

Jenny and Carlos get out of the rain



On the way back to camp, Jenny and Carlos are caught in a bad storm. They take shelter under a rock, at the entrance to a cave. When they crawl into the dark cave, they get lost. A talking bat promises to lead them out of the cave.

The bat helps Jenny and Carlos find a flashlight. They can see strangely shaped rocks and crystals all around them. A white fish with no eyes swims in an underground stream.



Jenny and Carlos meet more cave animals. White crickets and beetles live on piles of bat droppings. They can't see in the dark. Instead, they use long feelers to find their way.

Dripping water and rock take thousands of years to form cave sculptures. Sometimes people break the formations and they are gone forever.



People have used caves for centuries. In one cavern, Jenny and Carlos are impressed by paintings drawn by early Americans thousands of years ago. After they see the cave art, the bat leads the children out of the cave and they go back to camp.

LAVA CAVES

Lava caves are tubes that form when molten rock flows away from volcanoes. Cool air causes the rock to harden on the outside, and when all the lava has drained out, the tube becomes a cave.



WHERE ARE AMERICA'S CAVES?



SEA CAVES

Sea caves are formed by waves crashing on rocky coastlines.



Ice caves are formed by water flowing underneath glaciers of ice. Light passing through the ice makes the caves blue.

ICE CAVES

CAVE ANIMALS



Little Brown Bat

Packrat



Raccoon



Trogloxenes

The word TROGLO means hole. Trogloxenes are animals who sometimes choose caves as their homes.



DANGER!

Cave explorers always go in groups, never alone. If an accident does happen, cavers can help each other or send for rescuers. Joining a caving club is a good way to learn safe caving skills.

HANDLE WITH CARE!



Camel backed cave cricket



Blind cave beetle



Adult cave salamander

Troglophiles

Troglophiles are animals who like to live in caves but also live elsewhere.



Harvestman ("Daddy longlegs")



Blind flatworm



Blind millipede

Troglobites

Troglobites are animals who only live in caves. They can't survive anywhere else.



Blind crayfish



Blind Texas Salamander



Copepod



Blind shrimp

Damage to Cave Environments

When we visit caves, we must do no harm. Trash can kill cave wildlife. Graffiti makes the walls ugly and lasts forever. Cave features take thousands of years to grow. A broken stalactite or gypsum flower can't be put back together. Future visitors will want to see unspoiled caves as much as we do!

