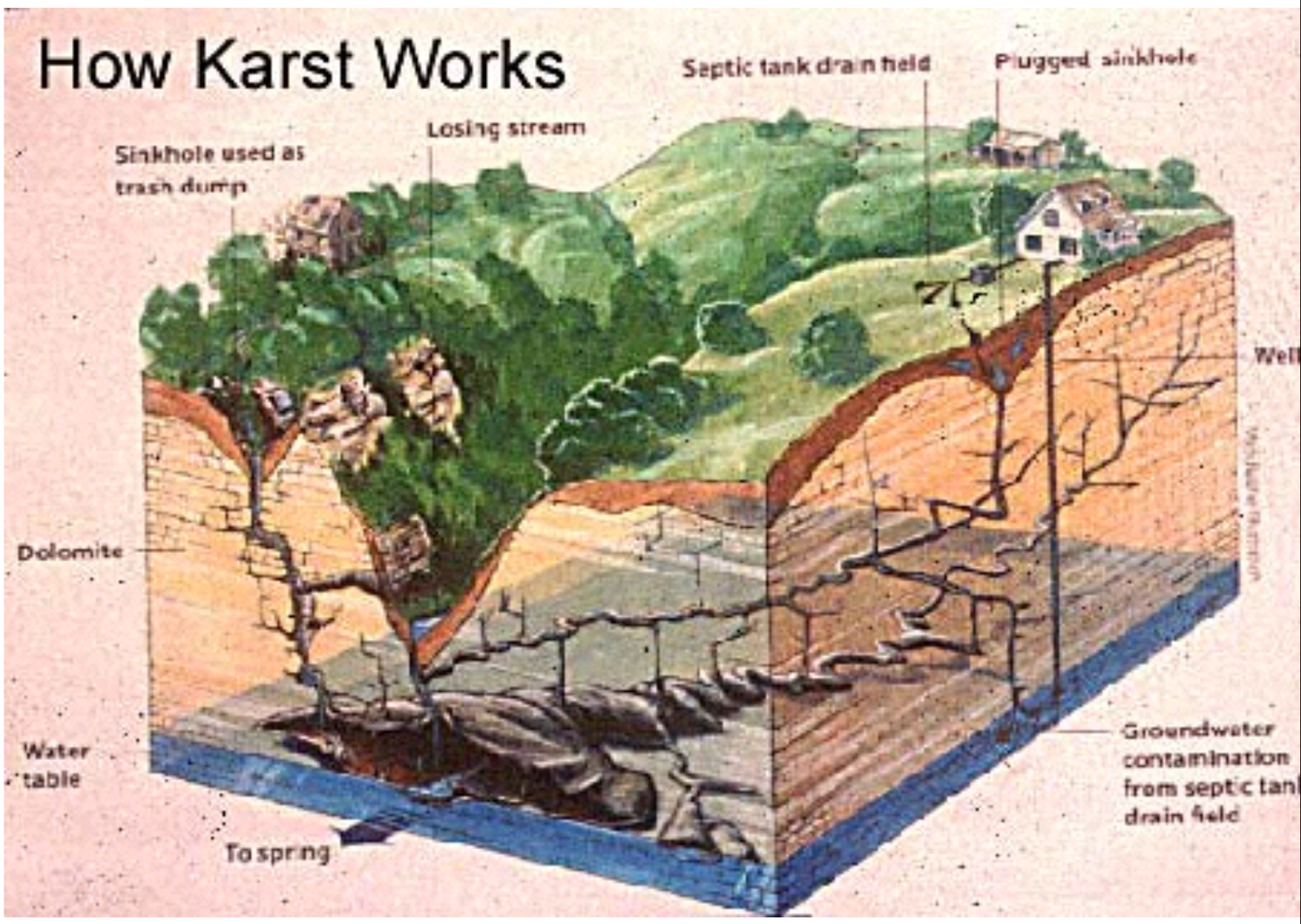
Karst Topography

What is Karst?

