

A Weekend in Pompeii

(Friday 22nd May)

Dear Diary,

Yes! Half term has arrived at last, and I can finally relax and have some fun for a change! The last few weeks at school have been **horrendous**! Tests, tests and more tests! Oh, and did I say we had tests to do? One whole week to kick back and chill! Bliss!

Even better news is that we touched down in Naples (Italy) just a few hours ago. Mom and Pops have whisked us off for the weekend to visit Pompeii and Mount Vesuvius. A-maz-ing! We have recently been learning about volcanoes in geography, so it will be awesome to see a real live one, and I do mean 'live'! According to my teacher, Mr Strict (yes, that is his real name), Mount Vesuvius is an active volcano, which last erupted in 1944. He said that, in the past, it had followed a twenty year **eruption** pattern. Even my poor maths skills can calculate that it is long overdue an eruption! I'm beginning to think I should be a little bit concerned about that!

So, the plan for tomorrow is to visit the remains of Pompeii; not sure what to expect really, but I will update you tomorrow night when I get back to the hotel. Finally! Room service has arrived and my stomach is telling me that it's time to eat. A delicious pepperoni pizza and a **humungous** bowl of ice cream is calling me – well I am in Italy, it would be rude not to indulge, just a little bit!

(Saturday 23rd May)

Dear Diary,

Wow it was hot today! We took a half hour train ride from Naples to Pompeii. The train stopped just outside the rather grand gates to the town, which was handy. Mom slapped lots of sun cream on me, shoved a hat on my head, forced a bottled of water into my hand and gave me instructions on what to do if we became separated. I'm sure she still thinks I am five! Armed with a map of the town, we walked excitedly through the gates.

My word, we needed that map! The town was a maze of streets, lined with houses, shops, taverns, restaurants, temples and **amphitheatres**. Pompeii must have been a **bustling** town, full of noise and activity. Pops was hilarious (if not a little bit embarrassing), he kept tripping over the stone blocks that helped us cross from one high pavement to the other. Mom said that, as well as helping the townspeople avoid the waste water running down the street, they were also used to slow the carriages down, who would have thought the Romans needed traffic calming measures?

Pompeii is so well **preserved**. Mr Strict told us that this was because the town had been buried in metres of ash and **pumice**, instead of being blasted away by the eruption, it had helped to preserve the site. I hadn't realised that **archaeologists** were still **excavating** the site; **20 hectares** are yet to be explored! Maybe I should pop back in a few years time to see how they are getting on?

As for Mount Vesuvius, it was impossible to miss! It **dominates** the skyline. The people of Pompeii would have lived happily in its shadow for years, believing it to be **dormant**. As I stared up at the **awe-inspiring** sight I shuddered at the thought of how unprepared the people of Pompeii were on that fateful day in AD 79. A deafening boom had signalled the start of the eruption. Magma

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A Weekend in Pompeii – 4b – Text

blasted out of the top, and the ground had shook the people Pompeii off their feet. Rocks the size of tennis balls had rained down, and the sun had been blocked out by the deadly ash cloud and smoke. At least 2000 people died that day. I don't really mind that Mom and Pops fuss over me. I know how incredibly lucky I am, because we are happy, healthy, and together.

We rounded the trip off with a rather scrummy bowl of pasta at a restaurant just outside the gates of Pompeii, before catching our train back to the hotel. My trousers are beginning to feel tight, I think Mom may have shrunk them in the wash!

(Sunday 24th May)

Dear Diary,

I have to confess that I had felt a little nervous about today's trip to Mount Vesuvius, especially after seeing, first hand, the **devastation** it had caused yesterday.

We caught a colourful looking 4x4 bus, which took us most of the way to the top. At times I thought we had mistakenly **boarded** a theme park ride, as it twisted and turned its way up the side of the volcano! However, I was more than a little **disconcerted** when the driver stopped at a car park, just short of the **summit**, and told us that we had to walk the rest of the way ourselves! He obviously didn't **appreciate** that, as an eleven year old child, I never, ever do any unnecessary walking!

