Hidden beauty

Brrrr! A cave is a damp, dark, chilly place. However, if you are lucky enough to visit a large cave that has been lit and opened to visitors, you'll discover incredibly beautiful shapes in the rocks.

Water damage

Over the course of thousands of years, a constant flow of water will eat away at a solid area of rock. After 100,000 years, this may have formed a small cave, which will continue to grow.

Build it up

Cave formations can be amazingly complicated. These slender shapes have built up gradually, as drops of water have deposited traces of a mineral called calcite.

A funny shape

Stalactites hang down while stalagmites grow up. It can take 1,000 years for these formations to grow less than a centimetre.

These volcanic caves were once mined for millstones.

Soft centre

Have you ever eaten a hard sweet with a soft centre? Volcanic caves can form when soft lava pushes on through a hardened outer layer.

The tallest stalagmite in the world is the height of a ten-storey house.