

Name _____

The Magical World of Caves and Karst Landscapes

Short Answer Key

1. Rainwater becomes weakly acidic by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which allows it to react with soluble rock, slowly dissolving it and contributing to cave formation.
2. Stalactites and stalagmites form as mineral-rich water drips from cave walls and ceilings, leaving behind deposits of minerals like calcite. Factors influencing their appearance include the mineral content of the water and the rate of water flow.
3. Sinkholes are depressions in the Earth's surface that occur when the ground above a cave or void collapses, revealing the underground world below. They are caused by the dissolution of soluble rock layers.
4. It is important to explore caves and karst landscapes responsibly to minimize disruption to their delicate formations and ecosystems, as well as to preserve their natural beauty for future generations.
5. One unique characteristic of a cave ecosystem is the absence of sunlight. Organisms in caves have adapted to this darkness and limited resources by developing specialized senses and behaviors.

