

"Mum, I want to make a volcano," said my son Cass on Sunday morning. "You know, the kind that we can make out of paper," he added. That is an unusual request for a Sunday morning. Papier mache is what he was talking about. I remember making heads and masks out of papier mache in school. We would blow up balloons, and then cover them with a mixture of torn up newspapers, flour, and water, and then leave them to dry for a couple of days. Then, the balloons would be popped and removed, and we would paint and decorate the project. Sounds like fun. This would be a bit more special because, in its center, we would put a plastic container, into which vinegar and baking soda could be poured, in order to get the bubbling, lava-like reaction. We sat and brainstormed for a while: what its base would be, did we have enough newspaper, how to make the lava realistic, could we put model villages at the base of the volcano, etc etc. Our imaginations took off. After we came to a consensus, we made the preparations. We covered the dining room table with newspaper, mixed the glue, tore up lots of pieces of newspaper, and decided who would do what. Oh, it was so messy! The flour water mixture was wet and gooey, and I had to really supervise my kids who unintentionally would flick the goo from their fingers, and it would go all over the place. Slowly, slowly, the volcano took shape. It even has a lake on one of its slopes. It is drying at the moment in the garage, soon to be painted, varnished, and made more real. Some people I know are quite anxious to see the lava flow, and the warring villagers fight.

### Grammar notes.

Practice of the past continuous with related vocabulary: gooey, warring, to brainstorm, to tear.

1. When I was little, my brother and I would make gooey mud pies in the garden by mixing soil and water.
2. The warring island nations would stop fighting for a few years, and then start all over again.
3. Our high school English teacher would make us brainstorm in groups, in order to get lots of ideas for stories.
4. Oops! I have torn a page in my book. I used to do that deliberately when I was a toddler.