



# BCGEU guide to First Nations acknowledgement, protocol & terminology

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## Acknowledgements

This report is the result of the work of numerous contributors, including the BCGEU's Aboriginal liaison and the Provincial Executive Equity and Human Rights Committee's Aboriginal Representatives.

We also wish to express our thanks for two resources used to create this guide:

*Indigenous Peoples: A Guide to Terminology*, <https://www.ictinc.ca/indigenous-peoples-a-guide-to-terminology>. Reproduced with the permission of Robert P. Joseph, President of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. [www.ictinc.ca](http://www.ictinc.ca).

*Reporting in Indigenous Communities, an Online Guide*, (CC BY-NC 2.5 CA), <http://riic.ca>

## Introduction

The history and legacy of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples has largely been one of paternalism and discrimination. This includes legislative attempts to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into mainstream society, efforts to destroy culture and language, and the federal government's role in the harmful legacy of residential schools.

Today, because of the hard-fought wins of Indigenous Peoples and their allies, the rights of First Peoples are increasingly being recognized by legal systems and government policy. Since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's report and calls to action in 2015, there has also been a constructive change in the way many Canadians understand the history and ongoing impacts of colonization. Indigenous youth are now the fastest growing population in Canada, and more Indigenous youth are graduating from post-secondary institutions than ever before.

The future is looking brighter, but there remains a great deal of work to do to address the socio-economic disparities still faced by so many Indigenous people in Canada, including our own members. The BCGEU is committed to this fight and has worked for many years to support the rights of First Nations in B.C. and all Indigenous Peoples in Canada and continues to learn how to be an ally.

Engaging in this work, and the larger process of reconciliation and healing in Canada, begins with sharing information and providing education about the long and diverse history of First Peoples, including the traditional territories upon which settler Canadians now live, work, play and learn.

One way our union participates in these efforts is by expressing our unity and respect by beginning every formal meeting and union event with a grateful acknowledgement that we gather on the traditional territory of First Nations people. At BCGEU's 2017 Constitutional Convention, delegates asked their union to go further and encourage all meetings at the local and component level to include an acknowledgement which resulted in the development of this guide.



PHOTO: BUTTERFLIES IN SPIRIT DANCE GROUP PERFORMS AT BCGEU HEADQUARTERS IN BURNABY, APRIL 2018

"OUR WORDS AND OUR ACTIONS SHAPE THE WORLD AROUND US AND THAT'S WHY ACKNOWLEDGING THE TRADITIONAL FIRST NATIONS TERRITORIES ON WHICH WE GATHER IS SO IMPORTANT. THESE SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT ACTS OF RECONCILIATION STRENGTHEN THE LARGER PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION AND HEALING IN CANADA."

- Stephanie Smith, BCGEU President

In this guide you will find protocols and helpful tips on simple and more complex reconciliation efforts. This includes how to acknowledge a territory or treaty on which a gathering takes place, First Nations social conventions, as well as useful terminology. We hope you find the *BCGEU guide to First Nations acknowledgement, protocol & terminology* a valuable tool.

Suggestions and/or questions are welcome so we can maintain the best resource possible. Please contact [communications@bcgeu.ca](mailto:communications@bcgeu.ca) with any feedback.

# Reconciliation

## What is reconciliation? What does reconciliation mean?

Reconciliation can be seen as a renewed relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples on a nation-to-nation basis. It means honouring treaties, eliminating discriminatory legislation, consulting with Indigenous Peoples on matters that affect them, and honouring their rights as nations with the right to self-determination and self-governance.

Reconciliation is also an ongoing individual and collective process that can be understood from three perspectives: the individual, the society, and the institution/organization.

### The individual

As an individual, you can begin by asking yourself a few questions. How much do you know about the history of Indigenous Peoples? Do you know about the local First Nations where you live? Have you ever had a conversation with an Indigenous person about their history, culture and traditions, including what reconciliation means to them? It all begins with doing a bit of research and asking a few questions.

