

Where bats live

Lesson

3

What we will learn this week:

- What a roost is
- Types of bat roosts
- When bats use different roosts
- What a bat is looking for from a home




Hi again friends, its Spike here.

In this lesson I want to talk to you about where my bat friends and I live. Can you guess? Maybe you have seen a bat living somewhere near your home? Where was it? In a tree? A cave? A building? Were the bats awake? Were they alone? Were they upside down? Let's find out!

If you see this symbol:



you may need help from an adult.



Don't forget, the pencil symbol means it's your turn to do an activity!

We've included all the **new words** in the word list at the end!

You will need :

- ✓ Coloured pencils
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ Sellotape
- ✓ String



1 What is a roost?

A **roost** is what we call a bat's home, it's where a bat lives and rests. (Birds have nests, bats have roosts.)

Everyone knows bats fly at night, and sleep in the day, so to get a good day's sleep, we need a home that's dark and quiet and safe.



We also need a good hunting ground – somewhere to find lots of yummy food. Bats can hunt anywhere they find food, which can be a forest, a field, in a village, along a river... where else can a bat find tasty insects or yummy fruit to eat?

Just like you humans who like to shop local, we bats like it when our hunting ground isn't too far away from our roost. We also need a safe way to get there!



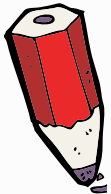
So to summarise, bats need three things to live a healthy life:

- 1 A safe place to live and find shelter (our roost!)
- 2 Plenty of food
- 3 A safe way to get between where we live and where we feed

