



***Indigenous Peoples, Global Issues,  
and Sustainability***

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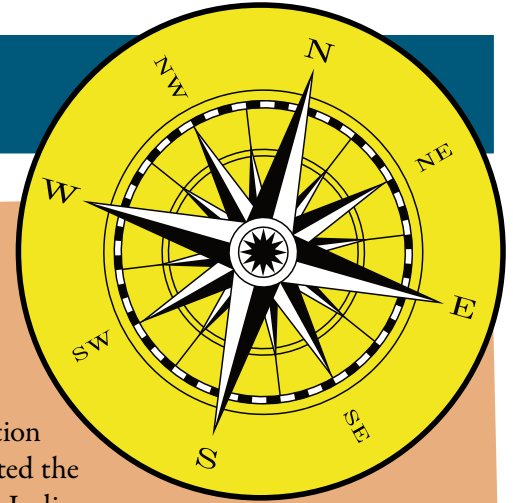


## Introduction

From time immemorial, the First Peoples (ancestors of today's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) inhabited every region of the land that would become Canada. From the coastal areas west of the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean to the Arctic and sub-Arctic to the Great Plains, there was a great diversity in language and culture.

Within each cultural grouping, there were many distinct languages and dialects. Equally diverse were the social customs, economies, political practices, and spiritual beliefs of the First Peoples. Communities ranged in size from single-family hunting groups typical of the Arctic to the multi-nation confederacy that was the achievement of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois). Whatever their size or political sophistication, First Peoples' social organizations were based on the family.

All Canadians can benefit from the preservation of unique Indigenous identities in that there are many things to learn from the variety of traditions and beliefs of Indigenous Peoples. For example, environmental stewardship, cooperation, and community development are all aspects of Indigenous worldviews that would be beneficial to Canada as a whole. As Canada is a multicultural country, everyone can learn from the cultures of others.



## Exploring the Issues

### Define *Indigenous*.

The United Nations has spent a lot of time discussing the definition of “Indigenous Peoples,” but Indigenous organizations have rejected the idea of adopting such a formal, universal definition. They believe Indigenous Peoples ought to define themselves for themselves rather than have a definition imposed on them.

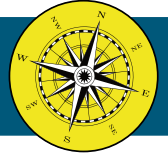
In 1982, José R. Martínez-Cobo, Special Rapporteur on Discrimination against Indigenous Populations for the United Nations, proposed the following definition of the term *Indigenous*, which the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) accepted and the International Labour Organization included in its Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention in 1989.

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.

This historical continuity may consist of the continuation, for an extended period reaching into the present, of one or more of the following factors:

- a. Occupation of ancestral lands, or at least of part of them
- b. Common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands
- c. Cultural in general, or in specific manifestations (such as religion, living under a tribal system, membership of an indigenous community, dress, means of livelihood, lifestyle, etc.)
- d. Language (whether used as the only language, as mother tongue, as the habitual means of communication at home or in the family, or as the main, preferred, habitual, general or normal language)
- e. Residence in certain parts of the country, or in certain regions of the world
- f. Other relevant factors

On an individual basis, an indigenous person is one who belongs to these indigenous populations through self-identification as indigenous (group consciousness) and is recognized and accepted by these populations as one of its members (acceptance by the group).



This preserves for these communities the sovereign right and power to decide who belongs to them, without external interference.

During the many years of debate at the meetings of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, observers from indigenous organizations developed a common position that rejected the idea of a formal definition of indigenous peoples at the international level to be adopted by states. Similarly, government delegations expressed the view that it was neither desirable nor necessary to elaborate a universal definition of indigenous peoples. Finally, at its fifteenth session, in 1997, the Working Group concluded that a definition of indigenous peoples at a global level was not possible at that time, and this did not prove necessary for the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Instead of offering a definition, Article 33 of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples underlines the importance of self-identification, that indigenous peoples themselves define their own identity as indigenous. (UN)

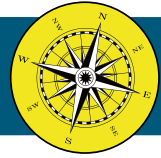
The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which was adopted by General Assembly Resolution 61/295 on September 13, 2007, stated the following:

#### Article 33

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures. (ILO)

Furthermore, this same Article 1 contains a statement of coverage rather than a definition, indicating that the Convention applies to the following groups:

- a) tribal 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.



