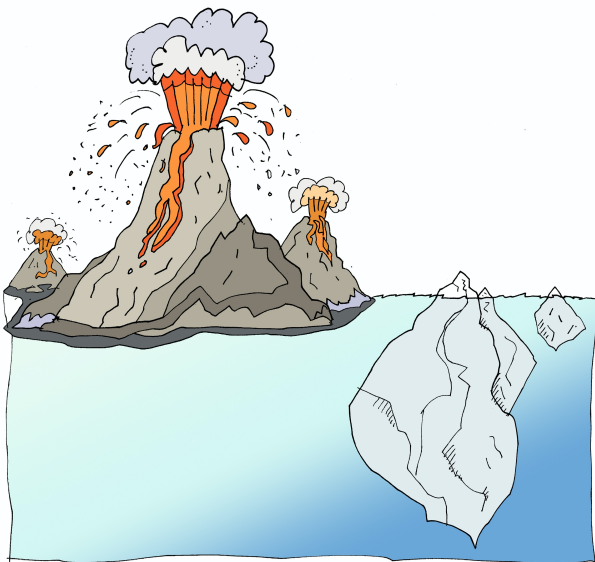


Introduction : Background information to the story



There are many tales about the legendary troll that have been told and retold for centuries. Trolls are often thought to be very large, ugly creatures, like giants or ogres, that live in the mountains and are dangerous to human beings. But are all trolls like this? On a trip to a country called Iceland, I found some great stories about Icelandic trolls. I discovered that there are some terrible trolls but there are also some that are peaceful, friendly and helpful.



Where is Iceland?

Iceland is an island in the very north of the Atlantic Ocean just below the Arctic Circle, between Canada and Norway. It has many large mountains, live volcanoes, amazing waterfalls and beaches made of black sand from volcanic lava. It also has lots and lots of glaciers and ice, plus masses of moss but very few trees!



In Iceland, stories about trolls have been told to explain some of the many interesting rock shapes that can be found all over the island.



The story in this pack has been inspired by a traditional Icelandic folktale. The names have been simplified to make it easier for you to read because the Icelandic alphabet is a bit different from ours. The story explains how some amazing rocks called 'sea stacks' were created. This story has been told many, many times over the years. Before we read the story, let's make sure we know some of the technical words.

Glossary

volcano: a mountain, usually shaped like a cone, with a large hole in the middle (called a crater), where hot, molten rock (called magma) and hot gas from the centre of the Earth erupts. Volcanoes can cause terrible destruction.

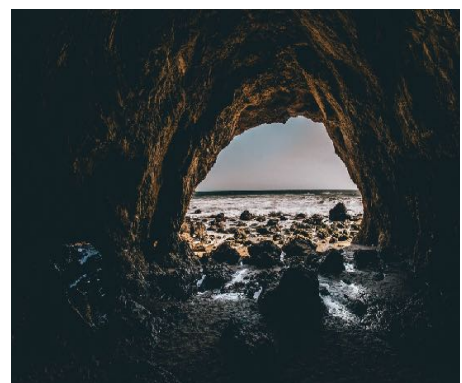
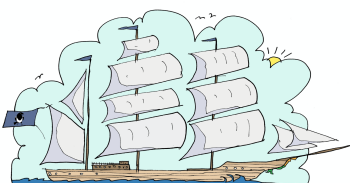


Further Background Information on Volcanoes from BBC Bitesize. Type in the link below to learn more:

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z849q6f/articles/zd9cxyc

cave: a hole in rocks or mountains big enough for a person (or a troll!) to go into.

three-masted ship: large sailing ship powered by the wind with three masts for the many sails.



Let's now read our story...

You can listen to an audio version of the story here

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/stone-trolls/s-bGWn1yz5NrI>

The Stone Trolls

On the southern coast of Iceland, near the small village of Vik, there once lived a band of trolls. They were huge, ugly creatures who were feared by humans and hid away underground in the dark caves of the nearby ice-covered volcano. All trolls knew that if they ever got caught outside in the daylight, they would immediately be turned to stone. So, each night, under the **cover of darkness**, they would **venture** outside to hunt and fish.

One stormy night, two **mischievous** trolls called Skess and Landra perched together on the craggy cliff, watching. Below, the sea bubbled and foamed. Above, the full moon glared down, casting a long shadow across the **ebony** beach. In the distance, they could hear the low rumble of other trolls, feasting on their **hoard** of freshly caught fish.

Suddenly, Skess jumped up, pointed at the horizon and roared. "Landra, look, a three-masted ship. I think it's in trouble!" Landra followed his gaze and stared at the magnificent ship, **pitching** and rolling on the bubbling sea. "Let's **wade** out and pull it into shore," Skess said, setting off down the beach. Landra frowned as it was already very late and the sun rose earlier and earlier in late spring, but then he jumped down from the cliff and followed close behind.

Slowly, they waded out into the sea until, at long last, they reached the **stricken** ship. Together they started to haul it towards the distant shore, which was now just a strip of silver moonlight.

For the rest of the night they heaved, and they heaved, and they heaved, but the ship was **hefty** and the sea was rough. Time passed. The two trolls didn't notice the moon slipping slowly away. Finally, they reached the blackened beach where the sailors quickly **clambered** to safety.

At that moment, the first glimmer of sunlight appeared. Shocked, Skess and Landra **shielded** their eyes and then stared at each other in horror. Their mouths widened. Their legs stiffened. Their arms ground to a halt. Their eyes closed. Both trolls and the remains of the ship instantly turned to stone ... forever.

To this day, what remains of the stone trolls and the ship can still be seen just off the coast of Iceland near the small village of Vik.

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Photo by [Rostyslav Savchyn](#) on [Unsplash](#)



The rocks in the distance are actually **basalt sea stacks**.

Glossary

basalt: volcanic rock. Here it is very dark in colour.

sea stacks: pillars of rock, formed by the wind and the waves. These were once thought to have been arches of rock attached to the nearby cliffs.

These rocks or sea stacks have real Icelandic names:

Skess in the story is actually called **Skessudrangur** in Icelandic.

Landra in the story is actually called **Landdrangur** in Icelandic.

What do the words mean?



★ Re-read *The Stone Trolls* story. All of the words below are in bold in the story. See if you can work out what they mean and jot down your ideas here.

★ If you are stuck, there is a list of similar words below to help you. If you are still stuck, you could ask someone else in your home or use a dictionary or the internet.

Target Word	Definition that fits with the information text
cover of darkness	
venture	
mischievous	
ebony beach	
hoard	
pitching	
wade	
stricken	
hefty	
clambered	
shielded	

Similar Words Help Box

protected
naughty

heavy
plunging

paddle
climbed

catch or supply
wrecked

black risk or dare
at night-time