Violent Eruptions Soufrière Hills volcano formed as ocean floor of the North American Plate and the South American Plate slid beneath the Caribbean Plate, causing magma to form. Successive eruptions of lava and tephra produced the majestic composite volcanoes that tower above the surrounding landscape on Montserrat and other islands in the Lesser Antilles. Before the 1995 eruption, silica-rich magma rose and was trapped beneath the surface. As the magma was forced toward Earth's surface, the pressure on the underlying magma was released. This started a series of eruptions that were still continuing in the year 2001.

Table 1 Thirteen Selected Eruptions

Volcano and Location	Year	Type	Eruptive Force	Magma Content		Ability of of Magma to Flow	Products of Eruption
				Silica	H_2O		
Mount Etna, Sicily	1669	composite	moderate	high	low	medium	lava, ash
Tambora, Indonesia	1815	cinder cone	high	high	high	low	cinders, ash
Krakatau, Indonesia	1883	composite	high	high	high	low	cinders, ash
Mount Pelée, Martinique	1902	cinder cone	high	high	high	low	gas, ash
Vesuvius, Italy	1906	composite	moderate	high	low	medium	lava, ash
Mount Katmai, Alaska	1912	composite	high	high	high	low	lava, ash, gas
Paricutìn, Mexico	1943	cinder cone	moderate	high	low	medium	ash, cinders
Surtsey, Iceland	1963	shield	moderate	low	low	high	lava, ash
Mount St. Helens, Washington	1980	composite	high	high	high	low	gas, ash
Kilauea, Hawaii	1983	shield	low	low	low	high	lava
Mount Pinatubo, Philippines	1991	composite	high	high	high	low	gas, ash
Soufrière Hills, Montserrat	1995	composite	high	high	high	low	gas, ash, rocks
Popocatépetl, Mexico	2000	composite	moderate	high	low	medium	gas, ash