

## Writing about Indigenous Peoples

1. Indigenous Peoples in Canada are not a homogeneous group with a standard set of interests and grievances. An effort should be made to reflect their diversity in stories specifically dealing with Indigenous groups.

Calling someone an Indigenous person in Alberta is unhelpful. Try to identify the Indigenous group, territory, affiliation, First Nation or people.

Milton Born With a Tooth, an Alberta Peigan; Barbara Harris of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory; Neil Sterritt, hereditary chief of the Gitksan First Nation in British Columbia; Angie Wahienhawi Barnes, grand chief of the Mohawk council at Akwesasne Territory near Cornwall, Ont.

2. If a language other than English or French is spoken, include it in the body of the story: John Mark, who addressed the forum in Cree.

3. Use the style and spelling preferred by Indigenous people for the names of their communities: Nickel Palm Reserve, Tsuut'ina Nation, Grassy Narrows First Nation. A good resource is the website for Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, which lists the names of most indigenous communities.

## Identities

1. The term **First Nation** or **Nations** is widely used by status and non-status First Nations people. It does not have a legal definition. When known, use the preference of the group or individual. Do not use First Nation for Inuit or Métis people.

**First Nation**, rather than reserve, is also used by many bands in the name of their community: **Gameti First Nation**.

2. Originally, the word **Métis** was applied to descendants of French traders and trappers and Indigenous women in the Canadian northwest.

Métis people evolved from the intermarriage of First Nations people and European settlers beginning in the 18th century, emerging with their own specific identity, unique culture, traditions, language and way of life. The Métis National Council defines Métis as "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."

The term Métis should only be used when individuals and communities use the term to describe themselves. It should not be used as a generic term for those of mixed descent, since many First Nations people with some non-First Nations ancestry are members of First Nations communities.

3. There are about 65,000 **Inuit** (never Eskimo) in Canada, according to the 2016 census.

Most live in 53 communities across the northern regions of Canada in **Inuit Nunangat**, which means "the place where Inuit live." Inuit

Nunangat comprises four regions: the **Inuvialuit Settlement Region** or simply **Inuvialuit region** (NWT and Yukon), **Nunavut**, **Nunavik** (Northern Quebec) and **Nunatsiavut** (Labrador). A fifth Inuit group — **Nunatukavut**, the Southern Inuit of Labrador — has yet to be recognized by the other groups and is in the process of negotiating a land claim.

The word **Inuit** means "the people." The singular of Inuit is **Inuk**. Their languages are known collectively as **Inuktitut**.

Note: Do not confuse the Inuit and the **Innu**, a First Nations people who live in Labrador and northeastern Quebec.

There are many dialects of Inuktitut which vary from region to region, along with spellings and pronunciation. Go with the subject's preference. Inuit from Nunatsiavut are called **Nunatsiavummiut** (or **Labradorimiut**, an older term); Inuit from Nunavik are called **Nunavimmiut**; Inuit from Nunavut are called **Nunavummiut**; Inuit from the Inuvialuit region are **Inuvialuit**.

While often mistaken for First Nations, Inuit have a different system of governance and terminology. They have community leaders, not chiefs; some communities have a mayor. They have homelands, not nations, tribes or reserves.

Inuit are represented nationally by the **Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami** (Inuit United in Canada).

## Languages

There are many different Indigenous languages spoken in Canada. **Cree** is the most common, followed by **Inuktitut** and **Ojibwa**. Many of the other languages are spoken by only a couple of thousand people.

**Iroquois** languages are spoken by such groups as the Six Nations, including the Mohawk and Oneidas.

Northern Indigenous people speak **Athapaskan** languages, while those in British Columbia speak languages from several families, the most common being **Salishan**.