

Montana
Comprehensive Assessment
System (MontCAS, Phase 2)
Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT)

COMMON CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ITEM RELEASE
READING, GRADE 4



OPI

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Reading

Session 1

Courtney lives with her mother and Granddad on the family ranch. Read the story about Courtney, and then answer the questions that follow.

The Top of the Tree

by Sally Lyons

An enormous tree stood at the top of a small rise. It was old, with wiggly branches that looked like an old man's outstretched hand. It was wonderful for climbing. The trunk was split just high enough to make climbing a challenge. The tree was in the field on Courtney's grandfather's ranch. Most of the land around it was pasture grown for the black and white cattle that wandered over the land that would someday belong to Courtney.

The old tree was the only big tree around. Courtney loved to climb the tree. She could see for miles—all the way into town. She could see the park and the grocery store. Courtney liked looking toward town. She would climb as high as she dared and watch for hours. She didn't get to go to town as much as she wanted. At the ranch there was always some chore that needed to be done. The ranch was like an island separated from the rest of the world.

3 Courtney and her mother had come to live with Granddad about three years ago. It was a big adjustment being on the ranch. There was plenty to do, but Courtney had liked living in a city with lots of entertainment. She loved being with Granddad, but she missed her old friends, too. Courtney was not sure that she wanted to have this ranch someday. She felt that it was a lot of work. She thought about all of this while she stole a few minutes here and there away from her chores to climb the oak.

One day when Courtney was up in the tree, she heard a twig snap below her. Looking down, she saw Granddad climbing the tree.

"Hello, Courtney," Granddad said as he reached that first split in the tree. "What are you doing up here?"

"Granddad, is it okay for you to be climbing trees?" asked Courtney.

"I've been climbing this tree my whole life. What are you looking at from up here?" Granddad asked as he sat down on the big branch next to his granddaughter.

"Just the town," Courtney replied sadly.

"You know, when I was a boy I used to sit up here and look at the town, too. Only I looked at it from up there." Granddad pointed to a branch about ten feet above their heads.

"Wow!" Courtney exclaimed. "That's high. How did you get up there, Granddad?"

"I'll show you," answered Granddad. Courtney watched as her grandfather climbed up much like walking up stairs. Courtney had never seen this way to the top. It always seemed like she was as high as she could go. She pushed herself up and followed. Courtney sat down next to Granddad. From this spot she could see more than the park and grocery store. The view was wonderful.

"When I was your age I would sit up here and dream about the places that I would visit. I never wanted to raise cattle with my dad. I wanted to see the world," said Granddad.

Courtney listened as Granddad continued. “I got my chance. Dad knew that I was restless, so he sent me to college. I was able to travel, too. But, you know, I missed this place more than I ever dreamed. So I came back. It was the best decision I ever made.”

Courtney stared in wonder at her grandfather. It was hard to believe that Granddad thought like she did or that he had ever left the ranch.

“Wow! I would never have thought that you did all that,” Courtney commented.

“I know that moving out here has not been easy. I just want you to know that when the time comes, you can do whatever you want. I hope you will take the ranch, but if you want something else, that’s okay. I will be proud of you whatever you do,” said Granddad.

Courtney hugged her grandfather. She felt as if a weight had been lifted off her shoulders. “I love you, Granddad. How did you know what I was feeling?” Courtney asked.

“You’re a lot like me, Courtney. I’m so glad that you and your mother are here. I love you, too,” answered Granddad.

Courtney looked at the view once more. Being able to see so much farther made her heart soar.

“Courtney,” Granddad said, “let’s get your mother, go to town, get something to eat, and see a movie.”

Courtney looked at her grandfather. “That sounds great. Let’s go.”

The two climbed down and started back to the house. Behind them, the oak tree watched them walk arm in arm as they made their way to the house.

22. Someday Courtney will own the ranch. Tell if you think Courtney will keep the ranch or if she will sell it. Give at least THREE details from the story to explain your answer.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
4	Response provides a prediction as to whether Courtney will keep the ranch or sell it. Explanation is thorough and uses three relevant details from the story as support.
3	Response provides a prediction as to whether Courtney will keep the ranch or sell it. Explanation uses three details from the story as support, but lacks some specificity and/or development. OR Explanation provides justification for both scenarios using two or three relevant details from the story as support for each.
2	Response provides a prediction. The explanation is limited and uses few details as support. OR Explanation provides justification for both scenarios. Explanation is limited and lacks some supporting details.
1	Response provides a minimal or vague attempt at a prediction.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response.

