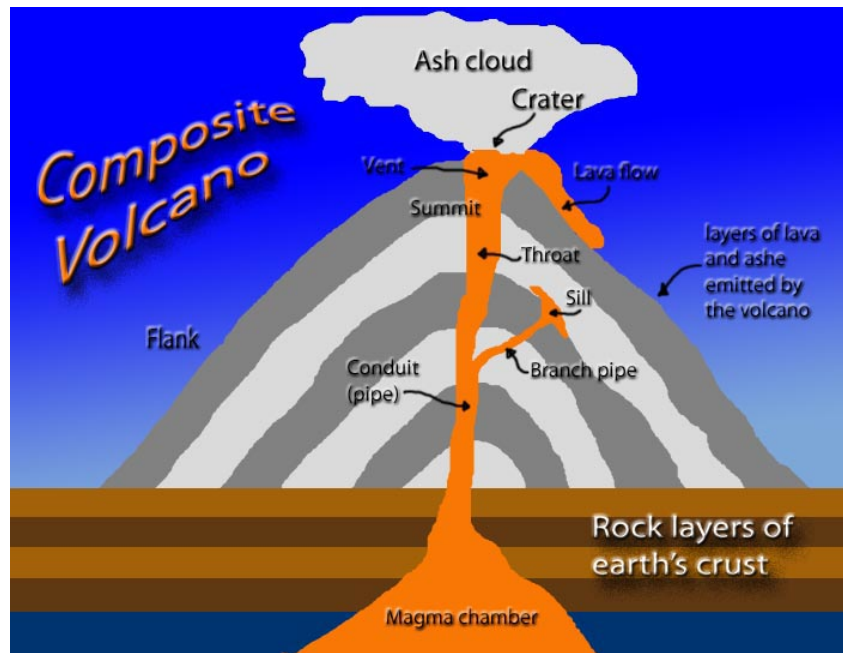


## Volcanoes

### What is a volcano?

A volcano is a mountain that opens downward to a pool of molten rock below the surface of the earth. When pressure builds up, eruptions occur. Gases and rock shoot up through the opening and spill over or fill the air with lava fragments.

Eruptions can cause lateral blasts, lava flows, hot ash flows, mudslides, avalanches, falling ash and floods. Volcano eruptions have been known to knock down entire forests. An erupting volcano can trigger tsunamis, flash floods, earthquakes, mudflows and rockfalls.



### How are volcanoes formed?

Volcanoes are formed when magma from within the Earth's upper mantle works its way to the surface. At the surface, it erupts to form lava flows and ash deposits. Over time as the volcano continues to erupt, it will get bigger and bigger.

### What are the different stages of volcanoes?

Scientists have categorized volcanoes into three main categories: active, dormant, and extinct. An active volcano is one which has recently erupted and there is a possibility that it may erupt soon. A dormant volcano is one which has not erupted in a long time but there is a possibility it can erupt in the future. An extinct volcano is one which has erupted thousands of years ago and there's no possibility of eruption.

### Why do volcanoes erupt?

The Earth's crust is made up of huge slabs called plates, which fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. These plates sometimes move. The friction causes earthquakes and volcanic eruptions near the edges of the plates. The theory that explains this process is called plate tectonics.

**How many volcanoes are there?**

There are more than 1500 active volcanoes on the Earth. We currently know of 80 or more which are under the oceans. Active volcanoes in the U.S. are found mainly in Hawaii, Alaska, California, Oregon and Washington.

**What is the difference between lava and magma?**

Magma is liquid rock inside a volcano. Lava is liquid rock (magma) that flows out of a volcano. Fresh lava glows red hot to white hot as it flows.

*<http://www.weatherwizkids.com/weather-volcano.htm>*