The Ring of Fire

Why are so many of the world's volcanoes found along the edges of the Pacific Ocean in a region called *The Ring of Fire*?

Scientists have discovered that the surface of the Earth is made up of *tectonic plates* – gigantic slabs of rock that fit together like the pieces of a puzzle. Some of these slabs are bigger than a continent, and the biggest is at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

Unlike the pieces of a puzzle, the tectonic plates can move and slowly shift positions. Over millions of years, they push and rub against each other. Around the Pacific Ocean plate, this pushing and rubbing sometimes causes earthquakes. It has also created a string of volcanoes that runs from New Zealand all the way around to the tip of South America – The Ring of Fire.

This map shows the locations of some volcanoes on The Ring of Fire. Read the descriptions of these volcanoes, then use your geography skills to match each number on the map to the correct volcano.



- ___ **A.** Krakatau, in Indonesia, created the loudest sound ever heard on Earth when it erupted in 1883.
- ___ **B.** Popocatepetl (an Aztec word for “smoking mountain”) covered thousands of homes with ash and stopped air travel into Mexico City when it erupted in 2013.
- ___ **C.** Mount Cleveland, in the Aleutian Islands, is so far out to sea that no one knew it had erupted in 2006 until astronauts spotted it from the International Space Station.

- ___ **D.** Mount Saint Helens, in the U.S., had been quiet almost 150 years before it exploded in 1980, blasting away the mountain top and leaving a mile-wide crater.
- ___ **E.** Mount Pinatubo, in the Philippines, created a cloud of volcanic gas that blocked sunlight around the world when it erupted in 1991.
- ___ **F.** Mount Fuji, Japan's highest mountain, buried Tokyo in volcanic ash when it last erupted in 1707.

Be Prepared! Scientists monitor volcanoes for signs that they may erupt. If you live near a volcano, listen for volcano warnings and leave your home immediately if local authorities tell you to evacuate. Protect yourself from volcanic ash by wearing long sleeves, long pants, goggles, and a dust mask (or breathe through a wet cloth). Avoid river valleys, which can fill with volcanic mudflows, and get to higher ground as fast as possible if you hear a mudflow roaring toward you. Remind the grownups in your home to check the emergency supply kit, especially for clean drinking water.

To Learn More about volcanoes, visit volcanoes.usgs.gov/index.html and www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/volcano, and play the volcano episode of Monster Guard, a free app available at redcross.org/monsterguard. You can also ask an adult to download the free Red Cross emergency apps at redcross.org/mobile-apps. To learn more about all kinds of emergencies, visit redcross.org/pillowcase.