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Science

Science

Life Science

# Do Animals Have a Sixth Sense?



Genre	Comprehension Skills and Strategy	Text Features
Expository nonfiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compare and Contrast</li><li>• Draw Conclusions</li><li>• Monitor and Fix Up</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Map</li><li>• Diagrams</li><li>• Captions</li></ul>

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by Marianne Lenihan





# Do Animals Have a **Sixth Sense?**

by **Marianne Lenihan**



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Do animals have a special sense? Does this sense help them know when earthquakes and volcanoes will happen? More than two thousand years ago, a story goes, snakes and rats left a city in Greece. Just days later, an earthquake shook the city!



**Can snakes predict earthquakes?**



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Scientists say that animals act strangely for many reasons. A dog may act oddly because an earthquake is coming. But maybe it's looking for a buried bone. Or maybe it has picked up the scent of a cat!



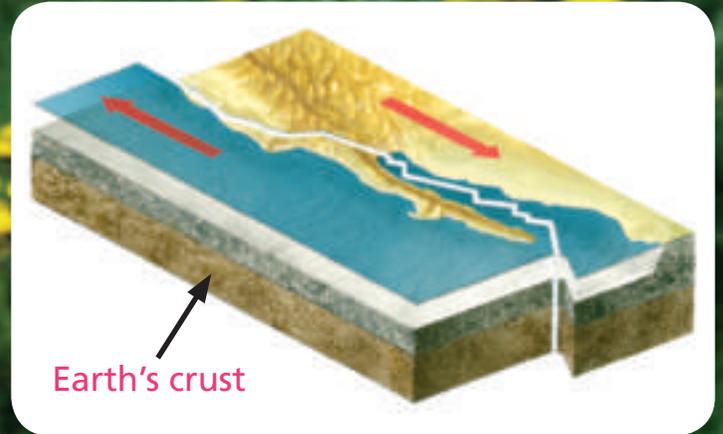
**Animals react to many things in the world around them.**



An earthquake is a sudden movement of Earth's crust. There is no way to know when or where an earthquake will happen. Animals may be able to feel the ground tremble before humans do. They might also sense changes in the air.



**When Earth's crust suddenly shifts, there is an earthquake.**





Dogs have been known to howl before an earthquake. Birds in cages have had trouble perching. Cats have hidden. Chickens have stopped laying eggs. Bees have left their hives. Why did these animals act this way?



In 1975, Chinese leaders noticed that many animals were acting strangely. They told people to leave the city of Haicheng. A few days later a huge earthquake came. Did the animals guess that an earthquake was coming?



**Why might a bee leave its hive?**



**There have been many earthquakes in China.**





There was a morning earthquake in Fairbanks, Alaska, on April 15, 1983. Many barnyard animals were behaving differently just before the earthquake. Did these animals feel the earthquake before their owners did? Nobody knows for sure!



There is a story that dogs once dug beneath the ground near a volcano. They did this for days before the volcano erupted. Did the dogs predict the eruption? At that same time, hundreds of small earthquakes were rumbling. Maybe the dogs felt them when people could not!



It is difficult to know what animals may sense.



Why might this dog be digging in the ground?





Volcanoes have been called “nature’s fireworks.” Magma, or hot, melted rock, builds up in a volcano’s chimney. The magma mixes with gases from the volcano. This mixture rises up. Pressure builds. Then the mixture explodes from the volcano!