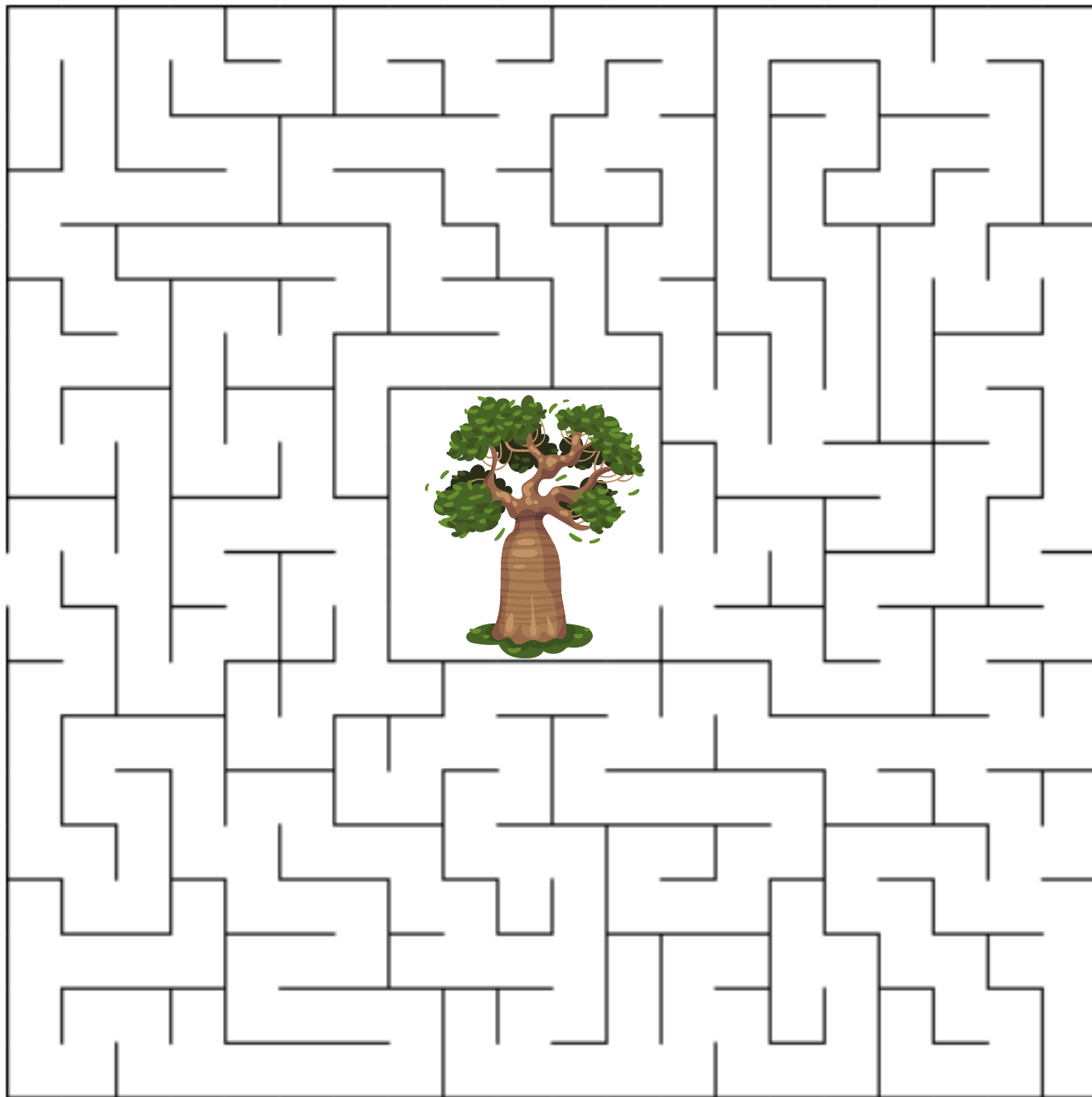


See, we aren't so different, you and I!

Over to you!



Activity 1:
Can you complete this maze and help the bat find its roost?



start here!



Help me get home!



2

Types of bat roosts

**Bats can live in a wide variety of places!
And different species prefer different homes.**

Some bats love to sleep in caves, suspended upside down from the ceiling. My friend Bella, who is a Striped leaf-nosed bat, lives in a cave



We often group together in "**colonies**", sometimes in groups of thousands! Bats love company, and we often stick close to the rest of our family. Other bats have got used to living close to humans, in buildings.



Nyenyenzi is a Mauritian tomb bat and lives in **tombs** but will also live in **caves** or **buildings**. Maybe you have seen a bat in a house? In summer, attics are nice and hot, perfect for raising bat babies. You can also find bats under roof tiles, in the holes between bricks, or even in your garage or cellar. The smallest bats, such as the tiny pipistrelles, can fit in a space the size of our little finger! Bats often take up residence in old unused barns or buildings...or even old tunnels... (if no one is using it, why not?)

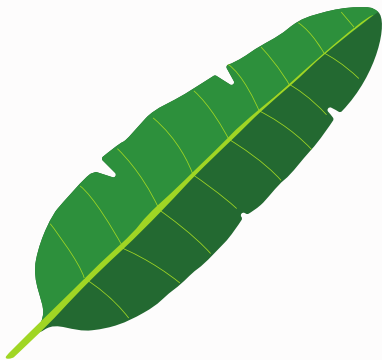
Some bats only like to roost in **trees**, like birds! Logan and his mum Bonggi are Botswanan long-eared bats and live in a cavity in a tree trunk.





Some small species roost in holes made by animals such as woodpeckers, or under unstuck bark.

In warm climates like in southern Africa, bigger bats like *Eidolon* (the straw-coloured fruit bat) hang upside down on the branches. If you are lucky, you can see them hanging out on the branches in broad daylight! Bonus for fruit bats: roosts can also double up as restaurants if the tree they are roosting in happens to be a juicy mango tree!



And then there are all the places that humans might not think of but bats do, like the inside of bamboo canes and termite mounds! One of my friends is a Banana pipistrelle, can you guess where he roosts?... No not in between the bananas but tucked inside the tube made by the rolled up leaves of the banana trees!

Sometimes bats have also been found in even stranger places like teapots and coat stands, but these aren't what we would consider a typical roost.



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know? Unlike birds, bats cannot build! They don't make nests or burrows.

They always take advantage of structures, or holes that already exist. So don't worry about bats destroying wood, or your roof!



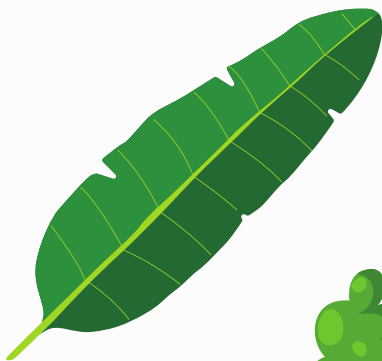
Activity 2:
Which of these places do you think bats roost?
Put a tick in the boxes next to the right answers

Over to you!