- Type of landscape that occurs where there is limestone or dolomite (rocks with calcium carbonate, $CaCO_3$)
- Named after a region in Europe called Kras, Karst a variety of other names.
- Result of Chemical weathering and water erosion

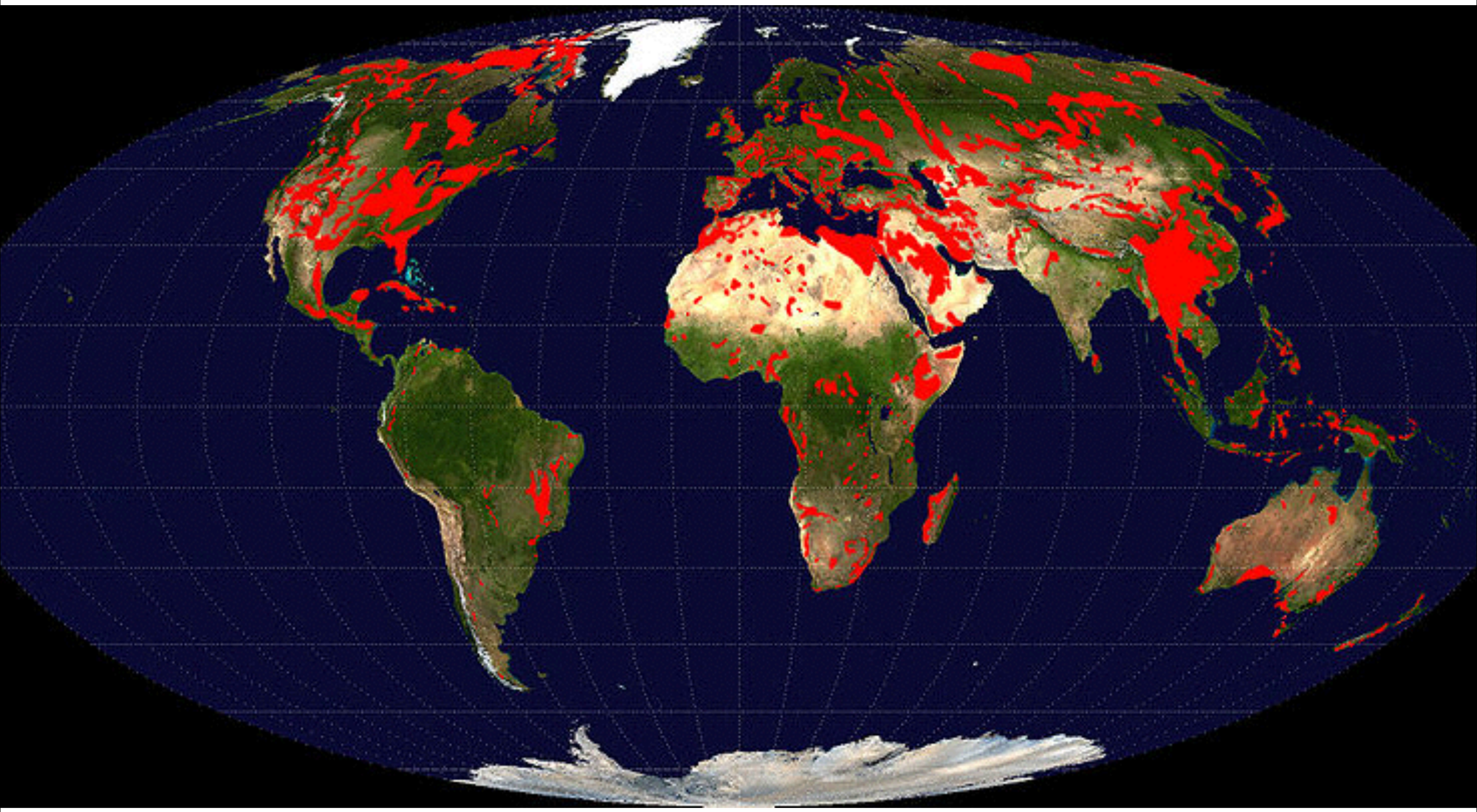
How Does Karst Work?

- Rain falls, mixes with CO_2 in the atmosphere.
- Weak acid rain falls, drips into cracks and can dissolve rock (Chemical weathering).
- Water carries it all away (water erosion)