### The society

Once you have a basic understanding of the history and have done some reflecting, look around the community you live in and listen to the people around you. Are your friends and family educated about the history of Indigenous Peoples? Do they believe in the stereotypes we see in the media? Is there an opportunity for you to teach them?

### The institution/organization

Consider the local schools. Are they teaching students about the history of Indigenous Peoples? What is the relationship between local First Nations and your municipal government? Are the provincial and federal governments living up to their promises to Indigenous Peoples?

You can also look at where you work. Does the employee make-up reflect the population of Indigenous Peoples in your region? Does the work of your

employer involve or affect Indigenous Peoples? Is there potential for developing relationships with local First Nations in the work you do, or as an organization? Do your policies provide opportunities to attract and recruit Indigenous people?

"I BELIEVE JUST AS THERE IS SOLIDARITY IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT, THERE IS A GROWING SOLIDARITY BETWEEN SETTLER CANADIANS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AS WELL. WORKING TOGETHER AS WE CONTINUE DOWN THE PATH OF RECONCILIATION IN CANADA WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO OUR COLLECTIVE PROGRESS."

- Stephanie Smith, BCGEU President

Reconciliation depends on each of us, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, working to make it happen. Each person will have their own contribution to make in their own way. Even small efforts build on one another and can create a movement—the same way the labour movement began and is now a force around the world protecting the rights of workers. We can do the same in our efforts to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## First Nations acknowledgement & traditional welcome

### Acknowledgement

It has become common practice in B.C. to begin meetings and events with an acknowledgement of the local First Nations territory on which the meeting or event is taking place. This practice is an important way to both respect and learn about local First Nations.

Below is an example of an acknowledgement given at BCGEU headquarters in Burnaby:

*"I would like to begin by acknowledging that we gather here today on the traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations."*

There is also a growing practice to tier the acknowledgement. Following a brief statement about the Indigenous territory on which an event takes place, the next tier would acknowledge the ongoing oppressions and struggles for justice that Indigenous Peoples and communities face. The following is an example:

*“I would like to begin by acknowledging that we gather here today on the traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.*

*We acknowledge our traditional hosts and thank them for their graciousness in welcoming us to carry out this work on their land. In so doing, we recognize their inherent Indigenous rights and title, the implementation without qualification of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and our support for the 94 calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”*

See page seven for the names of First Nations territories that should be acknowledged at meetings or events taking place where BCGEU area offices are located.



If you are planning or attending a meeting or event at a location other than a BCGEU area office, you should reach out to local First Nations through band/government offices or Friendship Centres in the area. They can assist in determining the First Nation(s) that should be acknowledged. You can also connect with BCGEU’s Aboriginal liaison to help write or confirm the accuracy of your acknowledgement by emailing [communications@bcgeu.ca](mailto:communications@bcgeu.ca).

## Traditional welcome

Traditional or First Nations welcomes are another way to show respect and connect with local First Nations.

Historically, a visiting nation would first ask permission to enter onto another nation’s territory. The host nation would welcome the visitors with ceremonies, song, dance, etc. The visitors to the territory would bring gifts to offer as a thank you. Many continue this practice today as a tradition during special events.

**When possible, it is always best to invite a representative or Elder to perform a traditional welcome rather than doing an acknowledgement alone.**

In most cases, they will talk about the history of the territory and the people who have lived there, often for thousands of years.

To set up a traditional welcome by inviting a local representative or Elder to your event, you can:

- Email [communications@bcgeu.ca](mailto:communications@bcgeu.ca) to see if staff in Research and Interactive Services can suggest a contact.
- Call the local First Nation band/government office or the local Friendship Centre and ask if they can connect you with someone. They will normally have a local Elder or representative who can do the welcome.
- Connect with BCGEU’s Aboriginal liaison for guidance by emailing [communications@bcgeu.ca](mailto:communications@bcgeu.ca).

