

## Athlete spends 500 days in underground cave

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An elite athlete has just emerged from spending a record-breaking 500 days alone in a cave in Spain. Beatriz Flamini, 50, is an extreme mountaineer. She participated in a scientific study to examine the effects of extreme isolation and deprivation on physical and mental health. She had to live in solitude in a cave 70 metres deep. She embarked on the solitary endeavour on the 20th of November 2021 and emerged from her subterranean abode last Friday. After resurfacing, she was given health check-ups by a doctor and psychologist. Rather than have a shower, she faced inquisitive reporters in a press conference, in which she briefly explained the past 16 months.

Ms Flamini was beaming as she told journalists that time had flown by. She said she was surprised when scientists came to tell her the 500 days had ended. She had been constantly monitored by psychologists and cave experts, but had no contact with anyone else. She lost track of time and all perception of time after day 65 "because it was always four in the morning". She explained her attitude, saying: "The most important thing is being very consistent....I lived up to my commitment to living in a cave for 500 days." She put her success down to being able to "get on very well with myself". She did admit to having occasional cravings for roast chicken.

Sources: [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) / [yahoo.com](https://www.yahoo.com) / [Aljazeera.com](https://www.aljazeera.com)

### Writing

We should all spend long periods of time alone to think about life. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

elite / athlete / cave / mountaineer / isolation / deprivation / solitary / check-up / time / psychologists / perception / commitment / success / cravings / roast chicken

### True / False

- 1) An athlete trained for 500 days in a cave for a race. T / F
- 2) The athlete was a 50-year-old mountaineer. T / F
- 3) The cave the athlete spent 500 days in was 70 metres underground. T / F
- 4) The first thing the athlete did upon resurfacing was have a shower. T / F
- 5) The athlete had counted down the end to the 500 days. T / F
- 6) The athlete always got up at 4am when she was in the cave. T / F
- 7) She said she got on well with herself. T / F
- 8) The athlete lived on roast chicken while she was in the cave. T / F

### Synonym Match

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

- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <b>participated</b> | a. grinning       |
| 2. <b>isolation</b>    | b. awareness      |
| 3. <b>abode</b>        | c. momentarily    |
| 4. <b>inquisitive</b>  | d. longing        |
| 5. <b>briefly</b>      | e. responsibility |
| 6. <b>beaming</b>      | f. home           |
| 7. <b>experts</b>      | g. took part      |
| 8. <b>perception</b>   | h. solitariness   |
| 9. <b>commitment</b>   | i. specialists    |
| 10. <b>craving</b>     | j. curious        |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How do you feel when you go into a cave?
- c) What's the longest time you could spend alone?
- d) Are there any good things to being isolated?
- e) Do you get on well with yourself?
- f) What do you have occasional cravings for?
- g) What do you think of roast chicken?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the elite athlete?

## Phrase Match

- |                                      |                      |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. An elite                          | a. had flown by      |
| 2. extreme isolation and             | b. endeavour         |
| 3. She had to live                   | c. for roast chicken |
| 4. She embarked on the solitary      | d. of time           |
| 5. she faced inquisitive             | e. deprivation       |
| 6. she told journalists that time    | f. to my commitment  |
| 7. She had been constantly monitored | g. athlete           |
| 8. She lost track                    | h. reporters         |
| 9. I lived up                        | i. by psychologists  |
| 10. having occasional cravings       | j. in solitude       |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of caves?
- What's the longest time you've spent alone?
- What happens to people who are isolated from everything?
- How would isolation affect your mental health?
- How long could you spend in a cave?
- What would you do if you spent 500 days alone?
- What would you miss if you spent 500 days in a cave?
- What's the first thing you would do after being isolated?

## Spelling

- extreme isolation and opadertivin
- She embarked on the tsriyaol endeavour
- emerged from her aeurebstnarn abode
- a doctor and gtyhisclospo
- she faced niivqiesut reporters
- in a press corefcneen
- constantly mrnitedoo
- lost track of time and all coipepretn
- She explained her atidtuuet
- being very incssotnte
- I lived up to my ctnomimmte
- occasional inarcgvs for roast chicken

### Answers – Synonym Match

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

## Role Play

### Role A – Clear Thinking

You think clear thinking is the best thing about solitude. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least attractive of these (and why): lots of sleep, no social media or knowing yourself.

### Role B – Lots of Sleep

You think lots of sleep is the best thing about solitude. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least attractive of these (and why): clear thinking, no social media or knowing yourself.

### Role C – No Social Media

You think no social media is the best thing about solitude. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least attractive of these (and why): lots of sleep, clear thinking or knowing yourself.

### Role D – Knowing Yourself

You think knowing yourself is the best thing about solitude. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least attractive of these (and why): lots of sleep, no social media or clear thinking.

## Speaking – Solitude

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to come from solitude at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| • Clear thinking | • Knowing yourself |
| • Book reading   | • No social media  |
| • No stress      | • Problem solving  |
| • Lots of sleep  | • Creativity       |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	F	5	F	6	F	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.