In 2005, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) published their *Report of the African Commission's Working Group of Experts on Indigenous Populations/Communities*. In it, they emphasized that the concept of indigeneity must be understood in a wider context than simply the colonial experience:

The focus should be on more recent approaches focusing on self-identification as indigenous and distinctly different from other groups within a state; on a special attachment to and use of their traditional land whereby ancestral land and territory has a fundamental importance for their collective physical and cultural survival as peoples; on an experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination because these peoples have different cultures, ways of life or modes of production than the national hegemonic or dominant model.

In May 2016, the Fifteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) affirmed that Indigenous Peoples are distinctive groups that have specific rights based on their ties to a particular territory prior to its settlement, development, and/or occupation, and that they are “vulnerable to exploitation, marginalization, oppression, forced assimilation, and genocide by nation states formed from colonizing populations or by politically dominant, different ethnic groups. (UNPFII)

Because of this, the UNPFII declared that Indigenous Peoples are entitled to special protection.

## Indigenous Concerns

The following is a list of Indigenous concerns for further exploration:

- Indigenous Knowledge (IK) devalued
- Appropriation/commodification of IK
- Loss of IK
- Land rights
- Racism
- Language/culture loss
- Decline of cultural diversity
- Poverty
- Self-determination
- Health
- IK versus Western science
- Indigenous women's issues



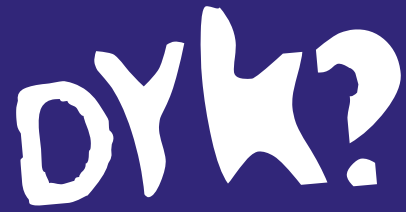
## Essential Questions

- How do Indigenous Peoples see and relate to the world?
- What were the policies and practices developed during the age of colonization that began the breakdown of Indigenous cultures?
- How have the policies and practices of governments in Canada suppressed First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures?
- What are the concerns facing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Canada today? Why should these concerns matter to all Canadians?
- Who are the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit of Canada?
- What are the roles of Indigenous Peoples in shaping contemporary Canada?
- How would you describe the relationship that existed among Indigenous nations and between Indigenous nations and the European newcomers in the era of the fur trade and the pre-Confederation treaties?
- What is the meaning and significance of the statement: “We are all treaty people”?
- What impact did the *Indian Act* have on the autonomy of status Indians?
- How have First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples attempted to regain their status as self-determining nations through land claims, recognition of treaty and Aboriginal rights, and the pursuit of self-government?
- How did colonization challenge traditional health practices for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples? How can the original intent of Indigenous health practices—to produce healthy individuals and communities—be restored?
- What is the connection between colonialism and the legal concerns facing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples?
- How has colonialism affected the economies of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples?
- Why is the preservation of Indigenous cultures vital for both Indigenous and other citizens of contemporary Canada?
- How do First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures combine tradition and adaptation to meet the challenges of today and to ensure a better tomorrow?
- What is Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)?
- What are some cultural and historical elements that are shared by all Indigenous Peoples of the world?
- How can Western and Indigenous Knowledge (IK) be combined to address concerns of resource management and sustainability?



- What can Indigenous worldviews and values teach us about how to become more responsible stewards of our planet?
- What are the some of the current concerns that continue to interfere with the quality of life of Indigenous people across the globe?
- What are some ways to achieve reconciliation between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians?





### Did You Know?

**10 000 to 6000 BCE**—First Nations people and communities live throughout lands now called “Manitoba,” particularly for hunting and fishing purposes (according to archaeological evidence).

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**6000 BCE to 1 CE**—First Nations communities in Manitoba thrive and change, developing new technologies and techniques (including small chipped stone tools, weapons, and utensils) for gathering and growing food. While depending heavily on bison, other animals including deer, wolf, rabbit, fox, and wild plants such as blueberries and cherries constitute a large part of the diet. Archeological findings also have uncovered formal burial sites that indicate elaborate cultural and belief systems and provide evidence of an extensive trading system taking place throughout the territory, including materials from the Inuit in the North, copper from the Great Lakes, pipestone and flint from the South, shells from as far away as the Gulf of Mexico, and volcanic glass from what is now called Wyoming.

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**200 BCE to 1750 CE**—What have often been called “Plains Woodland” cultures and practices extend throughout First Nations communities living throughout Manitoba.

