



Glossary of Terms

This glossary is adapted from the Aboriginal Studies 10–20–30 program of studies. The terms and definitions, while not prescriptive, take into consideration Aboriginal diversity and also relate to the overall generic understandings of Aboriginal historical chronology. The terms and definitions have been obtained from the following sources:

Aboriginal Policy Framework (APF)

Government of Alberta. *Strengthening Relationships: The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework*. Edmonton, AB: Government of Alberta, 2000.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND)

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. "Terms and Definitions." June 1, 2001. http://www.aand.gov.ab.ca/PDFs/terms_definitions.pdf (Accessed July 2005).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)

From *Words First: An Evolving Terminology Relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*, Ottawa, ON: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2005.

Knots in a String (Knots)

From *Knots in a String: An Introduction to Native Studies in Canada* by Peggy Brizinski. Copyright 1993 University Extension Press. Reprinted by permission of University Extension Press, University of Saskatchewan.

Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WCP)

Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education. *The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs: Kindergarten to Grade 12*. [N.p.] Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, 2000.

Aboriginal Peoples

The original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution [*Constitution Act, 1982*, s. 35] recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples—Indians, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. (INAC)

Aboriginal Rights

Rights that some Aboriginal peoples of Canada hold as a result of their ancestors' longstanding use and occupancy of the land. The rights of certain Aboriginal peoples to hunt, trap and fish on ancestral lands are examples of Aboriginal rights. Aboriginal rights vary from group to group depending on the customs, practices, traditions, treaties and agreements that have formed part of their distinctive cultures. (INAC)

Band

A body of Indians for whose collective use and benefit lands have been set apart or money is held by the Crown, or declared to be a band for the purposes of the *Indian Act*. Each band has its own governing band council, usually consisting of one chief and several councillors. Community members choose the chief and councillors by election, or sometimes through traditional custom. The members of a band generally share common values, traditions and practices rooted in their ancestral heritage. Today, many bands prefer to be known as First Nations. (INAC)

A Band is defined in the *Indian Act* as a body of Indians for whose common use and benefit lands have been set aside or monies held by the Government of Canada or declared by the Governor in Council to be a Band. Most Bands prefer to be referred to as First Nations. (AAND)

Band Membership

What an individual Indian has when he or she is a recognized member of a Band and whose name appears on an approved Band List. Where a Band has adopted its own membership code, it may define who has a right to membership in the Band, so being a Status Indian is not necessarily synonymous with being a Band member. Status Indians who are not band members are listed in the General List. (AAND)

Bill C-31

The pre-legislation name of the 1985 *Act to Amend the Indian Act*. This act eliminated certain discriminatory provisions of the *Indian Act*, including the section that resulted in Indian women losing their Indian status and membership when they married Non-Status men. Bill C-31 enabled people affected by the discriminatory provisions of the old *Indian Act* to apply to have their Indian status and membership restored. (INAC)

This is an *Act to Amend the Indian Act*. It was enacted in June 1985. This legislation amended the *Indian Act* to remove discriminatory clauses against women, restore status and membership rights, and increase Indian control over their own affairs. Those people who have been reinstated as Status Indians under this *Act*, are often referred to as Bill C-31 Indians. (AAND)

Culture

The collection of rules, values and attitudes held by a society which allows people to communicate, to interpret behaviour, and to attach shared meaning to behaviour and events (Knots, p. 372).

The customs, history, values and languages that make up the heritage of a person or people and contribute to that person's or people's identity. (WCP)

First Nations

Usually used to refer to a politically autonomous band under the *Indian Act*—a nation of First Peoples.

The term First Nations is preferred by many Aboriginal peoples and is used to refer to the various governments of the first peoples of Canada. The term First Nations is preferred over the terms Indians, Tribes and Bands, which are used extensively by the federal, provincial and territorial governments. (WCP)

A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian,” which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term “First Nations peoples” refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and Non-Status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term “First Nation” to replace the word “band” in the name of their community. (INAC)

The people of the First Nations are the descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. ... Some 117,465 persons in Alberta identified themselves as North American Indian during the 1996 Canada Census. A registered Indian is a person registered under the *Indian Act*. (APF)

Indian

A term with many usages: could be a person of Indian ancestry, a Status Indian under the *Indian Act*, or a Treaty Indian.