When arranging for the welcome, it is always a good idea to explain the purpose of your meeting or event. This will help the representative or Elder tailor a more specific welcome.

Once you have established a contact, it is good practice to ask if you may call on them again. You will find that your effort is welcome and appreciated and is a great beginning to building a lasting relationship.

## First Nations Elder protocol

When you invite an Elder to do a traditional welcome, or attend a meeting, the following should be considered and arranged for before the event.

### Receiving & introductions

Preparing for the arrival of an Elder is important and the best practice is to have a person or two acting as the key contact for the Elder. Provide the contact’s name, phone number, and email to the Elder beforehand. Ensure that they welcome the Elder upon arrival and show them the layout of the space and their seating. Be sure to provide seating that is close to the front and close to an exit. The key contact should also sit with the Elder and any other special guests they may bring.

At large events such as conferences or conventions, reserve a private space—preferably a private room—where the Elder can prepare, and if needed, rest after travelling or before returning home.



If they have travelled a far distance, provide refreshments such as light snacks and drinks.

Ask the Elder how they would like to be introduced when they come up to speak. Some may have a traditional name that they use. Some may hold a special position in their community such as a hereditary chief or council member and may prefer to be introduced as such. If they are a chief, then it is best practice at events to refer to them as chief, along with their last name, and to also include their nation (i.e. “Chief Ian Campbell from the Squamish Nation”) when introducing them.

If they do use a traditional name, ask for the spelling and practice pronouncing it if you need to. No one will be offended if you get it wrong, but simply practice it a few times. A useful tip is to try to spell it phonetically.

If you know the Elder personally, and you are on a first name basis, make sure they are comfortable being introduced in this way. If they hold a special position, such as hereditary chief or council member, introduce them as such. In many cases, once you have introduced them, it is okay to call them by their name, but this should be confirmed.

## Honorariums for Elders

When it comes to honoraria, it is not appropriate to ask the Elder what amount they would like to receive as putting a monetary value on traditional cultural practice is difficult. This should be dealt with beforehand in consultation with the local First Nation band/government office or Friendship Centre. They will recommend an appropriate amount for what you are asking the Elder to do.

The honorarium should be based on what you can afford, but generally, the BCGEU offers \$150 - \$200. You will also want to confirm the exact name to be printed on the cheque as this may be different than the name they use in person. Give the honorarium after the welcome and make sure you guide the Elder to a private area to hand them the cheque, not in front of the audience/group.

You must also clarify beforehand whether there are any other costs to be expected, such as travel or taxi expenses, whether they require someone to pick them up, or if they are bringing someone with them and the associated costs.

## Food and beverages

If the event includes a meal, always offer beforehand to have the Elder stay for the meal and ask whether they have any dietary restrictions.

It is always a respectful gesture for the Elder to be served their meal first—it is also customary. Also, be aware of any mobility issues that may make it difficult for them when it comes to set-up, such as a buffet-style or potluck meal.

If alcohol is being served at the event, some Elders will not want to participate/attend, so be sure to include this information when extending the invitation.

## Invitation

When you are contacting an Elder, making a phone call is always better than an email or going through another person. Many Elders still do not use email or text. It is best practice to call and follow up with an email if applicable and include all of the relevant information they will need such as the date, time, address, what type of event it is, and what you would like them to do. If the event is specific to a topic, like at a conference, provide the Elder with some background information to help them understand the context should they want to prepare any special remarks.

If you are inviting an Elder several months in advance, check back in with them closer to the date to confirm—perhaps at a couple of weeks, and then a few days before. They may have to cancel due to other community events or health reasons, for example. This will give you time to try find another Elder with enough notice.

Some organizations, such as the Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS), don't confirm attendance more than one month in advance, so in some circumstances, you may have to confirm an Elder's attendance closer to the date of your meeting or event.

## Ceremony & thank you

During the ceremony, everyone should stand with hats removed, heads bowed and hands by their sides or clasped in front. Do not sit down until the Elder has finished speaking. Do not talk, text or take phone calls during the ceremony. Be in the moment and ask the group or audience to also be in the moment.