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**1100**—There is evidence of “modern” agricultural development by First Nations communities, particularly in the use of corn seeded along the banks of the Red River (north of present-day Winnipeg). Bison hunting continues to be dominant but most community economies become increasingly mixed and seasonal (including hunting, fishing, wild rice gathering, and harvesting), depending on region. There is the first evidence of the bow-and-arrow, and there is also an increase in the need for tools and containers, particularly in the use of pottery and for ceremonies such as burial mounds.

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**Before contact with Europeans**—First Nations communities throughout Manitoba develop their own systems of government on their own recognized lands and territories. The cultural cornerstones of most of these communities centre on respect, sharing, and maintaining harmony and balance in the cycle of life. These communities include the Dene (in the Northwest); the Cree (primarily in the North); Anishinaabe-Cree (primarily in the Northeast); Anishinaabe (primarily in the South); and Dakota (in the Southwest).

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**1612**—Captain Thomas Button winters two ships at Port Nelson, near the mouths of the Nelson and Hayes Rivers, as they search for the fabled “Northwest Passage.”

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**1670**—King Charles II of England grants sovereignty over Manitoba to “the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson’s Bay” (the Hudson’s Bay Company).

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**1673**—La Vérendrye travels from New France to explore the rivers and lakes of Manitoba.

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**1690**—Henry Kelsey travels from Hudson Bay to the Saskatchewan River, stopping near what is now Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

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**1763**—A Royal Proclamation, decreed by King George III, recognizes First Nations as “nations” and acknowledges that they possess lands and territories. The proclamation declares that only the Crown could negotiate the sharing of lands and resources with First Nations Peoples and consent is required. Agreements must be based on a recognition of the need for sharing and peaceful co-existence.

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**1790**—Chief Peguis leads over 200 Ojibway from Sault Ste. Marie northwards to the Red River and settles with a Cree community in and around what is now Netley Creek/Petersfield.

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**1811**—Lord Selkirk establishes an agricultural settlement in the Red River area.

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**1816**—The Battle of Seven Oaks takes place, as part of a dispute between settlers (backed by the Hudson’s Bay Company) and the Métis (backed by the North West Company).

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**1817**—Anishinaabe and Cree leaders negotiate the Selkirk treaty with the Earl of Selkirk where they agree to share property rights, thereby allowing the Red River Colony to be established.

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**1821**—The North West Company merges with the Hudson’s Bay Company, giving the HBC the exclusive right to trade with First Nations throughout the “uninhabited areas of North America” (sic).

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**1867**—The *British North America Act* is adopted, giving the federal government “responsibility for First Nations and lands reserved for First Nations” (sec. 91).

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**1867**—Canada buys Rupert’s Land from the Hudson’s Bay Company for \$300,000 without informing the existing inhabitants.

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**1867**—The Department of the Secretary of State of Canada is established for the administration of First Nations affairs, and new legislation consolidates all earlier laws and treaties concerning First Nations Peoples.

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**1867**—Parliament passes legislation that gives more power to the superintendent of Indian Affairs in the administration of First Nations affairs and is designed to gradually remove “status” from First Nations.

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**1868**—Louis Riel’s provisional government negotiates Manitoba’s entry into Confederation with the federal government.

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**1870**—The Canadian military seizes the Red River Colony and Louis Riel is exiled. The *Manitoba Act* is passed, establishing the Province of Manitoba in Canada. Lieutenant-Governor Archibald is sent to Manitoba to open communication with the First Nations and begin the process of negotiating treaties.

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**1871**—Treaties 1 and 2 are negotiated and signed with Anishinaabeg leaders at Lower Fort Garry (near Lockport) and Manitoba House (near Ebb and Flow). The terms included allowing immigrants to use First Nations lands and territories; setting aside land for First Nations’ exclusive use; sharing resources; making annual treaty payments (now \$5); providing for education, housing, and medical assistance; providing food aid in case of famine; giving grants for clothing; and making annual payments for ammunition and rope, as well as other provisions.

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**1872**—Anishinaabeg signatories of Treaties 1 and 2 state that certain negotiated provisions do not appear in the written texts of Treaties 1 and 2 and that some of the written agreements are not being fulfilled by the Crown. John Schultz, a Member of Parliament, becomes aware of their concerns and informs the federal government.

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**1873**—Treaty No. 3 is negotiated and signed with Anishinaabeg leaders, sharing lands in southeastern Manitoba and northwestern Ontario and opening the way for immigration and the transcontinental railway.

