

Cirque [UPSC Geography Notes]

Geography is an important part of the UPSC syllabus. Static topics such as glaciers, glacial landforms, etc. are very important both from both the UPSC prelims and UPSC mains perspectives. In this article, you can read all about the glacial erosional landform Cirque for the [IAS exam](#).

Cirque

A glacier is a moving mass of ice and it forms various landforms during its lifetime. These glacial landforms may be erosional or depositional landforms.

Click on the links in the table below to know more about glacial erosional landforms and glacial depositional landforms.

[Glacial Erosional Landforms](#)

[Glacial Depositional Landforms](#)

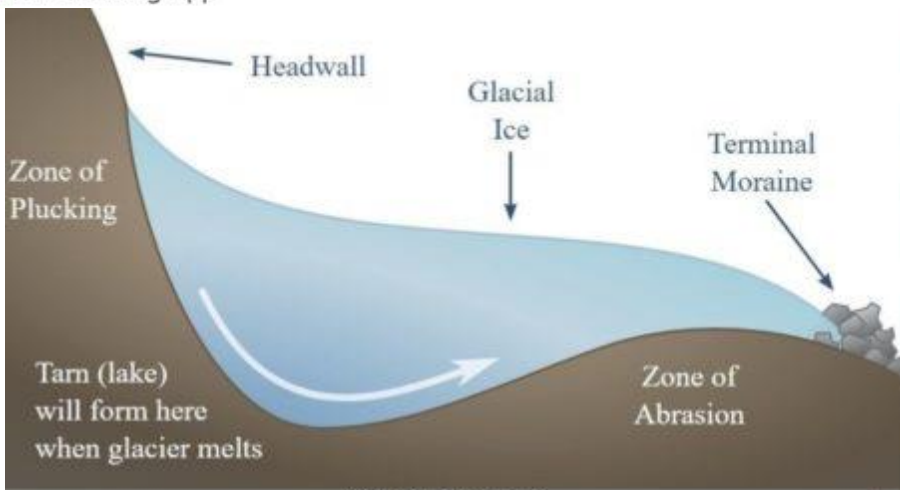
Cirque is a type of glacial erosional landform. It is also known as a corrie.

- They are deep, long and wide troughs or basins with very steep concave to vertically dropping high walls at its head as well as sides.
- A cirque is basically a bowl-shaped depression formed by the erosional activity of a glacier.
- As glaciers can only originate above the snowline, studying the location of present-day cirques provides information on past glaciation patterns and on climate change.

How is a cirque formed?

Corries or cirques are mountain valley heads that have been shaped into deep hollows by the erosion of small glaciers. They are frequently found on the heads of a glacial valley. Accumulated ice sheets when they move down a mountain, cut the land to form these cirques.

Once the glacier melts, water will fill up the cirques and these are then called **cirque lakes**. They are also called tarns or corrie lakes.



Is a corrie the same as a cirque?

Yes, they are the same. In Welsh, cirques or corries are called cwm.

Corrie Features

Corries can cause the below erosional features:

1. **Arête:** An arete is a steep-sided ridge that is formed when two adjacent cirques erode towards each other.
2. **Pyramidal peak:** A pyramidal peak is formed when three or more cirques erode towards one another.
3. **Cirque stairway:** A cirque stairway is formed when cirques form one behind the other.