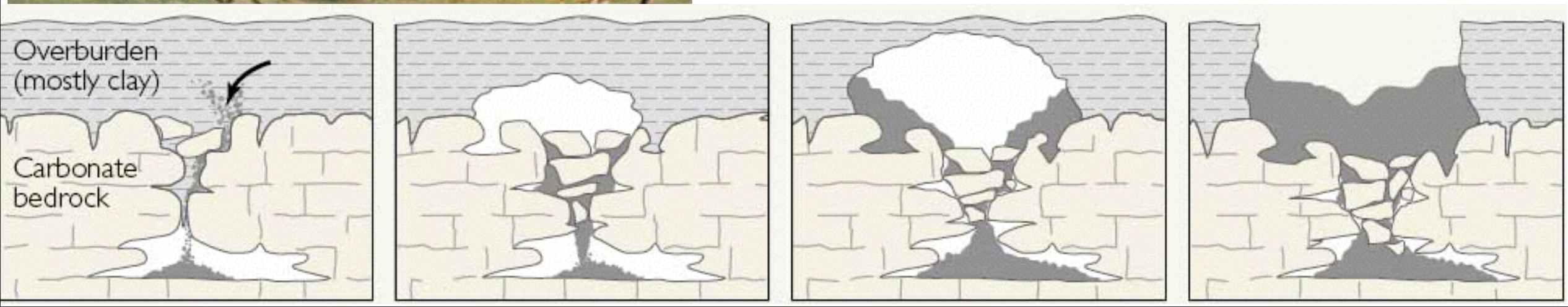
Where is Karst?

- Wherever there is limestone or dolomite!



Sinkholes

- Most Common Karst feature
- stone is weathered and eroded, leaving an empty space that collapses in on itself