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**1874**—Treaty No. 4 (the “Qu’Appelle Treaty”) is negotiated and signed with Anishinaabeg and Cree leaders, sharing 194,000 square kilometres of land in southeastern Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba.

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**1875**—Treaty No. 5 (the “Lake Winnipeg Treaty”) is negotiated and signed with Anishinaabeg and Cree leaders, sharing 260,000 square kilometres around Lake Winnipeg and Manitoba.

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**1876**—The *Indian Act* is passed by Canadian Parliament. Provisions in the act include the restriction of movement off-reserve, banning of religious ceremonies and public meetings, stringent controls over Indian “status,” mandatory school attendance (and jail for parents if they resisted), and punishment for any Canadian who helps First Nations resist the provisions of the act.

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**1877**—John Norquay, a Métis, becomes premier of the Province of Manitoba.

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**1870s**—With populations devastated by over-hunting and urban development, the bison almost totally disappear from the Prairies.

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**1885**—The Northwest Resistance takes place and, in the aftermath, Louis Riel and eight First Nations people are captured and hanged.

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**1892**—The federal government begins making arrangements with the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian (later United) churches for the establishment of Indian residential schools.

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**1906**—Treaty No. 10 is negotiated and signed with Dene and Cree leaders, sharing lands in northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

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**1907**—An illegal removal vote is held by government agents. Ojibway (Anishinaabeg), Cree, and Métis citizens of the St. Peter’s Indian Settlement (near Selkirk) are forced to move to Peguis First Nation.

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**1939 to 1945**—Over 3,000 Manitoba First Nations soldiers and nurses serve during the Second World War.

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**1951**—The *Indian Act* is amended to remove the ban on traditional ceremonies and to allow First Nations people to legally enter drinking establishments.

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**1952**—The Province of Manitoba allows First Nations people the right to vote in provincial elections. They would receive the right to vote federally in 1960.

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**1956**—The Sayisi Dene are forced by the federal government to move to Churchill.

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**1958**—The Indian Métis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg is established to assist First Nations and Métis people who had moved to the city by providing information, counselling, referral housing, literacy, employment, and social services.

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**1967**—Dave Courchene Sr. (Sagkeeng Anishinaabe) is elected president of the newly formed Manitoba Indian Brotherhood.

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**1969**—Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs, releases the Liberal government's "White Paper," which proposes repealing the *Indian Act*, removing special status for First Nations people, and abolishing all treaties.

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**1971**—*Wahbung, Our Tomorrows* is published by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, outlining future policies for First Nations education, health, and social and economic development.

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**1971**—Helen Betty Osborne, an Indigenous woman from Norway House Cree Nation, is murdered in The Pas by four non-Indigenous men.

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**1975**—Native Studies departments are established at Brandon University and the University of Manitoba.

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**1980**—Elijah Harper (Red Sucker Lake Anishinaabe-Cree) becomes the first treaty person to be elected to the Manitoba Legislature, where he serves for 11 years (including a stint as Minister of Native Affairs and Minister of Northern Affairs).

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**1982**—First Nations, Inuit, and Métis treaty rights are officially recognized in the *Constitution Act*, which is adopted by Parliament.

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**1982**—The first constitutional conference on First Nation autonomy is held. It proposes the following four additions to the Canadian Constitution:

- recognition of rights acquired under agreements to settle land claims
  - a guarantee of equal recognition for men and women of rights arising from the treaties
  - an undertaking to consult the First Nations on any future constitutional amendment relating to them
  - an undertaking to hold three further conferences
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**1985**—The *Indian Act* is amended to end discrimination against First Nations women and allow for the recovery of status by certain First Nations women. The federal government also includes clauses to limit the extension of status to future generations (6.1 and 6.2).

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**1985**—The first female First Nations lawyer in Manitoba, Marion Ironquill Meadmore, receives the Order of Canada.

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**1987**—Dave Courchene Sr., C.M., LL.D., former Grand Chief (Sagkeeng Anishinaabe), receives the Order of Canada.

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**1988**—J.J. Harper (Wasagamach Anishinaabe-Cree) is shot by a City of Winnipeg police officer, an event that later led to the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

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**1990**—Elijah Harper, a First Nations Manitoba MLA, helps to defeat the Meech Lake Accord, which stated that Quebec is “a distinct society within Canada” but did not adequately address First Nations concerns. He is later elected to the House of Commons in Ottawa.

