



Name: _____

Date: _____

Vocabulary Activity: *Pennsylvania Cave Becomes a State Park*

Part 1: Word Meanings

Match each vocabulary word to the correct definition.

Words:

1. Caverns _____
2. Limestone _____
3. Acidic _____
4. Spelunking _____
5. Conservancy _____
6. Preservation _____
7. Geological _____
8. Passages _____

Definitions:

- A. Study of Earth's rocks and physical features
 - B. A group that protects land or nature
 - C. Large underground cave spaces
 - D. Slightly sour or able to break down materials
 - E. Natural rock made from ancient sea life
 - F. Narrow paths or tunnels
 - G. Protecting something from being damaged or destroyed
 - H. Exploring caves, often by crawling or climbing
-

Part 2: Context Clues

Fill-in-the-blank with the correct word from the word bank. Use the article to help you.

1. The caves formed when _____ water slowly dissolved rock.
2. The caverns were created in soft _____ made from sea animals.
3. Some visitors go _____ through small cave spaces.
4. The state wants to ensure the _____ of the caves for the future.
5. Scientists study the _____ features of the cave system.

Word Bank: acidic • limestone • spelunking • preservation • geological

Part 3: Words in Action

Answer each question in 1–2 complete sentences.

1. Why is **limestone** important to the formation of caves?
2. How does a **conservancy** help protect places like Laurel Caverns?
3. Why might **spelunking** be more challenging than a guided tour?



Name: _____

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Critical Thinking Challenge: Planning the Future of *Laurel Caverns State Park*

Scenario (The Problem)

Pennsylvania has turned Laurel Caverns into a state park. Leaders now face a challenge: **How can the park allow visitors while also protecting the cave for the future?**

Part 1: Interpretation

In your own words, answer the following questions:

1. What makes Laurel Caverns unique?
2. Why did the state want to protect it?

Part 2: Analysis

List important environmental and human factors leaders must think about.

Environmental Factors (nature, cave, animals):

- _____

Human Factors (visitors, tourism, education):

- _____

Part 3: Evaluation

Below are possible decisions. Rate each one.

Option	Good Idea	Not a Good Idea	Why?
Allow unlimited visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Only guided tours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Close some areas of the cave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Name: _____

Date: _____

Part 4: Inference

What might happen if too many people visit the caves?

- _____
- _____

What might happen if the caves are too restricted?

- _____

Part 5: Explanation

Your Plan: What should the park do?

Explain your reasoning (4–6 sentences):

- Use evidence from the article
- Explain how your plan solves the problem

Part 6: Reflection

Answer honestly:

1. What part of this decision was hardest for you?

2. Did your opinion change while working? Why or why not?

3. What would you still like to learn about caves or parks?

Challenge

Create **one rule** for visitors that protects the cave. Explain why it is important.



Vocabulary Activity: *Pennsylvania Cave Becomes a State Park*

Part 1: Word Meanings

Match each vocabulary word to the correct definition.

Words:

1. Caverns **C**
2. Limestone **E**
3. Acidic **D**
4. Spelunking **H**
5. Conservancy **B**
6. Preservation **G**
7. Geological **A**
8. Passages **F**

Definitions:

- A. Study of Earth's rocks and physical features
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- H. Exploring caves, often by crawling or climbing

Part 2: Context Clues

Fill-in-the-blank with the correct word from the word bank. Use the article to help you.

1. The caves formed when **acidic** water slowly dissolved rock.
2. The caverns were created in soft **limestone** made from sea animals.
3. Some visitors go **spelunking** through small cave spaces.
4. The state wants to ensure the **preservation** of the caves for the future.
5. Scientists study the **geological** features of the cave system.

Word Bank: acidic • limestone • spelunking • preservation • geological

Part 3: Words in Action

Answer each question in 1–2 complete sentences.

1. Why is **limestone** important to the formation of caves?
Limestone is essential because it is a porous rock that easily dissolves when it comes into contact with acidic groundwater, eventually carving out cave passages.
2. How does a **conservancy** help protect places like Laurel Caverns?
A conservancy protects these sites by managing land use, preventing pollution, and ensuring that human activity does not damage the fragile underground ecosystem.
3. Why might **spelunking** be more challenging than a guided tour?
Spelunking is more difficult because it often involves navigating unlit, tight spaces and rugged terrain without the safety of paved paths or professional guides.



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Part 1: Interpretation

In your own words, answer the following questions:

1. What makes Laurel Caverns unique?

Laurel Caverns is unique, because its the largest and deepest cave in Pennsylvania. It's also mostly dry, allowing visitors to explore over four miles of underground passages and chambers.

2. Why did the state want to protect it?

Preserving the cavern protects Pennsylvania's fragile geological structures while helping the state provide residents with a state park within 25 miles of their homes.

Part 2: Analysis

List important environmental and human factors leaders must think about.

Environmental Factors (nature, cave, animals):

- Cave preservation; wildlife protection; pollution

Human Factors (visitors, tourism, education):

- Visitor safety; overcrowding; providing educational and historical information to visitors

Part 3: Evaluation

Below are possible decisions. Rate each one.

Option	Good Idea	Not a Good Idea	Why?
Allow unlimited visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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Close some areas of the cave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Part 4: Inference

What might happen if too many people visit the caves?

- Overcrowding could cause physical erosion of cave floors and formations
- Humans can alter the cave's temperature, disrupting the natural habitat

What might happen if the caves are too restricted?

- People may lose interest in conservation efforts of the cavern, leading to less funding and support

Part 5: Explanation

Your Plan: What should the park do?

Explain your reasoning (4–6 sentences):

- Use evidence from the article
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Part 6: Reflection

Answer honestly:

1. What part of this decision was hardest for you?

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Create **one rule** for visitors that protects the cave. Explain why it is important.