Once again I was **unceremoniously** grabbed by Mom and forced to **endure** the sun cream, sun hat, bottled water routine, with the addition this time of a jumper! Only a mother would hand you a jumper in 32 degree heat!

We set off together for the short, but steep, walk to the summit. There was lots of loose gravel and rocks underfoot and I was glad I had decided to wear my trainers instead of sandals. The view was breathtaking. We could see the Bay of Naples, snaking round the coastline, and the sun seemed to dance and twinkle off the calm, blue water which stretched for as far as the eye could see.

Once we had got our breath back, we made a last push for the top. A wooden post and rail fence stopped sightseers from **venturing** too close to the edge, however it was possible to appreciate the size of the crater. I do admit to feeling a little bit disappointed though when I peered into the crater; smoke, fire and magma had now been replaced by rocks, soil and plants! It was also remarkably cold at the summit – that jumper, which I had **begrudgingly** tied around my waist, was suddenly very useful at this high altitude. Moms can be very clever sometimes!

Well, that's it diary! We fly back to London tomorrow, but I will take some wonderful memories back with me. The hotel has been great, the sights have been **inspirational** and the food, well, the food has been to die for! Talking of which – room service has arrived! I will catch up with you tomorrow!

By Sue Chattoe

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A Weekend in Pompeii – 4b – Text

A Weekend in Pompeii – Oral Teacher Questions

Why do you think the writer was ready for a holiday? (AF3) **They had been doing lots of tests at school.**

Why do you think the writer repeated the fact that she had been doing tests? (AF4) **To help stress how much they had affected her life.**

Where is Naples? (AF2) **Italy.**

Why was she a little concerned about visiting Mount Vesuvius? (AF3) **Mount Vesuvius is an active volcano which could erupt at any time.**

Write down three other words which mean the same as 'humungous'. (AF5) **Various answers could include: vast, enormous, huge, immense, giant, mammoth, colossal.**

How long did the train journey take from Naples to Pompeii? (AF2) **Half an hour (30 minutes).**

What three things did the writer do to keep safe in the sun? (AF2) **Applied sun cream, wore a hat and drank water.**

Why do you think the writer used the word 'bustling' to describe Pompeii? (AF5) **Bustling means busy, active or lively, so it helps us to understand that Pompeii must have been a lively place to live.**

Was the writer able to see all of Pompeii? (AF3) **Not all of it has been excavated yet. Archaeologists are still working on the site.**

What made the writer realise that it wasn't too bad having her parents fuss over her? (AF3) **She had visited a place where thousands of people had died in a horrible way. It helped her to appreciate her health and her family.**

Do you think her mother had really shrunk her trousers? (AF3) **No, she had been eating too much delicious food.**

How did the writer feel about walking to the summit of Mount Vesuvius? (AF3) **She wasn't very happy about it, she didn't think you should walk anywhere unless it is absolutely necessary.**

What was the purpose of the post and rail fence? (AF2) **To stop people going too close to the edge of the crater.**

Why was she disappointed when she looked into the crater? (AF2) **She had expected to see magma, smoke and flames, but instead she saw rocks, soil and plants.**

What are the features you would expect to find in a diary extract? (AF4/AF5) **Informal, chatty language. Written in the past tense with some reference to future events. Personal thoughts and feelings referenced. A good range of punctuation included: full stops, commas, exclamation marks, question marks and brackets. Reported speech only. A date and time reference.**

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A Weekend in Pompeii – 4b – Teacher Questions

Why do you think the writer was ready for a holiday? (AF3)

Why do you think the writer repeated the fact that she had been doing tests? (AF4)

Where is Naples? (AF2)

Why was she a little concerned about visiting Mount Vesuvius? (AF3)

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Was the writer able to see all of Pompeii? (AF3)

What made the writer realise that it wasn't too bad having her parents fuss over her? (AF3)

Do you think her mother had really shrunk her trousers? (AF3)

How did the writer feel about walking to the summit of Mount Vesuvius? (AF3)

What was the purpose of the post and rail fence? (AF2)

Why was she disappointed when she looked into the crater? (AF2)

What are the features you would expect to find in a diary extract? (AF4/AF5)

