



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.