Earth Changes

In this unit, we'll read selections about Earth's natural but dynamic processes. We will think about the question "How do Earth's natural processes impact our lives?" Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation we started in school about how volcanoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis have changed people's lives around the world.

Topic Connection

Clues from Pompeii

Students will be learning about Mount Vesuvius and the destructive impact it had on the city of Pompeii, Italy, in 79 A.D. Do some research online with your child about the excavations that were done in Pompeii to reveal the city that was buried in ash during that violent volcanic eruption. Then make a list of at least five things these discoveries taught scientists about the blast. Ask your child to put those five ideas in the order of their importance. Discuss the idea that in order to learn how Earth's natural processes impact our lives, we must often be detectives looking back at history.

Vocabulary Connection

Visual Dictionary

In school, your child is learning words related to Earth's processes. Help your child keep track of these words by making a visual dictionary that he or she can refer back to during the course of the unit. Use two folded sheets of paper to make a book with six pages. Invite your child to make a cover for the dictionary, and then include two definitions with illustrations on each page of the book. The words to include in the dictionary are: distinct**, collide, preserve, massive, debris, pressure, chambers, rumble**, monitor, and **vibrate**. Your child may keep the book at home or bring it to school to use in class.

Comprehension Connection

Earthquake Diary

In this unit, students will read a firsthand account written by someone who survived earthquakes in Mexico. Ask your child to write imaginary diary entries describing what he or she thinks it might be like to witness a severe earthquake in your community. Encourage him or her to use sensory details and descriptive words in their diary entries. Write your own descriptions of the imaginary event, read each other's work and compare your use of details. Summarize how you think such an event would impact your lives.

Word Study Connections

Shake It Up!

While discussing earthquakes and volcanoes, students will be exploring words such as *rumbles* and *vibrate*. Ask your child to explain how these words are related, and how they are different. Draw a Venn diagram and label one circle *rumbles* and the other *vibrate*. Ask your child to use the diagram to write about the similarities and differences between the words and their meanings.