Did you know?

- Volcanoes are openings in the Earth's surface. When they are active, ash, gas and hot magma escape, often in violent and spectacular eruptions.
- The word 'volcano' originates from the name of the Roman god of fire, Vulcan.
- Volcanoes are usually located where tectonic plates meet. This is especially true for the Pacific Ring of Fire, an area around the Pacific Ocean where over 75% of the volcanoes on Earth are found.
- Hot liquid rock under the Earth's surface is known as magma. Once it has erupted from the volcano, it is known as lava.
- The biggest known volcano in our Solar System is actually on Mars. Its name is Olympus Mons and it measures a whopping 600 km (373 miles) wide and 21 km (13 miles) high!
- Io, one of Jupiter's moons, has the most volcanic activity of any object in our Solar System. Its volcano-covered surface changes constantly due to volcanic activity.
- There are also volcanoes on the ocean floor and under ice caps.
- Common volcanic gases include carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, hydrogen chloride, hydrogen fluoride and hydrogen sulphide. Even in small amounts, these gases can irritate the eyes, nose and throat. At increased levels, they can cause rapid breathing, headache, dizziness, swelling and spasm of the throat, and suffocation. Not good!
- Volcanoes can be active (regular activity), dormant (recent historical activity but now quiet) or extinct (no historic activity and unlikely to erupt in the future). While these terms are useful, scientists are more likely to describe volcanoes depending on characteristics such as their shape, how they formed and how they erupt.
- Volcanic eruptions can send ash hurtling more than 30 km (17 miles) above the Earth's surface. Awesome!
- Pumice is a unique volcanic (igneous) rock that can float in water and can be used as an abrasive. Beauty salons use it to remove dry skin!
- Rocks can be classified as igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic, depending on how they were formed.
- Diamonds form 90–120 miles beneath the surface of the Earth. They are carried to the surface by volcanic eruptions.
- Diamonds are the hardest natural substance found on Earth and are virtually fireproof. To burn a diamond, it must be heated to 1292 °F. (That's very hot!) A typical house fire reaches a temperature of approximately 1100 °F) so diamonds really are 'forever'.