

## Volunteers experience 40 days of isolation in a cave

28th April, 2021



Could you survive for a few days without your smartphone or without being connected to the Internet? How about living in a cave with no mod cons for 40 days? Fifteen people did just that. They took part in a project called Deep

Time to see how they would react to and cope with being totally disconnected to the modern world. Scientists from the Human Adaption Institute led the \$1.9-million project. They wanted to understand how people would adapt to drastic changes in living conditions. They put the volunteers in a cave for nearly six weeks. There was no sunlight and the cave dwellers had no contact with the outside world. They had to rely on their body clock to know when to wake up, go to sleep and eat.

Most of the volunteers said they enjoyed the experience of total isolation. Two-thirds expressed a desire to remain underground a while longer in order to finish projects they had started. Deep Time's director Christian Clot said the experience would, "test humans' ability to adapt to the loss of their frame of reference for time and space". He said: "Our future as humans on this planet will evolve. We must learn to better understand how our brains are capable of finding new solutions, whatever the situation." One striking observation is that participants lost their sense of time. Mr Clot said: "In our heads, we had walked into the cave 30 days ago". One team member estimated the time underground to be 23 days.

Sources: [abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au) / [france24.com](http://france24.com) / [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com)

### Writing

We should all switch off from the modern world from time to time. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

survive / smartphone / cave / project / cope / modern world / contact / volunteers / isolation / desire / underground / experience / loss / brain / observation / sense

### True / False

- a) The article says we could all survive without a smartphone. T / F
- b) Forty people lived in a cave for 40 days. T / F
- c) The research project cost \$19 million. T / F
- d) Volunteers had to rely on their body clock in the cave. T / F
- e) Two-thirds of the volunteers enjoyed the cave experience. T / F
- f) The research director said we need to find solutions to situations. T / F
- g) The participants in the research lost their sense of time. T / F
- h) One team member left the cave after 23 days. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>survive</b>    | a. change       |
| 2. <b>took part</b>  | b. extreme      |
| 3. <b>react</b>      | c. depend       |
| 4. <b>drastic</b>    | d. judged       |
| 5. <b>rely</b>       | e. make it      |
| 6. <b>enjoyed</b>    | f. answers      |
| 7. <b>adapt</b>      | g. participated |
| 8. <b>solutions</b>  | h. obvious      |
| 9. <b>striking</b>   | i. behave       |
| 10. <b>estimated</b> | j. loved        |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) Would you like to have taken part in this experiment?
- b) What do you think of caves?
- c) Could you survive for a few days without your smartphone?
- d) Could you live in a dark cave for 40 days?
- e) How would you cope with being disconnected from the world?
- f) What does your body clock tell you?
- g) What would you do in a cave for 40 days?
- h) What would you miss about having no contact with the outside world?

## Phrase Match

- |                                      |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. survive for a few days without    | a. dwellers              |
| 2. see how they would                | b. time                  |
| 3. how people would adapt            | c. on their body clock   |
| 4. cave                              | d. of total isolation    |
| 5. They had to rely                  | e. to drastic changes    |
| 6. enjoyed the experience            | f. for time and space    |
| 7. Two-thirds expressed a desire     | g. your smartphone       |
| 8. their frame of reference          | h. finding new solutions |
| 9. our brains are capable of         | i. react to and cope     |
| 10. participants lost their sense of | j. to remain underground |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How would you deal with total isolation?
- How might our future on this planet change?
- How good are you at finding new solutions?
- What happens when you lose your sense of time?
- How sociable are you?
- To what degree is technology isolating people?
- What questions would you like to ask the participants?

## Spelling

- rvvseui for a few days
- nodccntee to the Internet
- ecart to and cope with
- the Human pdAontia Institute
- aisrdct changes in living conditions
- They put the oursevnel in a cave
- Two-thirds drssepeex a desire to remain
- their frame of reerfnec
- finding new sloounsti
- One gtikrins observation
- rtiapnpitasc lost their sense of time
- One team member eettasidm the time

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. g	3. i	4. b	5. c
6. j	7. a	8. f	9. h	10. d

## Role Play

### Role A – Smartphones

You think smartphones is the thing you'd miss most if you spent time in isolation. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not so miss-able. Also, tell the others which is the least miss-able of these (and why): fast food, music or news.

### Role B – Fast Food

You think fast food is the thing you'd miss most if you spent time in isolation. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not so miss-able. Also, tell the others which is the least miss-able of these (and why): smartphones, music or news.

### Role C – Music

You think music is the thing you'd miss most if you spent time in isolation. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not so miss-able. Also, tell the others which is the least miss-able of these (and why): fast food, smartphones or news.

### Role D – News

You think news is the thing you'd miss most if you spent time in isolation. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not so miss-able. Also, tell the others which is the least miss-able of these (and why): fast food, music or smartphones.

## Speaking – Things I'd Miss

Rank these with your partner. Put the things you'd most miss if you spent time in isolation at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| • Smartphone    | • Music    |
| • TV            | • Shopping |
| • Fast food     | • Friends  |
| • Tea or coffee | • News     |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.