Trees



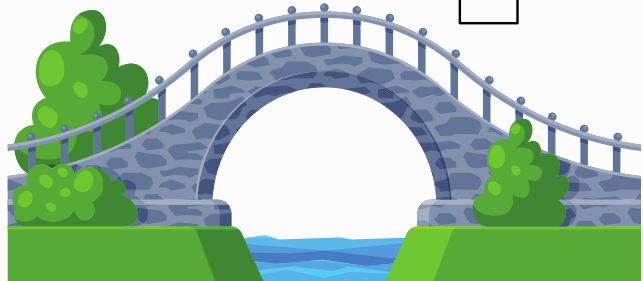
Banana leaves



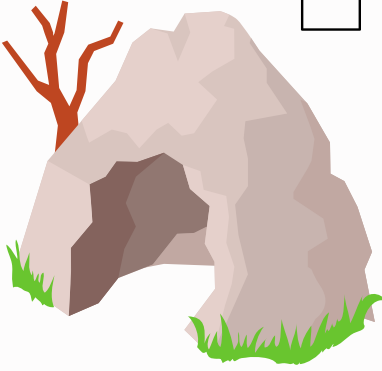
Cars



Bridges



Caves



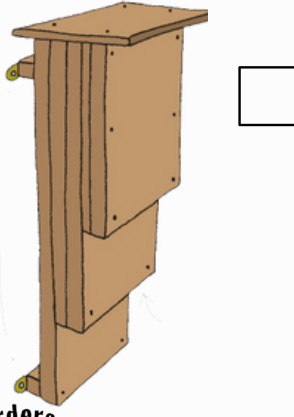
Houses



In the sea



In a bat box



Mines



In your bed



3 Different needs at different times

Bats can have different needs at different times of the year (and also during a season or even during a day). Some species of bats, when pregnant, like to snuggle up in roosts to keep warm. And once the babies are born they need a nice warm roost to keep warm too whilst mum is out looking for food. These types of roosts are called **maternity roosts** and are where lots of female bats and their babies live together.



In colder climates, where winter temperatures mean it is too cold to fly and there isn't enough food, some bats will **hibernate**. This means that their breathing and heart rate slow down and they sleep all winter. For this, they need somewhere cool and quiet. Which other animals do you know that hibernate?



Other bats will move to a completely new area where the weather is warmer and there is a lot more food to eat. This is called migration. Did you know, that every year the biggest mammal migration in the world takes place? 10 million straw-coloured fruit bats, like *Eidolon* here fly together to Zambia to feed on the mango trees.

In southern Africa, little is known about whether some bats hibernate or not. But scientists think that some of them go into "torpor" during the dry season when there is less food and the nights are colder. This means that they sleep more, but not as deeply as during hibernation.



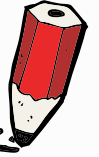
Sadly, one of the biggest problems that bats face is losing their homes and hunting grounds (scientists call this "habitat destruction"). This is why we bats need friends, to look after them us / speak up for us and help protect places that we use as home, and the places where we find our food

Activity 3: Make a home for bats!

Cut out this picture of Spike, and colour him in!

Find a place to hang your bats up – this could be in your bedroom, outside in a tree, in your garage or shed. Why not hang a piece of string up and hang your bats from there. Maybe take this lesson plan to school and get everyone in your class to make one – imagine how amazing the ceiling of your classroom would look! Use a small bit of tape to hang your bat up.

Over to you!



Decorate your bat roost – how about hanging some pretend cobwebs or drawing some food for the bat to eat!

Look after your bat(s) and new bat roost!



Glossary

(words we have learned today!)

Colony - a group of bats that all live together.

Hibernation - when some animals (including some bats) have long periods of deep sleep during cold weather.

Maternity roost - a place where female bats gather to give birth and raise their young.

Roost - a bat's home - there are many different kinds.



I hope you learned a lot today!
See you next week, to learn all about
where bats live!

Don't forget; the solutions to the
activities will be available on the Bats
without Borders Facebook page!