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**1988**—The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs is founded, and the first provincial leader is Chief Louis Stevenson (Peguis Anishinaabe).

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**1988**—Manitoba’s first First Nations judge, the Honourable Associate Chief Judge Murray Sinclair, LL.B. (Peguis Anishinaabe), is appointed Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba. Sinclair would later co-chair the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Commission to inquire into Aboriginal justice issues.

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**1990**—Angela Chalmers (Birdtail Sioux Dakota) becomes the first woman in the history of the Commonwealth Games to win both the 1,500 and 3,000 metre races at the 1990 games in Auckland, New Zealand. She later wins the bronze medal in the 3,000 metre race at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

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**1990**—René Highway, dancer (Barren Lands Cree), passes away. He had studied dance in New York, the Toronto Dance Theatre, Denmark’s Tukak Theatre, and the Native Canadian Centre in Toronto.

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**1991**—Ovide Mercredi, LL.B. (Grand Rapids Cree) is elected National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

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**1991**—The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report is released. It recommends extensive structural changes to the administration of justice in Manitoba and the creation of a distinct Aboriginal justice system for First Nations and Métis people.

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**1991**—The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) is established by the federal government with the mandate to work towards proposing practical solutions to restore the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

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**1992**—Reverend Stan McKay, B.Ed., LL.D. (Fisher River Cree) becomes the moderator of the United Church, which is the highest spiritual position within the church.

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**1992**—Phil Fontaine, B.A. (Sagkeeng Anishinaabe), Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, first speaks publicly about how the residential schools system caused many Indigenous people to suffer physical and sexual abuse.

**1992**—Eric Robison is the first Cree person from Cross Lake (Pimicikamak Cree Nation) to be elected NDP MLA for Rupertsland. He is later appointed Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism and the Minister responsible for Sport and Recreation.

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**1992**—W. Yvon Dumont (St. Laurent Anishinaabe Métis) is sworn in as Manitoba's Lieutenant-Governor.

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**1992**—The Southern Manitoba First Nations Repatriation Program is established in response to the identified needs of those First Nations members who were adopted or fostered into non-Indigenous homes across Canada, the USA, and Europe. Approximately 3,000 Manitoba First Nations children were removed into adoption and foster care from 1950 to 1980. The program is an effort to reunite lost generations.

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**1992**—The General Assembly of the United Nations declares 1995 to 2004 to be the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

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**1992**—Joseph Irvine Keeper, C.M., B.A. (Norway House Cree) receives the Order of Canada.

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**1994**—The Framework Agreement Initiative in Manitoba is signed by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. This agreement is the beginning of a process of community consultation and research that is intended to lead to Indigenous self-government.

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**1995**—The Louis Riel Institute is established by the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) to promote the educational and cultural advancement of the Métis people of Manitoba and promote awareness of their values, culture, heritage, and history.

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**1994**—A Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) Framework Agreement is signed, confirming the government's determination to address the problems of outstanding obligations owed to Manitoba's First Nations. The framework agreement is signed by negotiators for 19 Entitlement First Nations, as well as Canada and Manitoba.

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**1996**—The final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) is tabled in Canada’s Parliament. It makes 440 recommendations, calling for sweeping changes to the relationship among Aboriginal people, non-Aboriginal people, and the governments in Canada. These recommendations include the recognition of an Aboriginal order of government, including an Aboriginal parliament that has authority over matters related to the governance and welfare of Indigenous Peoples and their territories. It also calls for recognition of land rights and hunting rights, as well as control over their own social, education, health, and housing programs.

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**1996**—National Aboriginal Day (June 21) is established by the Governor General of Canada to celebrate Indigenous cultures and their many contributions to Canadian society.

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**1997**—Phil Fontaine is elected National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

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**1998**—Minister Jane Stewart, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, gives a formal apology to the First Nations people of Canada for years of neglect and mistreatment, including the widespread abuse of students at federally funded boarding schools, and announces a healing fund of \$350 million.

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**1999**—George Hickes (Inuit) becomes the first elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in the Province of Manitoba.

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**1999**—The Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) is established to provide services for teachers and students in First Nations schools.

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**1999**—The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) is established on September 1st as the first national Aboriginal television network in the world, with programming by, for, and about Aboriginal people, to share with all Canadians. This represents a significant milestone for Aboriginal Canada—for the first time in broadcast history, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people have the opportunity to share their stories with all of Canada through a national television network dedicated to Aboriginal programming.