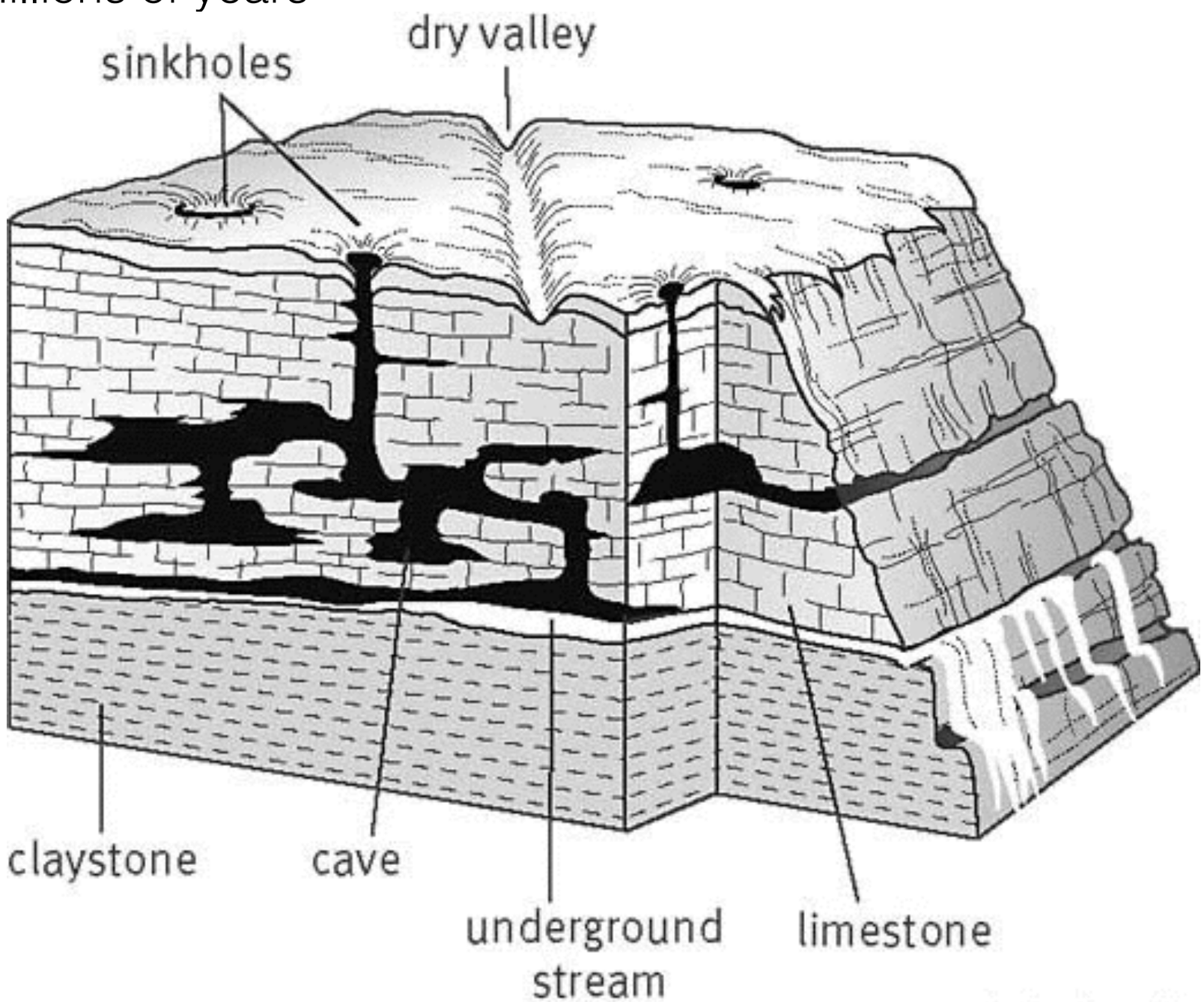


Cenotes

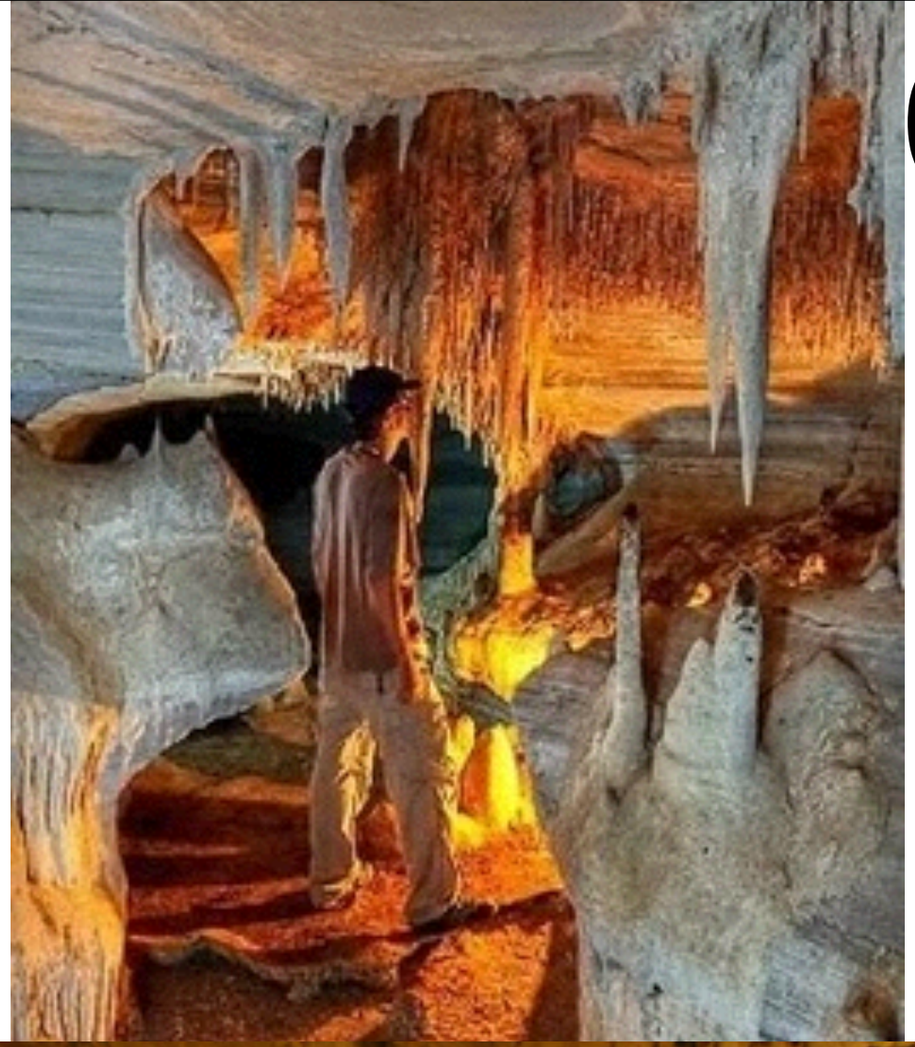
- Cenote is a sinkhole that fills with water (groundwater, ocean water, rainwater)

Caves

- Water sinks into cracks and dissolves larger areas in the rock.
- Carries weathered rock away, leaving open spaces
- Takes Millions of years



Caves



Stalagmites and Stalagtites

- Caused by dripping water that has calcium carbonate dissolved in it
- Slow dripping allows depositing of calcium carbonate in the water over time (thousands of years
- Stalagmites: rises from the floor
- Stalagtite: hangs from ceiling
- When a stalagmite and Stalagtite meet, it forms a column

Limestone Pavements

- Glaciers expose limestone bedrock
- Cracks are widened by acid rain over time

Karst Valleys

- Large amounts of rain cut down valleys and can leave karst towers

Other Landforms