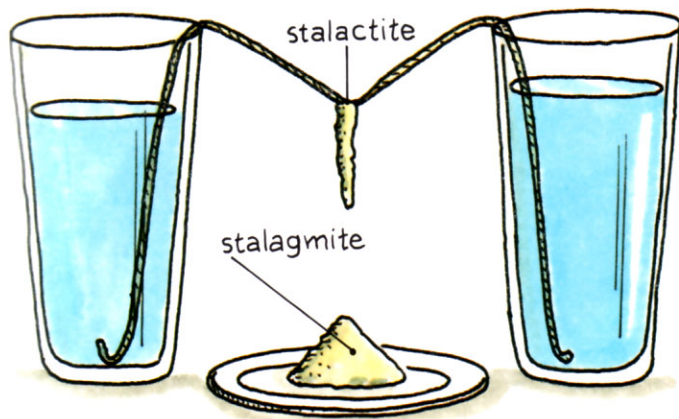


What causes stalactites and stalagmites?

You will need:

- ◆ epsom salts (from a chemist) ◆ a spoon
- ◆ 2 glass tumblers filled with warm water
- ◆ a plate ◆ thick string, 50 cm long
- ◆ thin string, 50 cm long

- 1 Dissolve as much epsom salts as you can into the two glasses of warm water.
- 2 Hang the thick string between the two glasses, making sure the ends are in both solutions.



- 3 Put the plate under the lowest part of the string.
- 4 What do you think will happen if you use the thinner string? Try colouring the solution with food dye.

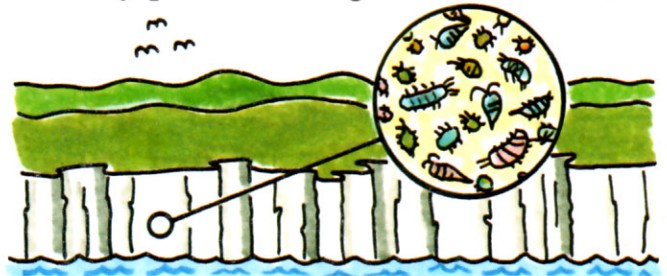
Stalactites and **stalagmites** are formed when water containing dissolved limestone drips from a cave roof. Some of the water evaporates, leaving behind a tiny layer of limestone. Stalagmites build upwards from cave floors. Stalactites hang from cave ceilings.



These stalactites and stalagmites have taken thousands of years to form.

How long does sedimentary rock take to form?

Chalk, a white sedimentary rock, was laid down about 100 million years ago, in many places throughout the world.



Chalk is the slow build-up of the skeletons of tiny sea creatures. About 1 cm depth of chalk was laid down every 1,000 years.