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**2005**—The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba is created through a partnership between the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada (alongside other treaty relations commissions in their localities).

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**2006**—Tina Keeper (Norway House Cree/Anishinaabe) is the first Cree woman to be elected as a Member of Parliament for the Churchill riding in northern Manitoba.

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**2008**—The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) is officially established on June 2, 2008, as a response to the charges of abuse and other negative effects on First Nations children that resulted from the residential schools system. Judge Murray Sinclair (Peguis Anishinaabe) is appointed chair of the commission. In 2015, the TRC issues a report identifying 94 “Calls to Action” to “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.”

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### Thought-Provoking Quotations

“For most Aboriginal people, that line doesn’t exist. It’s a figment of someone else’s imagination. Historical figures such as Chief Joseph and Sitting Bull and Louis Riel moved back and forth between the two countries and, while they understood the importance of that border to the Whites, there is nothing to indicate that they believed in its legitimacy.”

– Thomas King, Cherokee writer, on Indigenous perspectives of the Canada–U.S. border

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“The fact is that when the settlers came, the Indians were there, organized in societies and occupying the land as their forefathers had done for centuries. That is what Indian title means . . .”

– Supreme Court of Canada

Calder v. Attorney General of British Columbia (1973) (Province of British Columbia)

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“Aboriginal people are nations. That is, they are political and cultural groups with values and lifeways distinct from those of other Canadians.”

– Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

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“One Elder has said, ‘Without the language, we are warm bodies without a spirit’.”

– Mary Lou Fox, Ojibwe Elder (Huang)

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“Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department.”

– Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs (1920) (Titley, 50)

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“. . .because we were created last of all beings, our continued survival requires us to be in respectful relationships with the land and all of its animals, the spiritual world, other people and ourselves.”

– Dene Kede (Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment)

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“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”  
– Source unknown

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“We don’t want a bigger piece of the pie. We want a different pie.”  
– Winona Laduke (2015)

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“The only compensation for land is land.”  
– Winona Laduke (2002)

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“Suicide rates of Indigenous Peoples, particularly among youth, are considerably higher in many countries, for example, up to 11 times the national average for the Inuit in Canada.”  
– UNPO

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“The United Nations Development Program Human Development Index ranks living conditions on Canadian Indian reserves at the same level as Belize, which was 78 on the 2010 index, behind Uruguay, Libya, Panama, Mexico, Malaysia, and Trinidad and Tobago.”  
– Rural Poverty Portal

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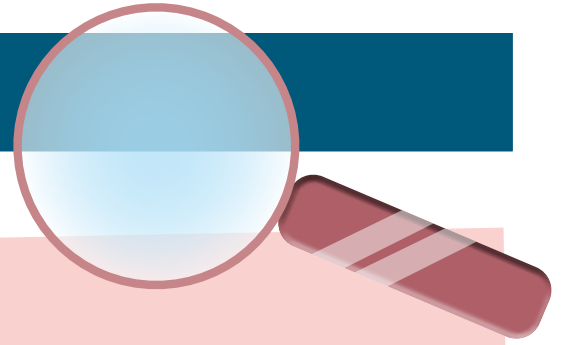
“Seventy-five percent of the food and fibre we grow today was discovered and cultivated by the native farmers and hunter-gatherers of North, Central and South America.”  
– Alexis Baden-Mayer and Ronnie Cummins

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## Making a Difference

Name	How they make a difference
<b>Verna Kirkness</b>	(born 1935, Fisher River Cree Nation, Manitoba) A Cree scholar, author, educator, and associate professor emeritus at the University of British Columbia. She is an Order of Canada recipient for her important contributions to Canadian Indigenous education policy and practices.
<b>Senator Murray Sinclair</b>	(born 1951, St. Peter’s Indian Reserve, Manitoba) An Ojibwe member of the Canadian Senate and lawyer who was the first Indigenous judge appointed in Manitoba, serving from 1988 to 2009. Sinclair was appointed to the Canadian Senate in 2016 and served as Chairman of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 2009 to 2015.
<b>Jikonhsaseh (also spelled Jigonhsasee or Jikonsase)</b>	An Iroquoian woman who, along with Deganawida and Hiawatha, united the Iroquois people and formed the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in the 15th or 16th century. She became known as “the Mother of Nations” among the Iroquois.
<b>Reverend Stanley John McKay</b>	(Cree/Métis, Fisher River Cree Nation, Manitoba) The first Indigenous person to serve as moderator of the United Church of Canada.
<b>Michael Greyeyes</b>	A trailblazing Plains Cree dancer, choreographer, actor, director, and educator from the Muskeg Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan.
<b>Alanis Obomsawin</b>	A U.S./Canadian, Abenaki filmmaker, singer, artist, and activist, she is well known for her National Film Board documentaries on First Nations issues.



