Caving terms (more detailed)

**Abseil:** Descent of a rope.

**Active cave / streamway:** Cave passage with a flowing stream.

**Aven:** A vertical shaft as seen from below.

**Bed:** Horizontal band of limestone.

**Bedding plane:** Weakness or gap between beds.

**Belay:** A fixed point to attach rope. Also describes the act of controlling a rope attached to another caver to prevent a fall.

**Boulder choke:** Fallen rocks obscuring a passage.

**Calcite:** A form of calcium carbonate that is the main mineral from which cave formations are made.

**Cavern:** A very large cave chamber.

**Crawl:** A cave passage with a low roof that necessitates crawling.

**Curtain:** A sheet-shaped stalactite.

**Decorations:** Another term for cave formations.

**Duck:** Place where the cave roof almost reaches a water surface.

**Flowstone:** Calcite formations resembling a frozen waterfall.

**Formations:** Features such as stalactites and stalagmites formed by the deposition of calcite. Also called speleothems.

**Helictites:** Stalactites that grow in convoluted shapes

**Jumar:** A device used to ascend a rope. Also termed an ascender.

**Karst:** A descriptive term for typical limestone landscapes.

**Pitch:** A vertical shaft requiring a ladder or rope to descend.

**Pothole:** A vertical cave.

**Rift:** A cave passage formed at a fault.

**Shakehole:** A surface depression resulting from the collapse of soil and rock. underneath. May indicate the presence of a cave beneath.
**Shaft**: A vertical cave pitch. A shaft that opens to the ground surface is also called a pothole.

**Sink / Swallow hole / Swallet**: Where surface water enters the ground.

**Speleothem**: Another term for a cave formation such as a stalactite.

**SRT**: Abbreviation for Single Rope Technique where a caver uses a rope to access vertical pitches in a cave rather than a wire ladder.

**Stalactite**: A long thin cave formation hanging from the roof, usually made from calcite.

**Stalagmite**: A cave formation growing upwards from the ground.

**Straw**: A thin hollow stalactite.

**Squeeze**: A short section of very constricted cave passage.

**Sump**: A flooded cave passage.

**Traverse**: Moving horizontally along a cave wall.