Let's Explore Caves!

photos.com

*A **cave** is an empty space inside Earth. Its opening is usually on the side of a hill. Caves are filled with a lot of interesting things. What hangs out in caves?*

The Cool World of Caves

Caves are home to many different animals. Like any home, a cave suits the creatures that live in it. Some animals can survive only in a cave's unique **ecosystem.** An ecosystem is an environment in which certain plants and animals depend on each other to live. So, just what lives in caves?

A Blind Find

You might see blind salamanders in caves, but they won't see you! Blind salamanders do not need sight. They live in the darkest parts of caves—in water or on land. They are able to catch food by feeling the movements of other animals.

Going Up or Down?

When water mixes with calcium and drips inside caves, it hardens and builds up over time. That creates cone-shaped objects called **stalactites** and **stalagmites.** Stalactites hang from the ceiling. Stalagmites rise from the ground. Sometimes they meet and form columns.

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Hanging Around

Many bats sleep in cave doorways. They fly out to find food. Some bats hibernate[1] in caves during the winter.

sxc.hu

A bat.

Lots of Legs

Millipedes like to chill out in the cool, damp middle sections of caves. They can have anywhere from 80 to 400 legs! Having so many legs helps them dig their way underground.

[1] **hibernate:** to pass the winter sleeping or resting

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Sneaky Snake

photos.com

A snake.

Rat snakes do not live in caves, but they sure do like to visit! Rat snakes slither through cave openings to look for food.

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Question Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

"Let's Explore Caves" Questions

_____ 1. The main idea of this passage is
- a. caves are home to many animals.
- b. blind salamanders live in caves.
- c. caves can be found in many places.
- d. caves need protection from pollution.

_____ 2. A detail from this passage is
- a. no animal can survive in a cave.
- b. millipedes have millions of legs.
- c. stalagmites hang from the ceilings of caves.
- d. columns are formed when stalactites and stalagmites reach each other.

_____ 3. _____ find food in caves.
- a. Bats
- b. Rat snakes
- c. Both
- d. Neither

_____ 4. Another detail from the passage is
- a. millipedes use their legs to dig in the mud.
- b. bats hibernate in caves.
- c. stalactites hang from the ceilings of caves.
- d. all of the above.

_____ 5. If you went into a cave, what do you think it would be like?

_____

_____

_____

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Name: _____ Date: _____

"Let's Explore Caves" Answer Sheet

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- **d. all of the above.**

DC 5. If you went into a cave, what do you think it would be like?

Answers will vary, but they may include that the cave is likely to be dark and damp; that there are likely to be animals there; and there may be rock-like formations coming from the ceiling and floor.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: calcium, column

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