Scoring Notes

Reasons why Courtney may keep the ranch:

- Courtney enjoys the old oak tree and the view it provides.
- Courtney’s granddad missed the ranch when he traveled the world.
- Courtney no longer resents the ranch; she feels as if the pressure is off to keep it.
- Courtney seems to feel a renewed appreciation for the ranch, and a closeness to her granddad after learning how her granddad once felt the same as she does now.

Reasons why Courtney may sell the ranch:

- To Courtney, the ranch feels isolated from the nearby town.
- Courtney misses the entertainment and stimulation the city provides.
- Courtney misses the friends she had to move away from in the city.
- There is much work to do on the ranch, work Courtney is not sure she enjoys.
- Because of the talk she had with her granddad, she no longer feels guilty if she should decide to sell the ranch.

I think Courtney will keep the ranch. I think she will because her Granddad said you are a lot like me, which made her think if Granddad is a lot like me and he loves ranching, then so will I. Granddad never wanted to raise cattle but after he left he realized how much he loved and missed the ranch. Courtney felt a wave of comfort go over her after Granddad talked to her which relieved her about the big responsibilities of owning the farm. It looks like Granddad and Courtney are friends and she probably will not let him down.

I think Courtney will not keep the ranch because it says in the story that Courtney had liked living in a city with lots of entertainment. She also said that she missed her friends and thought having a ranch would be a lot of work. Close to the end of the story Grandpa says, "I just want you to know that when the time comes you can do whatever you want. So that's why I think that

I think that Courtney will keep the ranch because it says these three things in the story: 1. The story says at the beginning "Courtney liked to climb the tree and look toward town", she did not want the ranch then because 2. "she could not go into town as much as she wanted because of ranch chores". 3. After that her Granddad told her about the time when he did not want to own the ranch, but he still wanted to own it. That made Courtney feel way less worried about not going because of the ranch, but made her want to own it. That is why I think she will keep it.

I think Courtney will own the ranch because she is just like her granddad and her granddad left once to college, He ended up coming back. The other reasons are The big oak tree is there and she loves to climb that tree. She would climb as high as she dared and look at the town. Those are my three reasons.

Score Point 2

Sample 1

I think Courtney will keep the ranch. I don't think that she will sell it because her grandpa explained how much he missed the ranch when he left it. Courtney's grandpa thought that he would want to explore the world but apparently he liked the ranch better.

Sample 2

I think that Courtney will sell the farm because she doesn't get into town as much as she wants to. And Courtney likes the city and entertainment. And she thought that the ranch was a island and was seperated from the rest of the city.

Score Point 1

Sample 1

I ~~to~~te kato He ~~was~~ going to leave the ranch
and know. I think ~~more~~ He will stay because
He is feeling better

scribe

I thought that he was going to leave the ranch,
and then. I thought he will stay because
he is feeling better.

Sample 2

I think she will not sell
it. Her family mite of
had it for a long time.
It would be good if
she kept the farm.

Reading

Session 3

A volcano is a natural wonder that can be both harmful and helpful to living things. Read the article about volcanoes, and then answer the questions that follow.

Volcano!

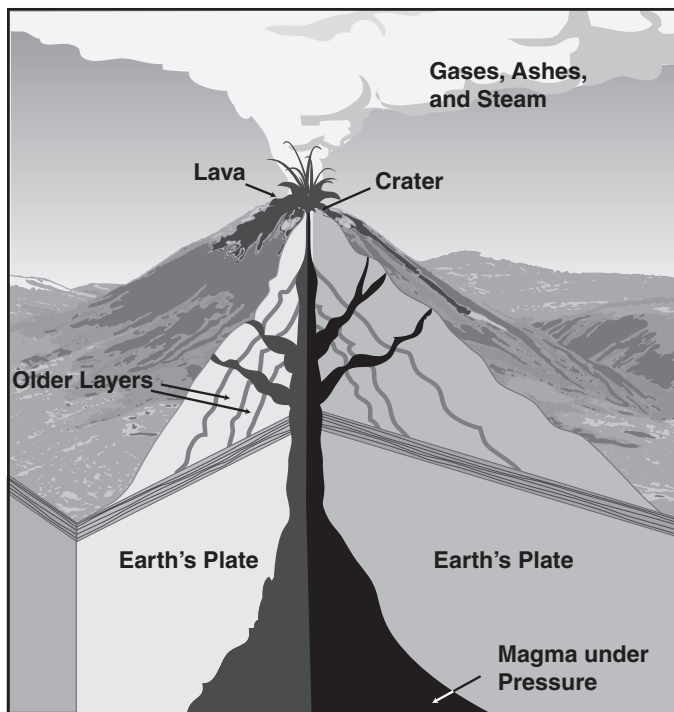
by Mark Lyons

It begins when invisible gases escape from an opening at the mountain's top. Then, a huge explosion fills the air. A cloud of steam, ash, and burning rock bursts out of the crater created by the blast. The sky becomes dark. Dust and ash block the Sun. Hot melted rock gushes over the sides of the crater and travels down the mountain. A volcano has erupted.

