

Quiz: RI.5.8

Read the passage. Then answer the question.

Exploring the Underground

- 1 Throughout the United States there are many different kinds of caves. They include lava caves, sea caves, and ice caves. The most common, however, are limestone caves. Some people also think they are the most beautiful.
- 2 Limestone caves are natural cavities formed from cracks in limestone rocks. The small cracks grow into underground streams, rivers, and lakes. As the water drains away, it makes underground passages. Constant dripping creates limestone buildups. Eventually, these turn into beautiful rock formations and crystals.

Spelunkers, Cavers, and Speleologists

- 3 Many people are interested in these underground caves. Some are scientists, called speleologists. Often trained in many different sciences, they collect data about caves. They study caves and cave life. They also create maps and reports of what they find.
- 4 Other people are simply interested in seeing the beauty of the caves. Originally, people who explored caves for fun were called “spelunkers.” But over time, this word has come to have a more negative meaning. Today, it is often used to describe people who do not know what they are doing. People with more knowledge about caving techniques and safety are commonly called “cavers.”
- 5 Caving is a hobby that requires money, time, and study. Cavers need to buy special equipment. This includes hard hats and headlamps. They must also learn how to navigate a cave correctly without injuring themselves or damaging the cave. Caves are made over thousands of years. People need to take care to leave them as they found them.

Show Caves and Caverns

- 6 People who do not have the time or the experience to go caving can still see the beauty of these underground worlds. Around the country there are what are known as “show caves.” These sites allow people to take guided tours through caves. There are safe, lighted walkways, and tour guides to explain the various displays.
- 7 There are a lot of show caves around the country and they are all well worth the trip. These include the wondrous Cave of the Winds in Colorado. Discovered in 1881, it contains a peak at 7,000 feet! Other great examples include the Carter Caves in Kentucky, Rushmore Cave in South Dakota, the Lewis and Clark Caverns in Montana, the Wind Caves in Tennessee, and the Cave of the Mounds in Wisconsin. Did you know that the largest cave room in the United States is the Big Room in Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico? In one part of the room, a thirty-story building would not touch the ceiling. This remarkable room draws visitors from around the world.