When the Elder has completed the ceremony, thank them and their companion(s). Make sure you guide them to the private space you provided or another private area and offer the honoraria at that time—not in front of the audience/group. Once they are ready to leave, make sure they have not forgotten anything, that they have everything they need, and that their transportation is ready for them.

## Terminology & lexicon

Throughout the history of the relationship between settler Canadians and Indigenous Peoples, terminology has been confusing. The terminology used in public discourse has also rarely been the language actually preferred by Indigenous Peoples, but that is changing. Using the best terminology in any given situation is not just a matter of being “politically correct,” but of being respectful and accurate.

Below are terms that are most commonly used, including their appropriate uses. Many terms have legal meanings, so it is important to understand the meaning, which allows you to more clearly understand the issues Indigenous Peoples still face today.

NOTE: DEFINITIONS FOR THE TERMS IN THIS SECTION HAVE BEEN ADAPTED FROM (1) *INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: A GUIDE TO TERMINOLOGY*. DOWNLOAD A FREE COPY OF THIS GUIDE HERE: [HTTPS://WWW.ICTINC.CA/INDIGENOUS-PEOPLES-A-GUIDE-TO-TERMINOLOGY](https://www.ictinc.ca/indigenous-peoples-a-guide-to-terminology) AND (2) REPORTING IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, AN ONLINE GUIDE: [HTTP://RIIC.CA/THE-GUIDE/ON-THE-AIR/LEXICON-AND-TERMINOLOGY](http://riic.ca/the-guide/on-the-air/lexicon-and-terminology)

### Aboriginal people

This is a term defined in the Constitution that identifies Aboriginal as Indians, Métis, and Inuit peoples. When you are referring to “Aboriginal people,” you are referring to all the Aboriginal people in Canada collectively, without regard to their separate origins and identities. Or, you are simply referring to more than one Aboriginal person.

When drafting communications you should take care in using this term, because “Aboriginal people” generally applies to First Nations, Inuit and Métis, if you are describing a particular departmental program that is only for First Nations, such as band funding, avoid using “Aboriginal people” as it may cause misunderstanding.

**Use as an adjective.** The use of “Aboriginal” as a proper noun, in stories or headlines, is grammatically incorrect.

IMPROPER: The government’s new strategy will support increased business with Aboriginals.

PROPER: The government’s new strategy will support increased business with Aboriginal people.

Avoid describing Aboriginal people as “belonging” to Canada. Use less possessive terms instead.

IMPROPER: Canada’s Aboriginal people have traditions and cultures that go back thousands of years.

PROPER: Aboriginal people in Canada have traditions and cultures that go back thousands of years.

### BCGEU area office locations and local First Nations territories

Area Office	First Nation(s)	Pronunciation
Victoria	Esquimalt and Songhees	ess-KWAI-malt and song-heez
Nanaimo	Snuneymuxw	snoo-NAI-muk
Lower Mainland	Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh	mus-kwee-um, squa-mish and tSLAY-wah-tooth
Fraser Valley	Kwantlen	kwant-len
Kamloops	Kamloops Indian Band: Tk’emlúps te Secwepemc	she-KWE-pem
Williams Lake	Williams Lake Indian Band	
Kelowna	West Bank First Nation	
Cranbrook	Ktunaxa	tun-Ah-hah
Castlegar	Sinixt	sn-selxcin
Fort St. John	Treaty 8 First Nations	
Prince George	Lheidli-T’enneh	klate-lee-tenn-eh
Terrace	Kitsumkalum	KIT-tsem-kay-lem

## Aboriginal Peoples

Defined in the *Constitution Act*, 1982 to include all Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, which includes status Indians, non-Status Indians, Métis and Inuit people.