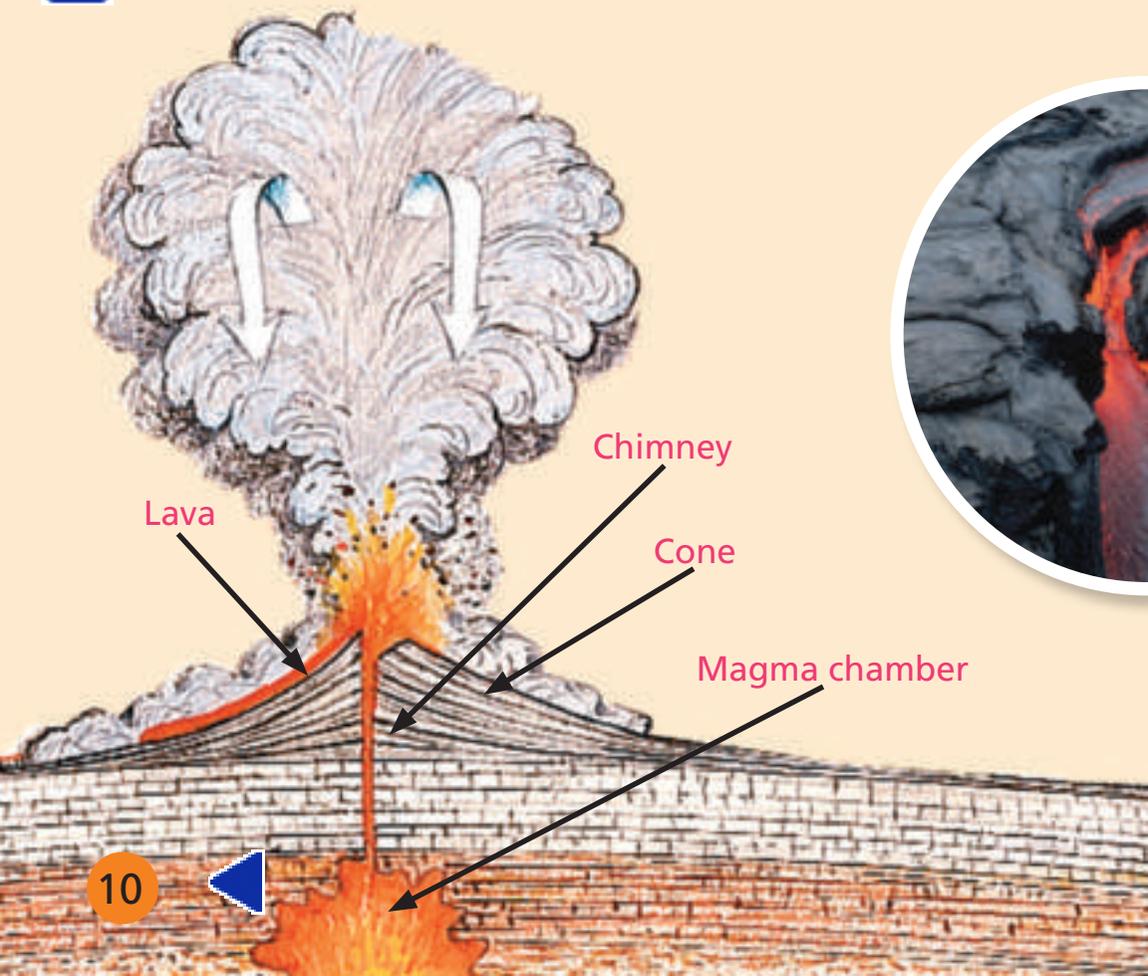
Volcanoes can destroy people and animals. Scientists want to know how to predict them. They study a volcano’s past. They find out when it has erupted. Scientists also look at how rocks inside the volcano change over time.



**Volcanoes begin deep within Earth.**



**Magma and gases explode from a volcano. On the ground, lava flows.**





Earthquakes and volcanoes can be very dangerous. Can animals help us know when and where these forces of nature will strike?

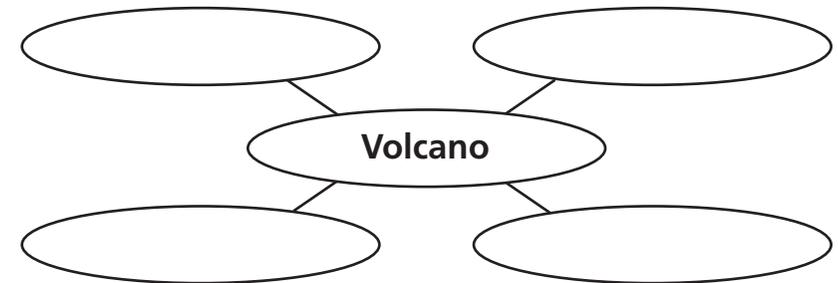


**A California earthquake ruined these homes.**



## Reader Response

1. How are earthquakes and volcanoes alike? How are they different?
2. Think of one question you have about what you have read. Write your question on a sheet of paper. Then go back and reread that part of the story to answer your question. Write the answer next to the question.
3. Make a web like the one below. In the web, write the words from this selection that relate to volcanoes.



4. Look at the map on page 7. Which two countries other than China are shown on the map? In which direction from China is each country located?