through this crack. This melted rock, called magma, forces its way out. The magma is now called lava. The lava cools and becomes hard. Over many years, the dried lava builds up into layers. After a while, these layers form a tall mountain. These volcanic mountains can form on dry land or under the sea on the ocean floor. Volcanic mountains born under the ocean can become islands. People think the island of Hawaii was formed this way.

Most volcanoes form along the largest cracks in Earth's surface. Earth's outermost layer (the crust) is made up of sections called plates. Plates float slowly on the liquid magma. The world's continents are on these plates. As the plates move, melted rock can push its way through the places where they

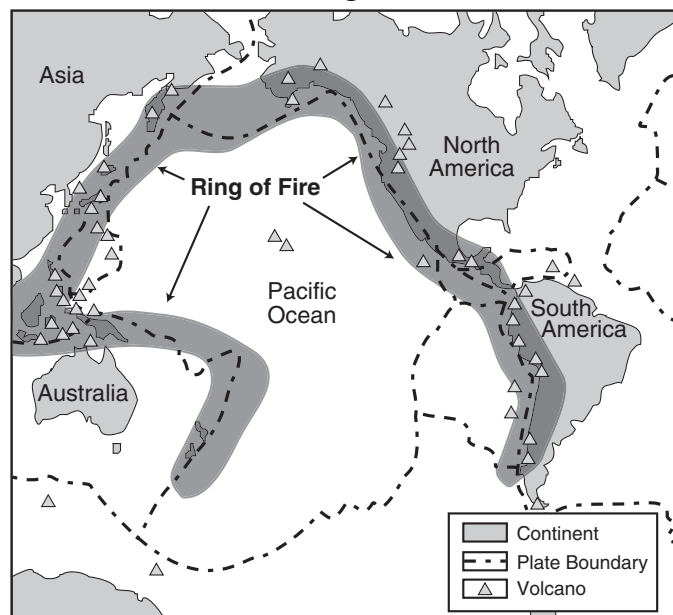
The Inside of a Volcano



A Volcano Is Born

Active volcanoes, like the one described above, are often large mountains. When a volcano is born, however, it starts out as a crack in the surface of Earth. Hot, melted rock from deep inside Earth rises and pushes

The Ring of Fire



meet. A string of volcanoes has formed along the edges of a large plate. This area is known as the Ring of Fire. California and Alaska are located along the Ring of Fire.

New Land Is Formed

Dried lava can add new land around a volcano. This can happen suddenly or over many years. Volcanoes can erupt violently, covering the surrounding area with rocks and ash. Other volcanoes are gentle, letting lava trickle slowly out of the opening and down the mountainside. Kilauea and Mauna Loa, two volcanoes on the island of Hawaii, usually give plenty of warning before they spew hot lava. Their lava sometimes adds new land to the island.

Detecting Volcanoes

5 Long ago, people had no warning that a volcano was about to erupt. Because of this, many people died. Much has changed thanks to scientists who study volcanoes. Today, scientists almost always know when a volcano may erupt. They use instruments that measure escaping gas and earthquake-like tremors in the earth. Scientists use computers to check for bulges in the sides or near the top of a volcano. Scientists around the world are always at work predicting when the next volcano might erupt.

Harmful or Helpful?

Volcanoes can be harmful. Hot gases and lava hurt living things. They can destroy crops and wipe out homes and towns. Temperatures can drop when clouds of ash block out the sun for days at a time. Daytime can seem like night. When this happens, more crops die. Sometimes, people have to leave their homes because of the ash in the air. This ash makes it hard for people and animals to breathe.

Volcanoes can also be helpful. Farmers use soil that comes from volcanoes. Dried lava holds useful minerals that help plants grow. Lava is also used to make soap. Volcanic rocks are used as building materials, since they are easy to find and easy to work with. Gold, silver, and diamonds have also been found in and around old volcanoes. Hot water and steam from volcanoes can be used to make electricity and to grow food in greenhouses. Many people will visit an area to watch a volcano spill lava or let out steam. A volcano can be a beautiful sight when seen from a distance.

