



## Cairns: An Invitation

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### Suggested Learning Objectives

- Become familiar with the process through which cairns are designed and created
- Understand the practical uses of cairns
- Appreciate the cultural significance of different types of cairns around the world
- Understand why not all cairns are created equal, and how some can disrupt their surrounding natural and cultural environments
- Consider the larger questions underlying the study of cairns

### Suggested Unit Pairing

- Unit 3: Cultural Patterns and Processes

### Discussion Questions

- Should all of the different structures on slide 4 be considered cairns?
  - How do we define a cairn?
- Is it disrespectful or otherwise damaging to create personal “cairns” yourself?
  - If not, where should and shouldn’t they be made?
- What makes a cairn “legitimate”?
- Are there places or spaces that aren’t meant to be marked by human presence?
- What roles do cairns play in cultures around the globe?

### Further Reading

- Acadia National Park. n.d. Waldron Bates, Pathmaker. <https://www.nps.gov/acad/learn/historyculture/uplcelandoad/WaldronBates.pdf>
- Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. n.d. Boulder, CO. <https://lnt.org/>
- Rock Cairns. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/rockcairns.htm>
- Pongola Game Reserve, Amafa/Heritage KwaZulu Natal. N.d. “Isivivane, Weenen” <http://www.heritagekzn.co.za/sites/visit/ladysmith/item/63-isivivane-weenen>
- What Are Rock Cairns? Live Science. <https://www.livescience.com/65687-rock-cairns.html>



- Wilderness Act of 1964. Public Law 88-577, 16 U.S.C. 1131-1136.  
<https://www.wilderness.org/articles/article/wilderness-act>