

Lost in a Cave

The Wild Boars soccer team in northern Thailand finished their practice. Instead of heading home, the 12 boys and their coach rode bikes to a nearby **cave**. Their plan was to explore the cave for an hour and then head home. It was a simple plan, but it went terribly wrong.

Rising Waters

Tham Luang Nang Non cave is six miles of narrow passages. On June 23, 2018, the boys parked their bikes outside the cave's only entrance. As they explored the cave, it began to rain. The cave quickly flooded. The boys had to scramble onto a small ledge to escape the rising water. Suddenly, they were trapped underground, more than two miles from the cave's entrance.

Twenty-five-year-old Ekkapol "Coach Ek" Chantawong calmed the frightened boys, who were between 11 and 16 years old. He told them their parents would come for them. He explained that they could survive by drinking the fresh water dripping down the cave's walls. Coach Ek taught the boys how to **meditate** as a way to stay calm in the dark, cold cave. He knew the meditation would also help them conserve energy and deal with hunger.

A Daring Rescue Plan

The boys' parents began to worry when their sons did not return home after soccer practice. They heard that the boys had gone to the cave. The parents rushed to the cave's entrance, where they found the boys' bikes and backpacks. Soon hundreds of rescuers were at the cave to try to find the missing boys.

The first thing rescuers did was to start pumping water out of the flooded cave. Teams of Thai divers began diving in the cave's waters to try to find the boys. Strong **currents** and murky water made the going difficult and dangerous. The local rescuers knew they needed help. Twenty Thai Navy SEALs were brought in along with expert divers from around the world. The rain continued, and diving stopped until water could be pumped out of the cave again. Finally, on July 2, two British divers entered the cave and found the boys. They were overjoyed to learn that all 13 of the Wild Boars were okay. The divers told the tired, starving boys that help was on the way and that "You are very strong, very strong."

Getting the Team Out

Divers brought medicine and food to the boys. Several divers and a medic stayed to care for the boys while they waited to be rescued. Pumps kept on pumping water out of the cave. Rescuers knew that time was running out. More rains were on the way—rains that could drown the boys. The oxygen level in the cave was also becoming dangerously low. How would rescuers get the boys out?

After much discussion, the rescue team decided that divers would guide the boys along the underwater route. Because none of the boys had experience diving, each boy would be given medicine to put him into a deep sleep. He would wear a wetsuit and an oxygen mask. Then he would be placed on a stretcher and carried by two divers through the narrow, flooded passageways. Each trip would take about eight hours. It was a very dangerous plan, as proven by the death of a diver who ran out of air while trying to place extra oxygen tanks along the route.

On July 8, a team of **international** divers began bringing out the boys one by one. It took three days to extract all 13 survivors. Each boy was checked by doctors and then sent to a local hospital. After a week, the team left the hospital and returned to their families.

The Wild Boars were trapped for 16 days. Rescuers from Thailand and around the world pulled together to save the boys. The Thai commander of the rescue operation summed up this amazing example of teamwork in this way: "It was a mission undertaken by the whole world, by humanity itself."



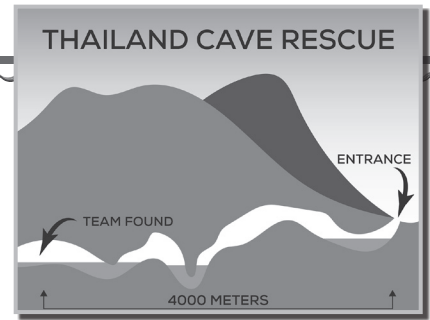
Two rescue divers guide a boy inside a stretcher underwater using a guide rope

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Write your answers.

Include evidence from the passage.

Use another sheet of paper if you need more space.



1. How did the Wild Boars become trapped in the Tham Luang Nang Non cave? _____

2. Why did Coach Ek teach the boys how to meditate? _____

3. True or false? Someone told the boys' parents that the team was trapped in the cave. _____

4. How do you know your answer to question 3 is correct? _____

5. Why was the approach of more rain so dangerous for the trapped boys? _____

6. What other danger did the boys face as they waited to be rescued? _____

7. Write the letter of each matching definition.

_____ ledge (paragraph 2)

_____ conserve (paragraph 3)

_____ murky (paragraph 5)

_____ expert (paragraph 5)

_____ medic (paragraph 6)

_____ extract (paragraph 8)

_____ humanity (paragraph 9)

a. someone with a special skill or knowledge in a particular area

b. cloudy

c. a flat rock surface that sticks out from a cliff

d. remove

e. person engaged in medical work

f. all people

g. to prevent the waste of

8. Why do you think people from other countries risked their lives to save the boys? _____

9. How do you think the experience of being trapped in the cave changed the boys and their coach? _____
