

Caves

- Cave Definition
- Speleology
- Cave Formation
- Stratigraphy and Stratum
- Stalactites, Stalagmites, and Columns



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1



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2

Caves



- They don't have to be large enough to stand in



Caves

- ---
- "Cave" can also refer to much smaller openings such as sea caves, rock shelters, and grottos





A sea cave formed by the action of the sea eroding the rocks.

A rock shelter formed when softer rocks were eroded away from under more durable rock.



A grotto is any type of natural or artificial cave that is associated with human use.

Speleology (spee-lee-aa-luh-jee)

- _____
- Note: Spelunking is the sport of cave exploration... sometimes called 'caving'



Cave Formation

- To understand cave formation, we must first understand sediment formation

Recall:

- _____
- _____
- _____

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Deposition

- _____
 - I.e., if the particle is too heavy or moving too slowly, it will fall out of the fluid and settle on the ground
- This is known as the null-point hypothesis
 - i.e. The point where no motion takes place

Stratigraphy

- The deposition of sediment usually happens in layers

- _____

- _____



A layer of sediment is often called a 'bed'. Beds can be anywhere from a few centimeters to a few meters in thickness.

Stratums



3

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Example: While the Earth's crust is under water, chert can be formed from the siliceous skeletons of small protozoa... or limestone could be made from seashells. Then, as the lithosphere shifts, the sea could dry up and become land. Then, ...

Stratums



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Now, Back to Caves



4

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- _____

- Once the sediments have all become layers of rock, the cave formation process can begin



5

Caves

- Water eventually seeps into cracks in the rock
- Since the water was exposed to carbon
- _____
- When the water dries up, it leaves a cavern behind



Speleothems (speleo-thems)

■ _____

■ The two most common cave formations are:

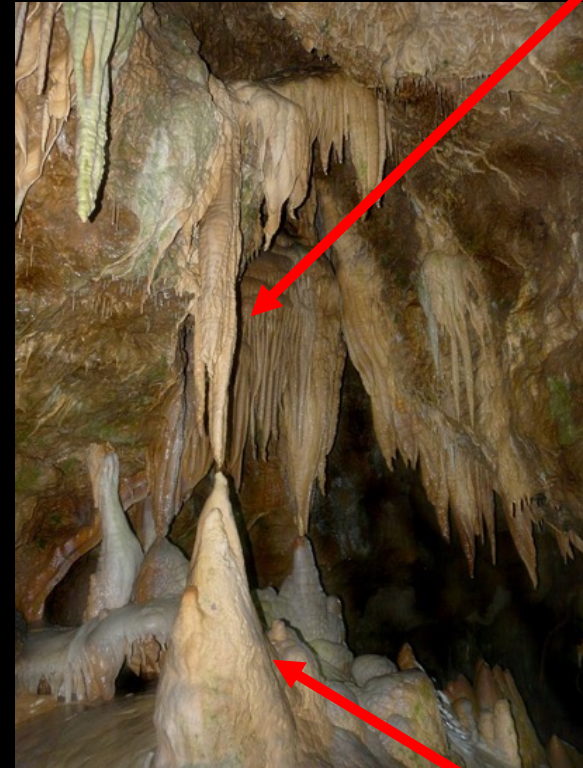
1. _____

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Stalagmites and Stalactites

- Stalagmites and stalactites are most commonly formed in limestone solutional caves



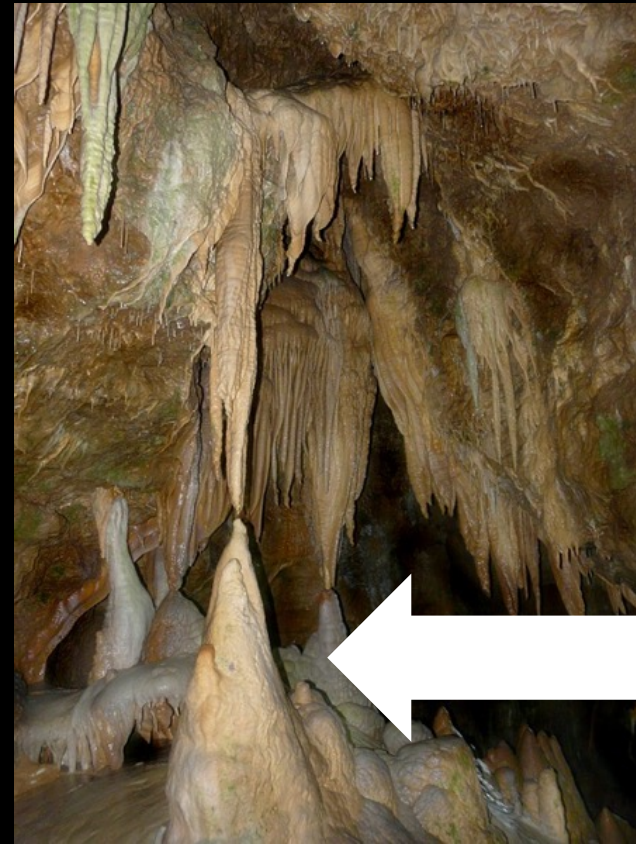
Stalactites

Stalagmites

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Stalagmites

- When mineral rich water drops onto the floor of a cave, it can leave a deposit there as well



Stalagmite

Stalagmites are usually formed under stalactites since this is where the mineral rich water is dripping.

Columns



- These two objects have now become one thing, usually called a column or a pillar

Column

