



Cave Wonders

In this activity, you will set up an experiment to “create” a cave formation – including a stalactite and stalagmite – over the course of several weeks.

Materials:

- 2 Plastic Cups
- Bowl/Pan
- String
- Baking Soda (40 – 50 ml)
- Water (approx. 400 ml)

Instructions:

1. Wash the string thoroughly with soap and water. Rinse. (This is to remove the glues that may be used in manufacturing the string.)
2. Heat the water (almost to a boil). Add baking soda. To make a saturated solution, keep adding the baking soda while stirring until no more baking soda dissolves.
3. Space the two cups so that the bowl or pan fits in the space between them. Pour an equal amount of the baking soda and water solution into each of the two cups, and place the ends of the strings in the water.
4. Place the string equally in each cup, until there is only a small “dip” in the string above the centre of the bowl or pan.

It should take about three weeks for any significant “formations” to occur. After three weeks, make more saturated solution and add it to the cups. Encourage students to sketch the apparatus and the developing “formations” on a weekly basis, to create an ongoing record of the process.

