

# Module 8: Weathering, Erosion, and Groundwater






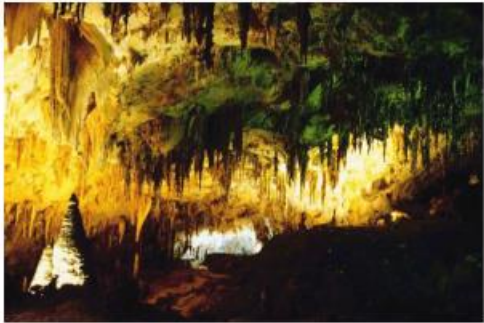
## Topic 2 Content: Cave Features Notes

### Introduction

#### Cave Features

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In this activity, click each of the thumbnail images below to learn more about the features found in areas of caves and karst topography.



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### Topic 2 Content: Cave Features Notes

#### Stalactite

##### Cave Features

##### Stalactite

After rainwater infiltrates the limestone bedrock to create a cavern, it carries away dissolved limestone. The water can reach the ceiling of a cavern and then begin to drip into the cavern. Similar to the process that produces icicles in the winter time, the dripping water can produce mineral deposits on the ceiling that slowly “grow” into limestone rock features that hang from the ceiling. These features are known as stalactites. Remember that stalactites hang from the ceiling by looking for the letter *c* in the spelling of the word stalactite.



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#### Stalagmite

#### Cave Features

#### Stalagmite



After the water drips from the stalactite, the droplet will fall to the ground of the cavern. The exact process that formed the stalactite on the ceiling will begin to occur on the floor of the cavern and form stalagmites. When distinguishing stalactites from stalagmites, remember the **g** found in the spelling of the word stands for ground.



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### Topic 2 Content: Cave Features Notes

#### Column

#### Cave Features

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When many years pass and countless water drops fall from the ceiling of the cavern, it is possible for a stalactite to extend downward and connect with a growing stalagmite. The newly formed feature is called a column.



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#### Flowstone

#### Cave Features

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Water flowing down the side of a cave wall will create flowstone. Flowstone is a feature created by deposition. As the water flows down the side of the cave, it leaves behind deposits of calcite. Over time, the calcite forms sheet-like formations.



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#### Sinkhole

#### Cave Features

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When the weight of the cave or cavern ceiling is no longer supported, it will collapse and form a sinkhole. This happens commonly in areas of karst topography. While the process that forms a cavern can take thousands of years, the formation of a sinkhole can occur in only a few moments. These sinkholes can present significant danger to surrounding communities.



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