

# Answers



## RD Classroom March 2016 Intermediate

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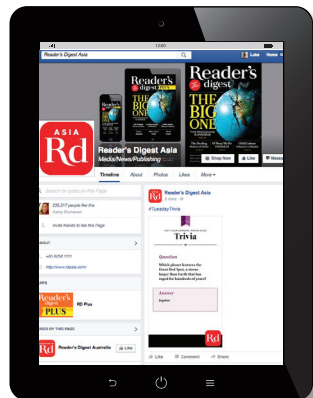
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**QUESTIONS FOR 'THE COMPANY OF HENS' (PAGE 32)**

**1. Explain what the HenPower project is. In what part of the world did it start? Do you think there is a particular reason it might have started there?**

HenPower is a project that uses chickens to help promote health and wellbeing in older people, and to also reduce loneliness. It started out in Wood Green sheltered housing in Gateshead, northeast England. England has a range of social programmes designed to support people who need help, with funding available from the UK Big Lottery Fund and charities and similar organisations, including Equal Arts, who come up with innovative ways to enrich the lives of the elderly. Give yourself one point for each of these facts contained in your answer. Give yourself a bonus point if you noted the fact that the English are generally happy to try out seemingly eccentric ideas.

**2. What benefits do animals provide to residents in places such as care homes?**

The story lists a number of benefits: caring for the chickens provides a focus of activity for the residents and forces them to work with each other. It encourages the male residents to form new friendships and allows all the residents involved in the roadshow to meet many new people, from students to medical professionals. The chickens themselves are also fun to work with and have the power to connect with people who no longer communicate with other humans. Give yourself five points if you mentioned at least three of these facts.

**3. As the HenPower project has grown in success the group now visits elderly residents in care homes. What else does the group do to spread their message?**

The group has made appearances on radio and TV, spoken at cultural festivals, lectured to delegates at university conferences and talked to student nurses and doctors about the needs and experiences of older patients. They also visit children at local schools. Give yourself five points if you mentioned at least three of these facts.

**4. Have the chickens particularly helped mainly female or male residents? Why is that? Find evidence in the text to support your answer. Can you come up with reasons why you think the project has been particularly successful with this group?**

The men have benefitted most obviously from the chickens. The story tells us on page 41 that women will usually make friends with one another, but the men are often more isolated. While the women in the story enjoy taking care of the hens, it is the men who have had the most changes to their lives thanks to caring for the chickens, and who talk of the biggest differences. Give yourself a bonus point if you mentioned the stories of Alan or Ossie to support your answer.

**ACTIVITY Many animals, such as the chickens in the story, provide a source of comfort, companionship and purpose to people. Design a similar project you could run in your community using a different animal. What animal would you choose? What would it do? What would you call the project? Who would it be aimed at? Write a few paragraphs to explain your answer.**

Your answer should show your knowledge of how animals can provide comfort and companionship. You should use your own experiences, opinions and ideas, as well as what you have read in the article to fully complete this activity. For full points, you should have chosen a specific animal and listed at least three reasons why it would be a good choice and how the residents would interact with the animal, plus completed the remaining parts of the activity.

If you are particularly proud of your answer, share it with us using the contact details on page 6 of the magazine.

**QUESTIONS FOR 'IN PRAISE OF TECHNOLOGY' (PAGE 42)**

**1. Write a paragraph to explain what this article is about. Overall, is the writer in favour of technology or is he against it? Why?**

Your answer should show that you have understood the article – a story of a man from the pre-digital era who has embraced the use of everyday technology in his life. The article is positive towards technology use and this should come across in your answer, along

with at least one example to support your opinion. Give yourself three points for an answer that contains all these elements.