## Aboriginal rights

- practices, traditions or customs which are integral to the distinctive culture of an Aboriginal society and were practiced prior to European contact, therefore rooted in the pre-contact society;
- must be practiced for a substantial period of time to have formed an integral part of the particular Aboriginal society's culture;
- must be an activity that is a central, defining feature which is independently significant to the Aboriginal society;
- must be distinctive, meaning it must be distinguishing and characteristic of that culture;
- must be given priority over all other land uses, after conservation measures;
- must meet a continuity requirement, meaning that the Aboriginal society must demonstrate that the connection with the land in its customs and laws has continued to the present day;
- may be the exercise in a modern form of an activity that existed prior to European contact;
- may be regulated by government, but only by legislation explicitly directed at a compelling and substantial objective such as the conservation and management of natural resources;
- do not include an activity that solely exists because of the influence of European contact; and
- do not include aspects of Aboriginal society that are true of every society such as eating to survive.

## Aboriginal title

Aboriginal title refers to the rights of Aboriginal Peoples to the occupation, use and enjoyment of their land and its resources. The classic legal definition was provided by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*:

“... aboriginal title encompasses the right to exclusive use and occupation of land; second, aboriginal title encompasses the right to choose to what uses land can be put, subject to the ultimate limit that those uses cannot destroy the ability of the land to sustain future generations of Aboriginal Peoples; and third, that lands held pursuant to aboriginal title have an inescapable economic component.”

## Band

The *Indian Act* defines band, in part, as a body of Indians for whose use and benefit in common, lands have been set apart. Each band has its own governing Band Council, usually consisting of a chief and several councilors. The members of the band usually share common values, traditions and practices rooted in their language and ancestral heritage. Today, many bands prefer to be known as First Nations. Capitalize “Band” when it is part of a specific band, such as Osoyoos Indian Band, otherwise, use lower case.

## Band Council or First Nation Council

Councils are the band's governing body. Community members choose the chief and councilors by election under section 74 of the *Indian Act*, or through traditional custom. The Band Council's powers vary with each band.

## Chief

There are two classifications of chief:

**Band Chief:** A person elected by band members to govern for a specified term. Under the specifications of the *Indian Act*, First Nations must have an election every two years.

**Hereditary Chief:** A hereditary chief is a leader who has power passed down from one generation to the next along bloodlines or other cultural protocols.

## Elder

An Elder is a person recognized by their community because they have earned their respect through wisdom, harmony and balance of their actions in their teachings. Elders try to instill respect in their community members, pass on history, culture, teachings, language, and play an important role in providing guidance on any number of issues.

## Enfranchisement

The process involved in giving up one's status as an Indian; predominate during era of Indian assimilation practices. In 1985, this practice was terminated by Bill C-31.

## Extinguishment

The history of extinguishment of title has its roots in old or historic treaties which contained the words “cede, release, surrender” of their rights, title and privileges to the lands included within the limits of that particular treaty.



## Fiduciary obligation

A legal duty described by the Supreme Court as the obligation of one party to look after the well-being of another. Canada has fiduciary obligations to Aboriginal people, meaning that Canada must consult and negotiate with Aboriginal people whenever their interests are concerned.

## First Nation

A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the term Indian Band which many (not all) found offensive. The term First Nation has been adopted to replace the word band in the name of many communities, and can refer to a single band, many bands, an Aboriginal governing body, organized and established by an Aboriginal community, or an Aboriginal community as a whole. First Nation does not apply to Inuit or Métis, who are distinct and separate.

**Use as a noun and a modifier.** The term First Nation is acceptable as both. When using the term as a modifier, the question becomes whether to use First Nation or First Nations. Note the different uses in the following examples:

*Plural modifier, plural noun:* The number of First Nations students enrolled at Canadian universities and colleges has soared over the past twenty years.

*Singular modifier, plural noun:* The association assists female First Nation entrepreneurs interested in starting home businesses.

*Plural modifier, singular noun:* Containing recipes from across the country, the First Nations cookbook became an instant hit at church bazaars.

