Name: _____ Date: _____

Slow Drips Build Stone Icicles in Caves

Circle group

Some caves have pointed rocks that look like icicles. The ones on the ceiling are stalactites. The ones that rise from the floor are stalagmites. Dripping water makes both.

Rain soaks into the ground. It picks up tiny bits of minerals from the rock. Then it seeps into a cave. A drop hangs on the ceiling. Some of the water dries into the air. A speck of mineral stays behind. Then the drop falls.

Drip after drip, the specks pile up. A stalactite grows down from the ceiling. Drops hit the floor and leave minerals there too. A stalagmite grows up. If both keep growing, they may join and make a column.

This is very slow. A stalactite may grow just a tiny bit in a hundred years. Visitors should not touch cave rocks. The oils on hands can stop the growth.

Questions

1. What are the pointed rocks on a cave ceiling called?

_____

_____

2. What does rainwater pick up from the rock?

_____

_____

3. What stays behind when water dries into the air?

_____

_____

4. What may happen if a stalactite and a stalagmite keep growing?

_____

_____

5. Why should visitors not touch cave rocks?

_____

_____

6. Why is an old stalactite likely to be longer than a young one?

_____

_____

Words to know

stalactites: cave rocks that hang down from the ceiling
minerals: natural solid materials found in rocks and water
ceiling: the top inside surface of a room or cave

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Slow Drips Build Stone Icicles in Caves

Triangle group

Some caves are full of pointed rocks that look like icicles. The ones that hang from the ceiling are called stalactites. The ones that rise from the floor are called stalagmites. Both are made by dripping water.

Rainwater soaks into the ground and picks up tiny bits of minerals from the rock. Later it seeps into a cave and collects on the ceiling as a drop. The drop hangs there for a moment. Some of the water dries into the air and leaves a speck of mineral behind. Then the drop falls.

Drip after drip, the specks pile up. A stalactite grows downward from the ceiling, one speck at a time. The drops that hit the floor leave minerals there too. Over time a stalagmite grows upward to meet them. If both keep growing, they may join and make a column.

This work is very, very slow. A stalactite may grow only a tiny bit in a hundred years. Visitors are asked not to touch cave formations, because the oils on hands can stop the growth.

Questions

1. What are the pointed rocks that hang from a cave ceiling called?

_____

_____

2. What does rainwater pick up from the rock in the ground?

_____

_____

3. What is left behind when some of the water dries into the air?

_____

_____

4. What may happen if a stalactite and a stalagmite keep growing?

_____

_____

5. Why are visitors asked not to touch cave formations?

_____

_____

6. Why is a very old stalactite likely to be longer than a young one?

_____

_____

Words to know

stalactites: cave rocks that hang down from the ceiling
minerals: natural solid materials found in rocks and water
ceiling: the top inside surface of a room or cave
formations: shapes made by nature over time

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Slow Drips Build Stone Icicles in Caves

Square group

Certain caves are filled with pointed formations that resemble icicles made of stone. Those that hang from the ceiling are called stalactites, while those that rise from the floor are called stalagmites. Both are created by dripping water.

Rainwater soaks into the ground and dissolves tiny amounts of minerals from the rock it passes through. Eventually it seeps into a cave and gathers on the ceiling as a single drop. The drop clings there for a moment, and some of its water evaporates into the cave air, leaving a minute speck of mineral behind. Then the drop falls.

Drip after drip, those specks accumulate. A stalactite slowly lengthens downward from the ceiling, one speck at a time. The drops that splash onto the floor deposit minerals there as well, and over time a stalagmite builds upward to meet them. If both continue to grow, they may eventually join and form a column.

This process is astonishingly slow, and a stalactite may grow only a tiny amount in a hundred years. Visitors are asked not to touch cave formations, because the natural oils on human hands can interfere with their growth.

Questions

1. What are the pointed formations that hang from a cave ceiling called?

_____

_____

2. What does rainwater dissolve from the rock it passes through?

_____

_____

3. What is left behind when some of the water evaporates into the cave air?

_____

_____

4. What may happen if a stalactite and a stalagmite both continue to grow?

_____

_____

5. Why are visitors asked not to touch cave formations?

_____

_____

6. Why would a very old stalactite probably be longer than a young one?

_____

_____

Words to know

stalactites: cave rocks that hang down from the ceiling
minerals: natural solid materials found in rocks and water
ceiling: the top inside surface of a room or cave
formations: shapes made by nature over time

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Slow Drips Build Stone Icicles in Caves

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Slow Drips Build Stone Icicles in Caves

Easier · 142 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.1

1. Stalactites.
2. Tiny bits of minerals.
3. A speck of mineral.
4. They may join and make a column.
5. The oils on hands can stop them from growing.
6. It has had more time to grow from the drips.

Triangle: Slow Drips Build Stone Icicles in Caves

This passage · 176 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.7

1. Stalactites.
2. Tiny bits of minerals.
3. A speck of mineral.
4. They may join and make a column.
5. The oils on hands can stop them from growing.
6. It has had more time for drips to add minerals.

Square: Slow Drips Build Stone Icicles in Caves

Harder · 190 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.6

1. Stalactites.
2. Tiny amounts of minerals.
3. A minute speck of mineral.
4. They may join and form a column.
5. The natural oils on hands can interfere with their growth.
6. It has had far more time for drips to add minerals.