Land of the Volcanoes

Have you ever wondered what cold, icy Alaska might have in common with hot, humid Guatemala? Have you thought about how both places are similar to Hawaii, Japan, and Russia? They are all places on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. They are also part of the Ring of Fire. The Ring of Fire is a horseshoe-shaped area that has been formed by earthquakes and volcanoes.

Volcanoes are openings in Earth’s crust. Earth has a solid outer crust made of rock. Under that crust is a layer of hot liquid called magma. When magma cools, it forms new rock.

A volcano is a cone-shaped hill or mountain, and it often has a large hole in its peak. Sometimes, magma comes out through the hole or through vents on the side of the mountain.

The magma that flows out of the volcano is called lava. At times, lava comes out slowly. At other times, the fiery liquid spurts from the vents with tremendous force. When lava pours out, people say that the volcano “erupts.” When volcanoes erupt, they spurt gases and ash high into the air.

Lava buries everything in its path and is known to cause immense damage. The lava can also pile up. Over time, it can form another cone-shaped mountain.
Name ___________________________ Date ____________

Answer the questions. You may reread parts of the passage to help you.

1 How are Alaska and Guatemala ALIKE?
   A They are both cold and icy.
   B They are both hot and humid.
   C They are both part of the Ring of Fire.
   D They are both places at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean.

2 What is a volcano?
   A an opening in Earth’s crust
   B a solid crust made of rock
   C a horseshoe-shaped area
   D fiery liquid

3 Read this excerpt from the passage.

   At other times, the fiery liquid spurts from the vents with tremendous force.

   Which word has the OPPOSITE meaning of the word tremendous?
   A great
   B little
   C terrible
   D wonderful

4 What is the MOST LIKELY reason the author wrote “Land of the Volcanoes”?
   A to describe the Ring of Fire
   B to tell how Earth’s crust forms
   C to explain how volcanoes form and erupt
   D to warn people about the danger of volcanoes

5 List three facts about volcanoes you learned from the passage. Write your response on another sheet of paper.