

Railway bridge at Tangiwai before and after



TaTa Tangiwai Railway Disaster

Remember

Understand

Apply

Analyse

Evaluate

Create

On the afternoon of Christmas Eve, 1953, the Wellington-to-Auckland train left the station with 258 people on board.

At 8pm, at the top of Mt Ruapehu, the crater lake wall broke and a huge wave of water, ice, mud and rocks (a lahar) flowed down the mountain and became a six-metre tidal wave in the Whangaehu River. It reached the Tangiwai railway bridge about 10:15pm, breaking one of its concrete piers.

The Wellington train, with one engine, nine carriages, and two vans, was travelling at 65 kilometres per hour towards the bridge. It reached the weakened bridge at 10:21pm and the engine and five carriages went straight into the river with very few on board surviving.

The next carriage swung for a few minutes and then dropped into the river and rolled onto the bank. All but one of these passengers survived. The engine driver had applied the emergency brakes 200 metres before the bridge because he saw a man waving a torch to warn him to stop. This action saved the last three carriages.

Soldiers from Waiouru and other volunteers spent the night rescuing who they could and Queen Elizabeth gave four medals to volunteers for their bravery.

134 people survived but 151 died in New Zealand's fifth worst disaster.

An early warning system upstream on the Whangaehu River was subsequently installed and in 2007 a moderate lahar caused little damage and no injury.

Words I need to understand and use:

lahar disaster

pier Mt Ruapehu

bridge survived volcano

erupted

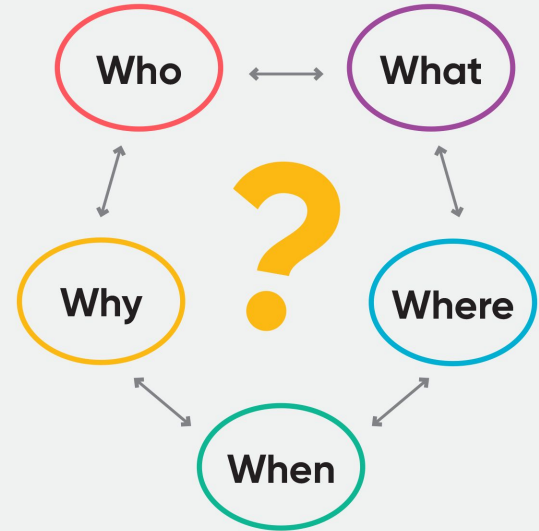
What is a lahar?



Wednesday-Planning

Describe the events of 24 December, 1953 at Tangiwai

Plan using the 5 Ws



Thursday-writing

Opening sentence

Paragraph 1-What happened? When did it happen?

Paragraph 2-Why did it happen? Where did it happen?

Paragraph 3-Who did it impact?

Closing sentence

Proofread your writing

Friday-Library

Reread slides 4 and 5

Can you answer these questions?

1. How many people were on board the train?
2. Where did the lahar begin?
3. When did the Tangiwai Railway Disaster take place?
4. How did the train driver know to put on his emergency brakes?
5. Why did the Queen give out medals?
6. What was installed after the Tangiwai Railway Disaster?

Be ready for our Blooket Quiz!