*Singular modifier, singular noun:* Many people have said that *North of 60* and *The Rez* were the only shows on television that depicted life in a First Nation community with any realism.

There is no clear right or wrong in this area, provided that reporters are consistent about the way they choose to use modifiers.

Many people today prefer to be called First Nations or First Nations people instead of Indians. Generally, First Nations people is used to describe both Status and non-Status Indians. The term is rarely used as a synonym for Aboriginal peoples because it usually does not include Inuit or Métis people.

Because the term First Nations people generally applies to both Status and non-Status Indians, care should be taken in using this term. If describing a program that is for only Status Indian youth, for example, avoid using First Nations youth, which may cause misunderstanding.

## First Peoples

A less frequently used collective term to describe the original peoples in Canada.

## Impacts and Benefits Agreements (IBAs)

A broad term used to describe various contractual commitments related to development of land or resources subject to Aboriginal rights. IBAs usually impose negotiated limits on a project's impacts on the environment, on fish and wildlife, on the land and First Nations traditional use and enjoyment of same; and IBAs usually define a range of negotiated economic and preferential benefits to flow to the First Nation(s) whose lands are to be impacted by the development.

## Indian

The origin of the term Indian dates back to Christopher Columbus, who mistakenly thought he had reached the East Indies, so referred to the people in the lands he visited as "indios" which is Spanish for Indian. Usage of the term has fallen out of favour to the point it is considered by many to be derogatory and has largely been replaced by Aboriginal Peoples.

Indian is still used in the following situations:

- direct quotations
- when citing titles of books, works of art, etc.
- in discussions of history where necessary for clarity and accuracy
- in discussions of some legal/constitutional matters requiring precision in terminology
- in discussions of rights and benefits provided on the basis of "Indian" status
- in statistical information collected using these categories (e.g., the Census)

**Status Indians:** people who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a Status Indian. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the Indian Act. Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

**Non-status Indians:** people who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation, but whom the Government of Canada does not recognize as Indians under the Indian Act, either because they are unable to prove their status or have lost their status rights. Many Indian people in Canada, especially women, lost their Indian status through discriminatory practices in the past. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians.

**Treaty Indian:** a Status-Indian who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown.

### Indian Act

The *Indian Act* is federal legislation that regulates Indians and reserves and sets out certain federal government powers and responsibilities toward First Nations and their reserved lands. The first *Indian Act* was passed in 1876, although there were a number of pre-Confederation and post-Confederation enactments with respect to Indians and reserves prior to 1876. Since then, it has undergone numerous amendments, revisions and re-enactments. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada administers the *Indian Act*.

### Indian reserve

Defined in the *Indian Act* as a tract of land that's been set apart for the use and benefit of an Indian band. The federal government has assumed jurisdiction over reserve lands and the Native people living on them.

### Indigenous

You will most often find the term “Indigenous” used in United Nations documents, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Indigenous is often the preferred term in an international, academic or activist context.

The adjective indigenous has the common meaning of “from” or “of the original origin.” The United Nations has yet to define Indigenous peoples, as the concept has been subject of much debate.

Indigenous legal scholar S. James Anaya offers this description: “Today, the term indigenous refers broadly to the living descendants of pre-invasion inhabitants of lands now dominated by others. Indigenous peoples, nations, or communities are culturally distinctive groups that find themselves engulfed by settler societies born of the forces of empire and conquest.”

According to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous peoples have a right to cultural sovereignty and self-determination.

### Indigenous Peoples

The definition of indigenous is “native to the area” – so, in terms of Aboriginal people, they are indigenous to North America. As a collective term, it should be capitalized “Indigenous Peoples.”

- a) Peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations.
- b) Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

### Inherent rights

Pre-existing rights that a person is born with into their nation; officially recognized by Canada under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*: Aboriginal Peoples of Canada have the right to govern themselves in relation to matters that are internal to their communities, integral to their unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions, and with respect to their special relationship to their land and their resources.