**2. “We can’t become hostages to the romantic notion that the past is always a better country.” What does the writer mean by this?**

The writer means that people often romanticise the past – this means they think of the past as a better time, and may conveniently forget things that they disliked at the time (for example, in the 1980s, it was not easy to catch a repeat of a film or TV show). He thinks that this sort of thinking can hold us ‘hostage’ – imprisoning our ways of thinking. Instead of looking only to the past, we should embrace the changes of the present day. Give yourself full points if your answer resembles this.

**3. The story says there is evidence “that the improvements in technology are making us more democratic, more aware of the planet, more interested in the experience of people who aren’t us”. What are your thoughts? Do you agree or disagree? Can you give an example to support your viewpoint?**

On page 45, the writer says: “There is evidence that the improvements are making us more democratic, more aware of the planet, more interested in the experience of people who aren’t us. It’s also pressing us to question what it means to have life so easy, when billions do not.” Your answer should reflect the broader sense of understanding and responsibility that can come with being part of a global community and being able to connect directly with others from all over the world.

Give yourself full points if you clearly stated an opinion and then explained it using at least one real-life example to support your thoughts. Give yourself a bonus point if you did additional research beyond the article, including more research on the internet, books and talking to people in your community.

**4. Think about how you use technology in your everyday life. Does it make tasks easier for you? Do you think it could be having a negative impact? Write a few paragraphs to express**

**your opinion, using your own ideas and the article to help support your argument.**

Your answer will be individual. A complete answer should address all parts of the question, including your own opinion supported by the article and real-life experiences. Both positive and negative aspects of modern technology should be considered.

A full answer would include at least one way in which you frequently use technology, from chatting with your friends on a smartphone (whether messaging, talking or using an app) to checking the next bus using a transport app. It would include your assessment of how this helped you (making it easier to catch up with people or else catch your bus) and also how it might harm you (you miss out on talking to your friends who do not use the same apps, you don’t make new friends chatting to people while waiting at the bus stop). You should explain your answers fully. Give yourself five points if you did all this.

**ACTIVITY As the article states, there are many benefits to the use of technology but there can also be many downsides. Talk to an older relative or friend who grew up in a time with less technology. Interview them and ask them about their thoughts on technology today compared to when they grew up. Compare and contrast your views with theirs. Write down your findings.**

Give yourself five points if you found and had a discussion with another person who lived in a time with less technology. Give yourself another five points for comparing and contrasting your views with theirs. There are no right answers to this question, but after this activity you should have more of a sense of how recent many things we think of as ‘essential’ are, from smartphones to the internet to television.

As an example, you may have spoken with a friend in their 40s or 50s who remembered the days before colour television and mobile phones, or someone in their 70s or older who did not have access to a telephone at all.

Did you learn something unexpected from your conversation? Write to us at [rdaeditor@readersdigest.com](mailto:rdaeditor@readersdigest.com) to tell us your story and you could appear on the letters page of the magazine!

## QUESTIONS FOR 'INSTANT ANSWERS: VOLCANOES' (PAGE 76)

### 1. Volcanoes are classified as active, dormant or extinct. How is this determined? Can they move from one classification to another?

The classification of a volcano depends on how much time has passed since it last erupted. **Active** means a volcano that shows signs of unrest up to and including erupting. **Dormant** means a volcano that hasn't erupted recently but could do so at some point. **Extinct** means no known eruptions in at least 10,000 years and none considered likely.

Volcanoes can move from one classification to another and sometimes do so with very little warning. Give yourself five points if you answered all parts of this question correctly.

### 2. What can happen where shifting tectonic plates meet?

These meeting places, or boundaries, are the weakest points in the Earth's surface. Magma can push up from deep within the Earth and break through at these points, and so they are the places where most volcanoes occur. Give yourself two points for getting this part of the answer right, then an additional two points if you did further research and included the fact that pressure between meeting tectonic plates is also responsible for forming mountain ranges and causing earthquakes. Add a bonus point if you found out that there are different types of plate boundaries, which are called convergent (where plates come together), divergent (where plates move apart) and transform (where they grind past each other).