Active volcanoes allow steam, gas, and lava to escape, but dormant volcanoes do not show these signs of erupting. Around these volcanoes, new plants have sprouted, and animals once again roam the hillside among the ash and dried lava. Life has returned.

67. Explain how a volcano can be helpful AND harmful. Use information from the article to support your answer.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
4	Response thoroughly explains how a volcano can be helpful AND harmful. Explanation is well supported with relevant information from the article.
3	Response explains how a volcano can be helpful AND harmful, but lacks some development and/or supporting information from the article.
2	Response explains how a volcano can be helpful AND harmful. Response is limited, uses weak support from the article, and may contain some misunderstandings or be unclear. OR Response explains how a volcano can be helpful OR harmful. Explanation uses information from the article as support.
1	Response provides a vague or minimal attempt to answer the question.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response.

Scoring Notes

Ways that a volcano can be helpful (explanations are in parentheses):

- Dried lava contains useful minerals that help plants grow (these minerals can be useful for farmers or gardeners who rely on good soil).
- Valuable minerals such as gold, silver, and diamonds have been found in and around old volcanoes (a person may be able to mine for these minerals and sell them for money).
- Lava can be used for making soap (this may be helpful if a person enjoys making soap).
- Volcanic rocks are used as building materials (building materials are light and easy to use).
- Hot water and steam can be used to make electricity and grow crops in greenhouses (electricity and crops are important for survival).
- People visit areas to watch volcanoes spill lava and let out steam (people visiting an area will bring business to the area).

Ways that a volcano can be harmful (explanations are in parentheses):

- Hot gases and lava harm living things (people and animals can be injured or die).
- Crops, homes, and towns can be wiped out (farmers can lose money, food supplies can be destroyed, people can become homeless).
- Temperatures can drop, and sunlight can be blocked for days at a time (this can cause crops to fail, and people and animals to have to move to different locations).
- Ash in the air makes it difficult for people and animals to breathe (fresh air is important to survival).

Score Point 4

Sample 1

Volcanoes can be helpful and harmful in many ways. They can be helpful by like it says in the story, producing lava which is used to make soap. Or hot water and steam from volcanoes can be used to make electricity and to grow food in greenhouses. Mining products have been found around volcanoes. Also volcanic rocks are easy to find a rock with so they can be used for building materials. Volcanoes can be harmful too, by destroying crops, homes, and even towns! Temperatures can go down when clouds of ash block the sun. Some people have to leave their homes because of the ash in the air. Ash makes it hard for people and animals to breathe. Because of this ash even daytime seems like night and because of this more crops die.

Score Point 4

Sample 2

A volcano can be harmful because when it erupts lava pours out and destroys crops and houses and the smoke clouds rise up and block the sun making temperatures drop. The ashes make it hard for people and animals to breathe.

Lava can be helpful too. Farmers use soil that comes from volcanoes. Dried lava holds useful minerals that help plants grow. Lava is also used to make soap. Volcano rocks are used as building materials; since they are easy to find and to work with. Gold, silver, and diamonds have also been found in and around volcanoes. Hot water and steam are used to make electricity and grow food in greenhouses.

Volcanos can be harmful they can send ashes into the air that can block the sun rays that can kill plants and its very hard to breathe. And hot gases can destroy crops and wipe out homes and towns.

Volcanoes can be helpful for farmers they use the soil from the lava because dried lava holds minerals that helps plants grow and lava is also used to make soap.

The reasons to follow are both good and bad thing that comes from a eruption. First the hot gases and lava often hurt living things, and wipes out many homes. Temperatures usually drop when ash clouds cover the sun for long periods of time.

The good reasons that comes from it are that farmers can use the soil to feed crops because in the minerals it are good for them. Lava is also used for making soap, building materials. Gold, silver and diamonds are found around old ones. These were the reasons they are good and bad.

Score Point 2

Sample 1

Volcanos can be helpful by a lot of things for example, a volcano can send hot water and steam through the air which creates energy.

Volcanos can also be harmful by destroying houses and killing crops.

Sample 2

How a volcano can be helpful is it can kill old plants and make room for new ones. How a volcano can be harmful is it can damage the lungs by if you breathe too much of it it can block out the sun making it hard for plants to grow. They can wipe out homes and towns it can destroy crops. That's how a volcano can be helpful or harmful.

Score Point 1

Sample 1

They haven't when they kill
people, they are happy when
they make land.

Sample 2

Volcanos can kill people and
crops, livestock. It fertilises the
plants.