Cave Dwellers

Grade Level: 1 - 5
Time: 60 minutes

Program objectives:
- Students will learn that living things interact with their environment, and how their adaptations aid them in the specific cave environment.
- Students will know how caves form and be able to identify the cave zones and types of rock formations inside the cave.
- Students will be able to identify cave dwelling animals and categorize them as troglobites, troglophiles or trogloxenes.

Program description:
Caves are home to many animals. Deepen your appreciation of the delicate ecosystem of a cave and the role that people play in preserving the home of cave dwellers. This program includes a guided experience in the Museum of Natural History & Science's famous limestone cavern.

Major vocabulary and concepts:
- Adaptation
- Echolocation
- Limestone
- Trogloxenes
- Deep cave zone
- Ecosystem
- Troglobites
- Twilight zone
- Dissolution
- Entrance zone
- Troglophiles

Suggested pre-visit activities:
- Read the story Stellaluna with your class.
- Take turns blindfolding the students and have them find their way around the room using their senses of smell, touch and hearing in place of the sense of sight.
- Make your classroom as dark as possible and tell them a short story in the dark. This could help to prepare them for the dark areas in the cave they will visit.
- Teach students about ecosystems. What is an ecosystem? What are some different ecosystems? How are plants and animals different or the same in different ecosystems? What are some ecosystems near your city or school?
Suggested post-visit activities:

- Create a classroom mural of a cave. Draw examples of cave creatures and locate them in the correct sections of the cave.
- Have students make a journal about their “caving adventures.” Have them pretend to be spelunkers and write about their experiences including animals they meet on the way and rock formations they encounter. Students could also write poems, songs, or raps to record their experiences.
- Have the students “make” a small cave using an old tarp or sheets. They can give tours to another class of younger students and tell them about what they saw in the cave when they visited.
- Look at pictures of famous caves around the world. Locate and mark them on a map.

Academic standards:

Ohio Revised Academic Standards:
- Earth & Space Science – grade 4
- Physical Science – grade 1
- Life Science – grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Related exhibits and features:

- The Cave in the Museum of Natural History & Science
- View our Omnimax® film: Amazing Caves

Resources:

Teachers: [Speleology – The Study of Caves](#) by George W. Moore and Nicholas Sullivan
- Caves by Neil Morris
- Caves and Caverns by Gail Gibbons
- The Life of The Cave – Our Living World of Nature by Charles E. Mohr & Thomas L. Poulson

Students: [Stellaluna](#) by Janell Cannon
- Bats: Creatures of the Night by Joyce Milton
- Cave by Donald M. Silver and Patricia Wynne
- I Wonder Why Stalactites Hang Down & Other Questions About Caves by Jackie Gaff