### 3. As the article mentions, volcanic eruptions can be dangerous. How could a volcano possibly cause engine failure in a plane?

As the article says, planes are at risk of engine failure due to the volcanic ash clouds produced during eruptions. The clouds contain minute glass particles and pulverised rock. If sucked into a plane engine these can melt and then solidify, causing numerous problems including potential engine failure. Give

yourself two points if you found this information in the article. Give yourself an additional two points if you did extra research to find out how the glass and rocks cause damage to aircraft. You should have learned that the melting point of the ash is around 1100°C and the operating temperature of a jet engine is around 1400°C, so any ash sucked into the engine will melt and then cool as it leaves the engine's combustor. If it hits any of the parts in the rest of the engine (as it is very likely to do) it will solidify and can stop the engine from working.

Give yourself an extra bonus point if you either found that volcanic ash can also scratch aircraft parts, including the cockpit window, or that volcanic ash had caused engine shutdown in two jet aircraft in the 1980s - happily both were able to restart their engines and land safely.

### 4. In the past 500 years, which has been the largest eruption? What damage did it cause? Using additional materials (books, internet, and so on), write a short description of the effects of the volcano's eruption.

The largest eruption was Mount Tambora, Indonesia, in 1815. The eruption caused massive damage. In total about 160,000 people were killed (70,000 people were killed from the eruption and 90,000 more died from the catastrophic global cooling that followed.)

Your description will be individual to you, but should include key facts about the eruption and its aftermath, including the following:

- In early April, 1815, Mount Tambora erupted over the course of several days. At its peak, the eruption is thought to have formed a column 40-50km high, ejecting large amounts of volcanic ash and sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere. Ash and pumice fell over nearby land to depths of up to a metre, smothering whole villages, and the sulphurous gasses emitted by the volcano killed many locals.
- Lava and pyroclastic flows killed many Indonesians, as did the tsunami caused by the eruption. Rafts of pumice stone and vegetation from the island, up to 5km across, made shipping in the area difficult for months afterwards.

- The next year was known as the 'year without a summer' in the Northern Hemisphere. This was a result of climate change driven by the volcano. Huge amounts of ash thrown up in the eruption blocked some of the Sun's rays hitting Earth, while the sulphur dioxide that was also ejected by the volcano combined with water and oxygen in the atmosphere to form sulphuric and sulphurous acids, which also stopped warmth from the Sun reaching Earth (as well as causing acid rain). The unseasonably cold weather caused widespread crop failure, leading to great hardship and deaths across North America, Europe and India, in addition to the suffering of Indonesians who had lost farming land and had their water polluted by ash.
- Some diseases also increased dramatically in the years following the eruption. Typhus and cholera outbreaks were directly blamed on the climate changes, which caused people to gather indoors, and pollution from the falling ash, which contaminated many water supplies. Other diseases were blamed on poor nutrition thanks to crop failures.
- The immediate climate change caused by the eruption led to an unusually high number of extreme weather events, including devastating floods in China, summer snows and freezes in North America and very high rain and snowfalls in Europe. These all caused further deaths and hardship.

Give yourself full points if you discussed at least three of these facts in your description.

**ACTIVITY** Using the article to help you, draw a diagram of a volcano on a separate piece of paper. Use the word bank below to label your drawing. Using what you have learned from the article, along with your labelled diagram, write a short report on what happens when a volcano erupts.

Magma	Dust and ash	Lava
Vent		Crater

Your answers will be individual, but your diagram of a volcano should resemble the one below. Give yourself five points if you labelled all the parts correctly. Give yourself an additional two points if you wrote a report and a further three if your explanation covered all of the following points. Super-hot magma from beneath the Earth's surface is pushed upwards by changes in pressure; the magma breaks through at a weak spot in the Earth's crust and erupts as lava, ash, volcanic dust and stone.

Give yourself up to five bonus points if your report also covered the eruption's impact on people and ecosystems. You could use parts of your answer to Question 4 to provide you with details.

