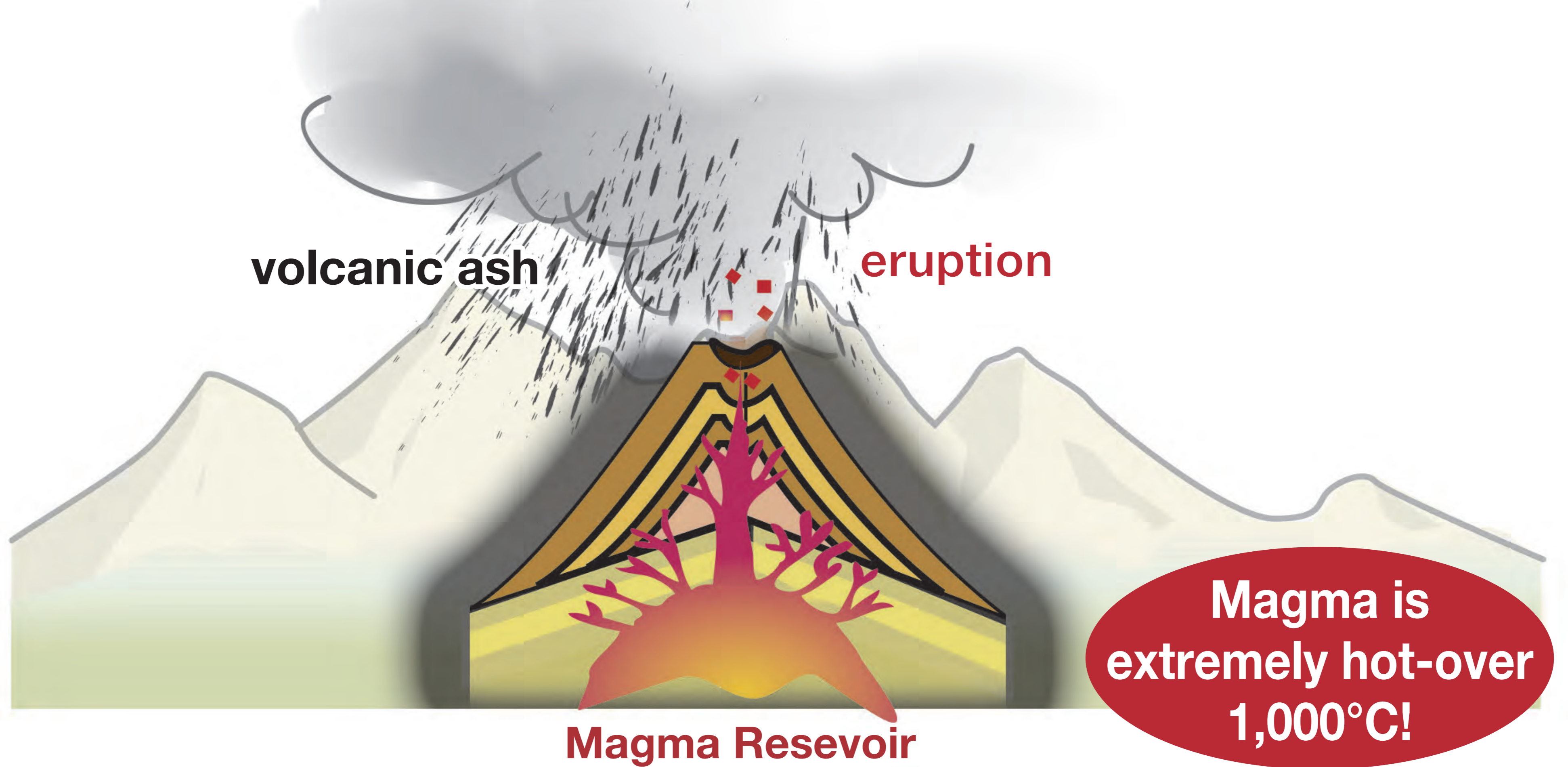


Why do Eruptions Happen?

How Volcanoes are Formed

When underground magma (rock melted at high temperature) rises to the earth's surface, an eruption occurs. The lava flows and volcanic ash from these eruptions accumulates to form a mountain (volcano). However, explosions from volcanoes formed in this way can also destroy mountains. Volcanoes grow in size through repeatedly forming and collapsing in this way.



Magma is lighter than the material that surrounds it, so it rises from deep underground to accumulate in areas closer to the surface where the relative weight is balanced. These locations are called magma chambers. Water, carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide and other volatile components dissolve naturally in magma. When these components turn to gas, they form bubbles in the magma. These bubbles cause an increase in volume and a decrease in weight that make the magma start to rise up, resulting in an eruption.

