

# SPELEOTHEM FLASH CARDS

**GRADE LEVEL:** Elementary / Intermediate

**SUBJECT:** Science (Unifying Concepts, Physical)

**Related Colorado Content Standards:** SC(1-6).4

**TIME:** 30 Minutes

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will practice learning the names of cave formations.

**MATERIALS:**

- Copies of Student Worksheets #1 and #2
- Index cards or paper cut to fit
- Scissors
- Glue

**BACKGROUND:**

Speleothem is the name given to any cave formation inside of a cave. Stalactites are speleothems that hang down from the cave ceiling, and stalagmites are speleothems that rise up from the cave floor.

Formation of any speleothem takes a long period of time. As each drop of water leaves a tiny amount of mineral residue on a cave ceiling, floor, wall or other feature, it adds to speleothem growth. When a speleothem is broken, it will not be replaced within our lifetime, if ever!

Therefore, people should be extremely careful while exploring caves.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Hand out the student worksheet with all the formations and descriptions.
2. Have the students cut out the pictures and information and glue them on to the index cards.
3. Students can begin to quiz themselves and quiz other students in pairs.

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## Student Worksheet #1



**STALACTITES** - grow down from the ceiling. The deposition of calcite occurs around the outside of the structure, slowly widening and lengthening it.



**CAVE CORAL** - (also known as "popcorn") consists of small knobby clusters, formed by seeping water, apparently from between the crystals.



**BACON RIND** - forms on slanted ceilings. It is a drapery that has bands of color which make it look like a large piece of bacon. The minerals, in addition to calcite, are usually iron oxides.



**FLOWSTONE** - forms when water flows down walls, over floors, and over older formations. The layers of calcite build up, often looking like frozen waterfalls.

*Illustrations adapted from Pennsylvania's Caves & Caverns, Lincoln Caverns, PA*

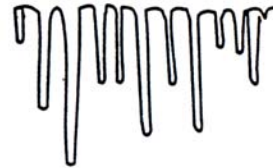
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### Student Worksheet #2

**STALAGMITES** - rise up from the muddy floor and are often, but not always, formed by the dripping water from the stalactites above.



**SODA STRAWS** - grow down from the ceiling. They are thin-walled hollow tubes, about the diameter of a drop of water. The water runs inside them and deposits rings of calcite around their tips.



**HELICITITES** - form on the ceilings, walls, or floors. They are small, twisted structures that seem to defy the laws of gravity. They are formed by seeping water and project at varying angles.



**COLUMNS** - form as stalactites and stalagmites grow together, or when one of them grows all the way to the floor or ceiling.