## Glossary

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**Aboriginal:**

In Canada, Aboriginal Peoples include three groups: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. The term *Aboriginal* is used when speaking about Aboriginal rights (i.e., the inherent right to land) and when discussing things that happened to people whom the government recognized as being “Aboriginal” (e.g., Aboriginal children who were apprehended and put in residential schools).

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**assimilation, assimilate:**

Prior to 1867, the British Crown ruled over what is now known as Canada. It wanted the Indigenous Peoples to adopt British culture, religion, government, and way of life. After Confederation, the Canadian government continued to pursue Indigenous assimilation into mainstream culture.

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**autonomy:**

The independence of Indigenous Peoples to make their own decisions

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**cede:**

To surrender legal rights to territory.

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**clan:**

A group of people with common descent. For example, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) are a matrilineal society, where descent is traced through the women’s line. They have clan mothers who, among other things, were in charge of appointing clan chiefs. Indigenous Peoples organized their work and family responsibilities under the clan system, which is based on the principles of equal justice, equal voices,

law and order, and sacred teachings. Under the clan system, they would work together to attend to the physical, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual needs of the community.

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**colonization:**

Colonization refers to when one people is conquered by another people by destroying and/or weakening its basic social structures and replacing them with those of the conquering culture. (Mussell, p. 4)

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**decolonization:**

Decolonization refers to a process where a colonized people reclaims its traditional culture, redefines itself as a people, and reasserts its distinct identity. (Mussell, p. 4)

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**discrimination:**

Assuming difference based on prejudice.

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**diversity:**

Diversity in this document describes the differences in knowledge, skills, gender, education, age, culture, heritage, etc., that we perceive. For example, we can see diversity or variety among the different Indigenous groups in Canada.

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**First Nations:**

In Canada, *First Nations* is a term that means “a community”; it replaces the term *Indians* and the word *band*. There is no legal definition of *First Nations*.

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**holistic:**

Including the whole; the interdependence of the parts within the whole.



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**Indian:**

The term *Indian* was commonly used to describe Indigenous Peoples of North America. It is assumed the term was mistakenly coined when Columbus came upon the American continent in the search for a passage to India. An Indian today (other than being a person who comes from India) is a registered Aboriginal person in Canada who meets the requirements outlined in the *Indian Act*. Other uses of the term are generally considered to be inappropriate.

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**Indigenous:**

Indigenous Peoples are the descendants of the first people to inhabit a locality and self-identify as members of a collective. They are recognized by other groups or by state authorities and they wish to affirm and perpetuate their cultural distinctiveness in spite of colonial subjugation and pressures to assimilate. The United Nations has not adopted a definition for the word *Indigenous*, as there is such a diversity of Indigenous Peoples around the world. The term *Indigenous* in this course refers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. Indigenous Peoples have been subjected to colonization. They are not the dominant group in society. They have distinct social, economic, and political systems, as well as distinct languages, cultures, and beliefs. They wish to have self-government in order to prosper, to heal, and to provide a future for their descendants.

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**Indigenous Knowledge (IK):**

Indigenous Knowledge differs from place to place because local environments are different and have affected the development of this knowledge. At the same time, Indigenous Knowledge has

similarities all over the world. For example, respect for the Earth is a common factor of IK. “Indigenous Knowledge comprises all knowledge pertaining to a particular people and its territory, the nature or use of which has been transmitted from generation to generation.” (Battiste, p. 7)

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**Indigenous rights:**

Some examples of Indigenous rights are the preservation of land, religion, and language.

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**inherent rights:**

For some First Nations people, inherent rights are rights bestowed upon them by the Creator who placed them on Turtle Island and provided them with instruction on how to live.

In 1995, the federal government recognized the inherent right of Aboriginal self-government as an existing right within section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Basic rights that all people should have.

