

Part 3

Questions 19 to 26 are based on the following passage.

Read the passage carefully and choose the best answer A, B, C or D.

I arrived at the entrance of a limestone cave in Perak. I felt so small as I stared into the opening of this majestic, million-year-old cave. This cave never ceased to amaze me. Near the entrance, there was a team of familiar faces. They were members of the exploration team that I had joined. I headed towards them with excitement, just in time for the safety briefing.

‘Good to see everyone,’ said team leader Liyana. ‘Before we head in, let’s make sure we have our headlamps and helmets with us. Flick on your headlamps twice right now to make sure they’re working. I have a few spare batteries if you need them.’ She then continued, ‘Make sure you grasp the ropes as you explore. Follow the team closely, and do not wander into the no-go areas. These restricted areas are closed off due to potential dangers caused by the rain. Any questions?’ I recited the rules silently in my mind, mindful not to miss out a single detail. Liyana never failed to impress me with her ability to guide a team.

The team was ready. We descended into the cave by climbing down a rusty, slippery iron ladder. From there, the cave grew narrow and dark. I got down on my hands and knees to crawl through a narrow limestone passage. Even though it was no more than 10 degrees Celsius, after close to two hours of walking, crawling and climbing, we were dripping wet and struggling to fill our lungs.

Suddenly, the passage opened up and I could stand fully upright. In the dim light of a dozen headlamps, I saw thousands of long, pointy rock formations hanging from the cave ceiling and jutting up from the cave floor. These rocks took thousands of years to form.

Five years ago, if anyone had asked me to go caving, I would have responded, ‘What’s caving?’ I was never interested in dark, confined places, so I was rather ignorant about this hobby. My passion had always been collecting leaves and rocks in the dense Malaysian jungles. I even earned a nickname at school – The Rock. Everyone knew I had an amazing rock collection at home. I was first introduced to the idea of caving through a completely innocent conversation with my Geography teacher.

‘You know’, said Miss Lee, ‘growing up, I was also a rock collector just like you, Daniel. That’s why I became a Geography teacher. Then one day, my friend asked me if I wanted to study the rocks in caves. It felt like yesterday when I explored my first cave!’ I thought Miss Lee’s story was interesting but did not think much of it.

About a year later, I watched an interview about a firefighter. In the interview, the man explained, ‘When you go caving, it can be quite dark. Similarly, in fire rescue missions, the smoke and burning fire also makes it hard to identify anything. The fire scene is also difficult to navigate. Sometimes, you have to crawl under a fallen bookshelf or jump over a burnt bed. Caving is no different. So I used my caving skills to find the boy, and that was how I got us out of the blazing fire.’

Then, I began to realise that caving was much more than just walking among rocks. What did caving feel like? More importantly, was I physically capable of exploring a cave? I felt a strong desire to witness this secretive, rocky world with my own eyes.

I still remembered the scrapes, bruises and body aches after my first caving trip. During the trip, I almost gave up but I clenched my teeth and kept going. For that, I was rewarded with seeing swiftlet nests for the first time in my life! More importantly, I learnt more about myself. Caving was never about the skill, but the will to succeed.

Finally, my mind returned to the present moment, to the magnificence of the limestone in front of me. I felt proud, connected and alive so I began cheering. To my surprise, all my companions joined in. Perhaps we were all quietly thinking back to our personal caving journey. It was a magical moment.

19 In paragraph 1, what did the writer think of the limestone cave?

- A He was frightened by its size.
- B He was nervous about entering it.
- C He was in awe of its magnificence.
- D He was excited and ready to conquer it.

20 In paragraph 2, how did the writer feel towards team leader Liyana?

- A He aspired to become a team leader like her.
- B He realised she was a decisive commander.
- C He found her instructions confusing.
- D He admired her leadership skills.

21 In paragraph 3, why does the writer use the phrase 'we were dripping wet'?

- A The explorers worked up a sweat.
- B One of the explorers possibly slipped.
- C The passages were damp and slippery.
- D The explorers were wet from the puddles in the cave.

22 In paragraph 5, what was the writer's first impression of caving?

- A He was eager to go caving and collect rocks.
- B He did not know much about the subject.
- C He was terrified of dark, tight spaces.
- D He preferred hiking to caving.

23 What effect did Miss Lee's story have on the writer?

- A It had little impact on the writer.
- B It helped the writer discover a new hobby.
- C It motivated the writer to read about caving.
- D It made the writer more curious about caving.

24 According to the firefighter, how are caving and firefighting similar?

- A Both activities are highly dangerous.
- B You need to work up a lot of courage.
- C You need to train for physical strength.
- D There are many obstacles to get around.

25 What was the writer's first caving experience like?

- A He was surprised by how pleasant it was.
- B He regretted joining the caving trip.
- C He suffered some minor injuries.
- D He saw some rare insects.

26 What is the **main** purpose of the writer writing this article?

- A To describe the challenges he faces as a caver
- B To reflect on his personal journey as a caver
- C To show appreciation for his team members
- D To inspire more people to try out caving