

YEAR 4

Year 4 Sample Lesson

Explanation Writing: How Does a Volcano Erupt?

Lesson Overview

Year Level	Year 4 (Stage 2)
Term / Unit	Term 2 — Explanation & Exposition Writing
Text Type	Explanation Text
Duration	60 minutes
Curriculum Link	Australian Curriculum — Literacy / Language / Text Structure

Learning Intentions

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the key structural features of an explanation text.
- ✓ Use present tense and cause-and-effect language accurately.
- ✓ Incorporate technical vocabulary related to the topic.
- ✓ Plan and draft a structured explanation paragraph.

Warm-Up Activity (10 minutes)

What Do You Already Know?

Begin by asking students to brainstorm what they know about volcanoes. Write responses on the board under these headings:

What I Know	What I Wonder	What I Want to Learn
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Discuss: What is the difference between describing a volcano and explaining how it works?

Direct Teaching (15 minutes)

The Structure of an Explanation Text

Teach students that explanation texts have a specific structure. Display and discuss each part:

Section	Purpose	Example Opening
General Statement	Introduces the topic and phenomenon. "A volcano is a natural opening in the Earth's surface..."	
Explanation Sequence	Explains how or why in logical steps using connectives. "As magma rises, pressure builds... This causes..."	
Concluding Statement	Summarises the explanation or its significance. "Volcanic eruptions are powerful natural events..."	

Key Language Features to Model:

Language Features of Explanation Texts

- ✓ Present tense verbs: rises, builds, flows, erupts
- ✓ Cause-and-effect connectives: as a result, this causes, due to, therefore, consequently
- ✓ Technical vocabulary: magma, lava, tectonic plates, vent, crater
- ✓ Precise, formal language — avoid contractions and colloquial expressions
- ✓ Passive voice where appropriate: 'pressure is created', 'magma is forced upward'

Guided Practice (20 minutes)

Model Writing — Think Aloud

Write the following model paragraph together as a class, discussing each language choice:

Model Explanation Paragraph

A volcano erupts when pressure inside the Earth becomes too great. Deep within the Earth's mantle, extreme heat ca

Independent Task (10 minutes)

Your Turn — Write Your Own Explanation

Choose ONE of the following topics and write a structured explanation paragraph:

Option A: How does rain form?

Option B: How do earthquakes occur?

Option C: How do plants make food?

Remember to:

- ✓ Use present tense
- ✓ Include cause-and-effect language
- ✓ Use at least 3 technical vocabulary words
- ✓ Write a general statement, explanation sequence and concluding statement

Wrap-Up & Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

Ask students to share one cause-and-effect sentence from their writing. Review the learning intentions together.

Exit Ticket Question

Write one sentence explaining something using a cause-and-effect connective.

Example: 'Because magma is less dense than rock, it rises toward the surface.'