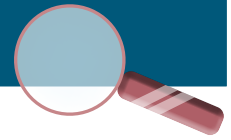
The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* lists many inherent rights.

Indigenous Peoples have the inherent right to land. They have been here since “time immemorial” and their rights to the land are a permanent right (inherent).

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**intergenerational impacts:**

Descendants of people who went to residential schools are experiencing residual negative effects of this experience, such as the loss of traditional knowledge including language and the sense of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.



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**Inuit:**

Indigenous people living in northern Canada, Greenland, and Alaska. The singular form is *Inuk*. Inuit means “people” in Inuktitut (the Inuit language). One of three Indigenous Peoples recognized by Canada’s *Constitution Act, 1982* (the others are Indian and Métis).

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**mainstream (culture):**

The dominant culture. Anything outside this dominant culture is considered to be different or other. The word *mainstream* originally meant the middle of a stream, which is where the current is strongest.

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**Métis:**

A person who self-identifies as Métis is of historic Métis nation ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples, and is accepted by the Métis nation. One of three Indigenous Peoples recognized by Canada’s *Constitution Act, 1982* (the others are Indian and Inuit).

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**Potlatch (or giveaway):**

A ceremony among some West Coast First Nations that can include a feast and dancing and giving away possessions to others. Often, a Potlatch is connected to an event such as a wedding, birth, or death. The potlatch functioned as a means for passing around surplus wealth of the society among community members. These giveaways are still happening today. A person does not require a reason to give a gift beyond the desire to give. People use giveaways to demonstrate generosity by giving gifts to the members of their tribal community who have been helpful to them during times of need or crisis.

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**reserve:**

A place set aside for status Indians to live. Many reserves in Canada are in isolated areas. When First Nations groups signed treaties, many had to leave their land and move to a reserve. The location of the reserve was chosen by the government.

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**restorative justice:**

Unlike the Canadian justice system, which focuses on punishment, the restorative justice system focuses on the needs of all people in order to bring peace and restore balance in the community. The needs of all people (including the offender) are addressed. Peaceful resolution is valued over punishment.

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**sacred:**

To act in a sacred manner is to understand and respect one’s place in the web of creation. Everything is connected. A person respecting the sacred acknowledges that he/she must create and maintain a respectful relationship with everything in nature.

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**scrip:**

Scrip was issued to extinguish the Aboriginal title of the Métis by awarding a certificate redeemable for land or money—the choice was the applicant’s—of either 160 or 240 acres or dollars, depending on their age and status.

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**self-determination:**

The right of a community to decide how to govern itself based on cultural beliefs and traditions. Self-determination goes beyond self-government because it includes the right to decide what is important and meaningful to the group, rather than just following what is important and meaningful to the larger/dominant society.





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## systemic racism:

Racism derived from the organization, policies, practices, and economic and political structures within organizations such as governments, which place minority racial and ethnic groups at a disadvantage in relation to an institution's racial or ethnic majority (e.g., when applying for jobs, many immigrants have challenges gaining employment even if they have better qualifications than the applicants from the majority population). Since this phenomenon is seen all over Canada, it is considered *systemic*.

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## time immemorial:

The distant past, long before there were written records. Some First Nations people believe their ancestors originated in North America. There are various scientific theories about when and how Indigenous Peoples arrived in North America. Various timelines for their arrival have been theorized, ranging from 12,000 to 30,000+ years ago.

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## treaty/treaties:

An agreement between different groups of people where each party agrees to certain conditions. One example is the Wampum Belt treaty. Another example are the treaties made between the Canadian government and the First Nations of Canada. First Nations view treaties as agreements that must be revisited and reinterpreted to suit changing times and conditions. Treaty rights are recognized and affirmed in the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

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## Turtle Island:

A term used by some Indigenous people to describe North America. *Haudenosaunne*

*example:* In oral tradition, muskrat swam to the ocean floor to get dirt. He put it on turtle's back, which grew into Turtle Island (North America).

*Anishinaabe example:* There are oral traditions describing Anishinaabe travel westward across Turtle Island. The Anishinaabe were one of the most widespread nations and can be found as far north as the Canadian sub-arctic and as far south as Mexico. Not all First Nations used the term *Turtle Island*.

*Modern use:* Today, many Indigenous people have adopted the term *Turtle Island*. It is a term that precedes European arrival, and it does not incorporate modern political boundaries such as the Canada-U.S. border (the 49th parallel).

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