Name: _____ Date: _____

Stone Steps of the Giant's Causeway

Circle group

On the coast of Northern Ireland, thousands of tall stone columns stand by the sea. Their tops make a bumpy floor of stepping stones. It looks like a path into the waves. This place is called the Giant's Causeway.

An old story says that a giant built the path to walk to Scotland. Scientists tell a different story. Millions of years ago, hot melted rock called lava poured out of the ground there. It spread over the land in a thick layer. Then it began to cool.

As the lava cooled, it shrank and cracked. The cracks made neat patterns. Most of the shapes had six sides, like the cells of a honeycomb. When the rock got hard, it was split into columns packed side by side.

Over time, waves wore away the softer land around the columns. The columns were left standing. Now visitors climb on them with care. Some columns are tall and some are short and low. The short ones make a staircase down to the sea.

The Giant's Causeway shows that Earth can make its own art.

Questions

1. Where is the Giant's Causeway?

_____

_____

2. What does the old story say about the path?

_____

_____

3. What is lava?

_____

_____

4. What shape do most of the columns have?

_____

_____

5. How did the columns come to stand by themselves?

_____

_____

6. What caused the cracks in the rock?

_____

_____

Words to know

columns: tall, upright pillars of stone
lava: hot melted rock that flows from a volcano or crack in the ground
honeycomb: the wax cells with six sides where bees store honey

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Stone Steps of the Giant's Causeway

Triangle group

On the coast of Northern Ireland, thousands of tall stone columns stand beside the sea. Their tops form a bumpy floor of stepping stones that seems to lead right into the waves. This place is called the Giant's Causeway.

An old story says that a giant built the path so he could walk to Scotland. Scientists tell a different story. Millions of years ago, hot melted rock called lava poured out of the ground there. It spread over the land in a thick layer and then began to cool.

As the lava cooled, it shrank, and it cracked. Cracks formed in neat patterns, and most of them made shapes with six sides, much like the cells of a honeycomb. When the rock hardened fully, it was split into columns packed tightly side by side.

Over time, waves wore away the softer land around the columns and left them standing. Now visitors climb on them carefully, and they notice that some columns are taller and some are short and low. The short ones make a staircase down to the sea.

The Giant's Causeway shows that Earth sometimes builds its own works of art.

Questions

1. Where is the Giant's Causeway?

_____

_____

2. What does the old story say about the path?

_____

_____

3. What is lava?

_____

_____

4. What shape do most of the columns have?

_____

_____

5. How did the columns come to stand by themselves?

_____

_____

6. What caused the cracks in the rock?

_____

_____

Words to know

columns: tall, upright pillars of stone
lava: hot melted rock that flows from a volcano or crack in the ground
honeycomb: the wax cells with six sides where bees store honey
hardened: became firm and stiff

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Stone Steps of the Giant's Causeway

Square group

Along the coast of Northern Ireland, thousands of tall stone columns stand beside the sea. Their flat tops form a bumpy floor of stepping stones that appears to lead directly into the waves. This remarkable place is known as the Giant's Causeway.

According to an old story, a giant built the path so that he could stride across to Scotland. Scientists, however, offer a different explanation. Millions of years ago, scorching melted rock called lava poured out of the ground in this area. It spread across the land in a thick layer and then slowly began to cool.

As the lava cooled, it shrank, and the shrinking caused it to crack. The cracks formed in orderly patterns, and most of them created shapes with six sides, much like the cells of a honeycomb. When the rock finally hardened, it was divided into columns that fit tightly together side by side.

Over a very long time, the waves wore away the softer land surrounding the columns and left them standing. Today visitors climb across them with care, noticing that some are tall while others are short and low. The shorter ones form a staircase that descends to the water.

The Giant's Causeway demonstrates that the Earth itself sometimes creates works of art.

Questions

1. Where is the Giant's Causeway?

_____

_____

2. What does the old story say about the path?

_____

_____

3. What is lava?

_____

_____

4. What shape do most of the columns have?

_____

_____

5. How were the columns left standing on their own?

_____

_____

6. What caused the cracks in the rock?

_____

_____

Words to know

columns: tall, upright pillars of stone
lava: hot melted rock that flows from a volcano or crack in the ground
honeycomb: the wax cells with six sides where bees store honey
hardened: became firm and stiff

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Stone Steps of the Giant's Causeway

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Stone Steps of the Giant's Causeway

Easier · 181 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.8

1. On the coast of Northern Ireland.
2. A giant built it to walk to Scotland.
3. Hot melted rock that pours out of the ground.
4. Six sides.
5. Waves wore away the softer land around them.
6. The lava shrank and cracked as it cooled.

Triangle: Stone Steps of the Giant's Causeway

This passage · 192 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.9

1. On the coast of Northern Ireland.
2. A giant built it so he could walk to Scotland.
3. Hot melted rock that pours out of the ground.
4. Six sides.
5. Waves wore away the softer land around them over time.
6. The lava shrank and cracked as it cooled.

Square: Stone Steps of the Giant's Causeway

Harder · 211 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.2

1. Along the coast of Northern Ireland.
2. A giant built it so he could stride across to Scotland.
3. Scorching melted rock that pours out of the ground.
4. Six sides.
5. Waves wore away the softer land that surrounded them.
6. The lava shrank and cracked as it cooled.