Write the meaning of each of these words. (AF2)

- horrendous _____
- eruption _____
- humungous _____
- amphitheatres _____
- bustling _____
- preserved _____
- pumice _____
- archaeologists _____
- excavating _____
- hectares _____
- dominates _____
- dormant _____
- awe-inspiring _____
- devastation _____
- boarded _____
- disconcerted _____
- summit _____
- appreciate _____
- unceremoniously _____
- endure _____
- venturing _____
- begudgingly _____
- inspirational _____

Write the meaning of each of these words. (AF2)

horrendous – very unpleasant

eruption – the violent ejection of gas, steam, ash or lava from a volcano

humungous – something which is very large in size or importance

amphitheatres – a round building with no roof, used by Romans for public entertainment

bustling – hurried or energetic activity

preserved – to keep something protected from anything which would cause change or deterioration

pumice – a light porous rock, formed by solidified lava

archaeologists – someone who studies ancient cultures by examining material remains

excavating – to remove earth carefully to uncover objects of archaeological interest

hectares – a metric unit of area equal to 100 acres or 10,000 sq m

dominates – to overlook an area from a prominent or elevated position

dormant – describes a volcano which has not erupted for many years, but may still erupt one day

awe-inspiring – so impressive as to make a person feel humble or amazed

devastation – severe or widespread damage

boarded – to get onto a vehicle as a passenger

disconcerted – to feel taken aback or frustrated

summit – the highest point or top of a mountain

appreciate – to feel grateful for something

unceremoniously – done abruptly with no concern for politeness or manners

endure – to bear hardship of some sort

venturing – to make a dangerous trip

begudgingly – to show unwillingness to do something

inspirational – inspiring, motivating

A Weekend in Pompeii – Vocab 2

Complete the chart using the word bank below.

<u>Informal</u>	<u>Formal</u>
kids	
	received
man	
pleased	
	enquire
	many
glasses	
	beverages
put up with	
not allowed	
	in conclusion
get off	

disembark children prohibited lots of got delighted
spectacles drinks gentleman to finish ask tolerate

Now include some of the formal phrases above in sentences of your own.

Complete the chart using the word bank below.

<u>Informal</u>	<u>Formal</u>
kids	children
got	received
man	gentleman
pleased	delighted
ask	enquire
lots of	many
glasses	spectacles
drinks	beverages
put up with	tolerate
not allowed	prohibited
to finish	in conclusion
get off	disembark

disembark children prohibited lots of got delighted
 spectacles drinks gentleman to finish ask tolerate

Now include some of the formal phrases above in sentences of your own.

Brackets can be used to add more detail to a sentence.

e.g. The hedge (a type of hawthorn) surrounded the school playing field.

•Place brackets around the extra information in these sentences.

My sister a pretty girl with blue eyes and freckles had just started at my school.

The sandpit finally dry after the rain was great fun to play in.

My Grandma a crazy old lady was found skateboarding down the road.

Butter icing available from most shops is delicious on top of cup cakes.

Tim raced out of the cinema he had been watching Star Wars so he could catch his bus on time.

The boy new to the school got lost going to his first lesson.

The children aged 10 couldn't wait for the holidays to begin.

The boots made out of rubber were great for jumping in puddles.

•Rewrite these sentences, choosing suitable information to complete the brackets.

The car () raced to the finish line.

The teacher () gave the children an extra playtime.

Italy () is a great place to visit.

Brackets can be used to add more detail to a sentence.

e.g. The hedge (a type of hawthorn) surrounded the school playing field.

•Place brackets around the extra information in these sentences.

My sister (a pretty girl with blue eyes and freckles) had just started at my school.

The sandpit (finally dry after the rain) was great fun to play in.

My Grandma (a crazy old lady) was found skateboarding down the road.

Butter icing (available from most shops) is delicious on top of cup cakes.

Tim raced out of the cinema (he had been watching Star Wars) so he could catch his bus on time.

The boy (new to the school) got lost going to his first lesson.

The children (aged 10) couldn't wait for the holidays to begin.

The boots (made out of rubber) were great for jumping in puddles.