### Inuit

Aboriginal people in northern Canada, living mainly in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador. Ontario has a very small Inuit population. Inuit are not covered by the *Indian Act*. The federal government has entered into several major land claim settlements with Inuit.

Usage: The word Inuit means “the people” in the Inuit language and is used when Inuit are referring to themselves as a culture. Inuit is also the plural form of “Inuk.” Avoid using the term “Inuit people” or “the Inuit people” as that is redundant—Inuit is the preferred form.

## Land claims

In 1973, the federal government recognized two broad classes of claims—comprehensive and specific.

**Comprehensive claims** are based on the assessment that there may be continuing Aboriginal rights to lands and natural resources. These kinds of claims come up in those parts of Canada where Aboriginal title has not previously been dealt with by treaty and other legal means. While each claim is unique, frequently these claims include such things as land title, fishing, trapping, and resource rights and financial compensation—hence the term “comprehensive.”

**Specific claims** declare grievances over Canada’s alleged failures to discharge specific obligations to First Nations groups.

## Land claim agreement

A term used by the federal government to refer to a negotiated settlement with a First Nation on lands, land usage, and other rights.

## Métis Peoples

People of mixed Aboriginal and European ancestry. The Métis National Council adopted the following definition of Métis in 2002: “Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.”

## Nation

People united by common descent, history, culture and language associated with a particular territory.

## Native

An outdated collective term referring to Indians (status and non-status), Métis, and Inuit but has largely been replaced by Aboriginal.

## Oral history

Aboriginal Peoples of North America have relied on oral histories, as opposed to written languages, since the dawn of time. History is frequently passed to future generations through stories, songs and oral communications.

## Reserve

Defined by the *Indian Act* as “... tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a band.”

A result of the definition of reserve land in the *Indian Act* is that reserve land cannot be privately owned by the band or band members. “Reservation” is an American term.

## Scrip

Certificates redeemable for land or money issued to Métis during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Métis would have to apply for the scrip in order to qualify; it was a system designed to extinguish Métis Aboriginal title.

## Self-determination

A major objective of Aboriginal Peoples, country-wide, is to gain control over who can become members. Currently, bands are required to maintain a registry with many of the rules governing membership mandated by the *Indian Act*. As we move into the future, the desire is for communities to decide who their members are, and not be directed by a bureaucrat in Ottawa. Self-determination is the right to decide who your people are.

## Self-government

Long before Europeans arrived in Canada, First Peoples were self-governing. In 1876 when the *Indian Act* went into effect, traditional governance systems were dismantled and alien regulations were imposed in their place. When we take a look at the day-to-day operations of a band we see that all the actions of the band are directed in accordance with the *Indian Act*. This is a huge problem for bands, and their politicians, because it means that while they are elected by their people they are accountable to the department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development of Canada. Their preference would be to change to a system where the governing leaders are elected and accountable to their people. Such models do exist and the communities with self-government agreements have done well in terms of the nation building process.

## Self-reliance

A key objective of Aboriginal Peoples. They want the ability to participate in the political and, more importantly, the economic mainstream without having to rely on federal funding to meet their community needs. In addition to business opportunities, they also want to get into the realm of taxes, royalties and revenue sharing on land developments that are viewed as key to the self-reliance puzzle.

## Socio-Economic Participation Agreement (SEPA)

A synonym for Impacts and Benefits Agreement.

## Surrender

A formal agreement that confirms the conditions and terms when a First Nation exchanges part of its territory for equitable compensation.

## Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)

TEK broadly describes systems for understanding one's environment, based on detailed personal observation and experience, and informed by generations of Elders. TEK is recognized and used around the world as an important environmental assessment tool.

## Traditional territory

The geographic area identified by a First Nation to be the area of land which they and/or their ancestors traditionally occupied or used.

## Treaty

An agreement between government and a First Nation that defines the rights of Aboriginal Peoples with respect to lands and resources over a specified area, and may define the self-government authority of a First Nation. Modern treaties, once ratified, become part of the law of the land.

