Geography – Volcanoes, Mountains and Earthquakes – Year 6

Vocabulary Top Ten:

archipelago	a group of islands
ecosystem	an area where organisms, weather and landscape, work together to form a bubble of life
equator	an imaginary line around the earth at an equal distance between the North and South poles
hotspot	areas of the world where the crust is so thin that hot magma melts the rock above it and breaks through the surface
island	areas of land that are not connected to a continent and are surrounded by water
magma	molten rock
shield volcano	a volcano with low, gently sloping sides
tectonic plates	the earth's surface is called the crust which is made up of different rocky sections called tectonic plates
tourists	people who travel away from their homes for pleasure
volcano	an opening in the earth's crust that allows magma, hot ash and gases to escape

Galapagos Islands





Located in the Pacific Ocean, almost 1,000 km from the coast of Ecuador in South America.

They are in both the Southern and the Northern Hemisphere.
They have a unique island ecosystem; they receive cool ocean currents making a strange mix of tropical and temperate climates.

How did they form?

The islands are formed by the Galapagos hotspot. In some parts of the world, the crust is so thin that hot magma melts the rock above it and breaks through the surface, this is a hot spot. The thin crust at the bottom of the ocean is most easily melted by magma, causing hot magma to rise and form underwater volcanoes. These keep erupting and growing over the hot spot and can eventually form an island. Several chains of volcanic islands have forms when tectonic plates move over the hot spots.

The Galapagos Islands are still moving today, about 6cm to the South-East every year!

Key Facts:

- the largest island, Isabela, consists of six shield volcanoes
- the oldest island, Española, was formed three to five million years ago
- Española moved slowly along the Nazca tectonic plate and new islands formed on the hot spot where it had originally appeared
- the islands are home to lots of different types of plants (flora) and animals (fauna)
- in 1835, Charles Darwin visited and his observations there helped him work out his theory of natural selection

Many tourists visit the islands each year but there are laws to prevent over fishing, too many people living there or visiting.

Galapagos Penguin



Giant Tortoises



Marine Iguanas

