

Living underground

More than 60 million people around the world live underground. Some underground houses and communities are new, modern developments, others have been here for hundreds of years. Let's visit three underground towns and find out about how people live beneath the ground.

Gaudix, Spain

There are more than two thousand underground houses in Gaudix, Spain, and some of them are more than one thousand years old. Some of the residents are farmers, and they live with their animals in these cave houses. Many of the cave houses here are light and bright, with high ceilings and white walls. In the past, the cave houses were for poorer people, but today many people want to buy a cave house and most houses come with electricity, internet access and new kitchens and bathrooms!



Matmata, Tunisia

The underground houses in Matmata, Tunisia, first became famous when people saw them in the film Star Wars in 1977. But people have lived here for many hundreds of years. The houses are very unusual. The builders dug out a big hole in the ground and then built houses into the sides of the hold. The houses are cool in the summer and warm in the cold winters. Today, few people live here, as many families have moved to more modern houses in the cities.



Coober Pedy, Australia

People have lived in underground houses in Coober Pedy since 1915. They came here to mine for opals. It was very hot outside, so they built underground houses, which are dark and cool. The houses haven't got any windows, but they've got electricity, water, and the internet. If you want a new bookcase, a shelf or even a new room, you can dig a hole in your wall. More than one thousand people live under the ground here. The most famous house in Coober Pedy is Faye's Underground Home. It's got a kitchen, three bedrooms, a living room and a small swimming pool!



Glossary

- development:** a piece of land with new buildings on it
- dug:** past simple of dig – to make a hole in the ground
- mine:** make deep holes in the ground to find gold, silver or gems
- opal:** a type of precious stone used in jewellery

Read the article again and answer the following questions.

1. For each question, choose the correct answer.

		Guadix	Matmata	Cooper Pedy
1.	Where have people lived for less than 150 years?			
2.	Which place will movie fans know?			
3.	Which homes do not have a lot of modern equipment?			
4.	Which homes have tall rooms?			
5.	Which place does not have a large population?			
6.	Where can people easily make their homes larger?			
7.	Which place is now becoming more popular?			

2. Mention TWO underground houses that were primarily used by workers.

3. Look at the section about underground houses in Matmata, Tunisia. Complete the table below with one piece of evidence from the article to support each statement.

	Evidence
These underground houses help the inhabitants cope with harsh weather conditions.	
Matmata is featured in several popular films.	

4. How are these underground houses being modernised? Give one example.

5. Which of these houses would you like to live in? Give a reason based on what you have read.