## Treaty rights

Rights specified in a treaty. Rights to hunt and fish in traditional territory and to use and occupy reserves are typical treaty rights. This concept can have different meanings depending upon the context and perspective of the user. Treaty rights are constitutionally recognized and affirmed; the terms of treaties take precedence over the other laws and policies in Canada.

## Treaty settlement land

The area of land that is part of a treaty and is therefore owned and managed by the First Nation that negotiated the treaty.

## Tribal affiliation

Many diverse and autonomous peoples lived in the territory now known as Canada for thousands of years. Each community or culture had distinct languages, religious beliefs and political systems, and its own name for its people and names for the peoples around them.

Whenever possible, try to characterize Aboriginal people through the identities of their specific tribe or Nation (e.g., a Haida painter, a Mohawk school, a Blackfoot publication).

Note that many Aboriginal people are using English transliterations of terms from their own languages to identify themselves; e.g., the Mohawk Nation is also called "Kanien'kehá:ka"; the Blackfoot, "Siksika"; the Chippewas, "Anishinabeg"; and the Swampy Cree, "Mushkegowuk."

## Tribal Council

Not defined under the *Indian Act*, a Tribal Council usually represents a group of bands to facilitate the administration and delivery of local services to their members.

## Usufructuary rights

Communal or community rights to share in the use of property. This concept has been used by the courts in attempting to distinguish between Crown title and Aboriginal title.

# Resources

## Lexicon and terminology in communication

For information on vocabulary and terminology when writing about Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, visit: <http://riic.ca/the-guide/on-the-air/lexicon-and-terminology>

## Pronunciation guide

To find the pronunciations of B.C. First Nations, visit: <https://www.first-nations.info/pronunciation-guide-nations-british-columbia.html> or <http://bannockand-butter.tumblr.com/post/31780109220/pronunciation-guide-for-indigenous-communities-in>

## Guide to Indigenous organizations and services

For a listing of Indigenous community-based services and organizations in B.C., visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-organizations-services>

## A-Z listing of First Nations in B.C.

For an alphabetical listing of First Nations in B.C., and links to further information, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/first-nations-negotiations/first-nations-a-z-listing>

## A Manual for Decolonization

*Whose Land Is It Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization* was inspired by a 2016 speaking tour by Arthur Manuel, less than a year before his untimely passing in January 2017. Visit: [https://fpse.ca/decolonization\\_manual\\_whose\\_land\\_is\\_it\\_anyway](https://fpse.ca/decolonization_manual_whose_land_is_it_anyway)

## Spiritual events & gatherings

Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police Service <http://www.stlatlimxpolice.ca/ceremonies--cultural-protocol.html>

Reporting in Indigenous Communities: Aboriginal Customs and Protocols <http://riic.ca/the-guide/in-the-field/aboriginal-customs-and-protocols>

Canadian Aboriginal: Rituals, Worship and Festivals <https://canadianaboriginal.weebly.com/rituals-worship-and-festivals.html>

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.: The pow wow - First Nation pow wow dances <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/the-pow-wow-first-nation-pow-wow-dances>

LivingMyCulture.ca: Indigenous Voices: Honouring Our Loss and Grief <http://livingmyculture.ca/culture/first-nations/indigenous-voices-honouring-our-loss-and-grief/?topic=After+Death+and+Ceremonies>

The Canadian Encyclopedia: Religion and Spirituality of Indigenous Peoples in Canada <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/religion-of-aboriginal-people>

## First Nations historical dates in Canada

### Historical timeline in B.C.

For a timeline and history of Aboriginal Peoples in British Columbia, visit: <https://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/POH/timelineENG.pdf>

### B.C. First Nations history

First Nations of North America have always been self-sustaining societies with complex social, economic and political structures. For a brief historical overview of First Nations in B.C., starting with the signing of a Royal Proclamation in October 1763, visit: <http://mobilemuseum.ca/bc-first-nations-historical-territories-and-timeline>