Indian peoples are one of three peoples recognized as Aboriginal in the *Constitution Act, 1982*. It specifies that Aboriginal people in Canada consist of the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples. There are three categories of Indians in Canada: Status Indians, Non-Status Indians and Treaty Indians. (INAC)

Indian Act

Canadian legislation first passed in 1876 and amended many times since then; defines an Indian in relation to federal obligation and sets out a series of regulations applying to Indians living on reserves.

Canadian federal legislation, first passed in 1876, and amended several times since. It sets out certain federal government obligations and regulates the management of Indian reserve lands, Indian moneys and other resources. Among its many provisions, the *Indian Act* currently requires the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to manage certain moneys belonging to First Nations and Indian lands, and to approve or disallow First Nations by-laws. (INAC)

Indigenous People

Refers to all inhabitants originating in or native to a particular country, and their descendants.

Inuit

The Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada. Inuit live primarily in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and northern parts of Labrador and Québec. The word “Inuit” means “the people” in Inuktitut, the Inuit language. “Inuk” is the singular form of Inuit. (INAC)

Métis

Historically, the term “Métis” applied to the children of French fur traders and Cree women in the prairies, and of English and Scottish traders and Dene women in the North. Today, the term is used broadly to describe people of mixed First Nations and European ancestry who *identify* themselves as Métis, distinct from Indian people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. (INAC)

A term for people of mixed Aboriginal and European ancestry. The history of the Métis dates back to the days of the fur trade when Aboriginal people, particularly the Cree, and French or French-Canadian people married. Although the Métis have historically been refused political recognition by the federal government, they were recognized as Aboriginal people in the *Constitution Act of 1982*. The Métis are excluded from registration in the *Indian Act*. They were allotted money scrip or land scrip. (WCP)

A French word meaning “mixed blood” which usually refers to people of mixed ancestry who emerged during the days of the fur trade when Europeans and Indian people had children. The Métis are recognized as Aboriginal people in the *Constitution Act, 1982*. (AAND)

Métis Settlements

Métis Settlements Accord 1989 (APF)

In 1989 the Government of Alberta and the Federation of Métis Settlement Associations signed an historic accord. This led to the cooperative development of unique legislation that establishes the only land base and the only form of legislated Métis government in Canada. Proclaimed in 1990, the legislation includes: the *Métis Settlements Act*, the *Métis Settlements Land Protection Act*, the *Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act* and the *Métis Settlements Accord Implementation Act*.

Under the *Métis Settlements Act*, Métis means a person of Aboriginal ancestry who identifies with Métis history and culture.

The legislation established eight Settlement Corporations (Buffalo Lake, East Prairie, Elizabeth, Fishing Lake, Gift Lake, Kikino, Paddle Prairie and Peavine), the Métis Settlements General Council, the Métis Settlements Transition Commission and the Métis Settlements Appeal Tribunal.

An elected Settlement Council governs each Métis Settlement. The members of the Settlement Councils comprise the Métis Settlements General Council, which elects a four-person executive. The General Council deals with matters that affect the collective interests of the eight Settlements and holds the Letters Patent for the Settlement lands.

Nation

A group of native people with common ancestry who are socially, culturally, politically and linguistically united (Knots, p. 374).

Non-Status Indian

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. (INAC)

Reserve

Tract of land, the legal title to which is held by the Crown, set apart for the use and benefit of an Indian band. (INAC)

The *Indian Act* describes a reserve as lands which have been set apart for the use and benefit of a Band, and for which the legal title rests with the Crown in right of Canada. The federal government has primary jurisdiction over these lands and the people living on them. (AAND)

Status Indian

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*, which defines an Indian as “a person who, pursuant to this Act, is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian.” Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law. (INAC)

Treaty Indian

A person affiliated with a First Nation that has signed, or whose ancestors signed, a Treaty and who now receives land rights and entitlements as prescribed in a Treaty. Not all First Nations have signed treaties; for example, in British Columbia there are almost no treaties. (AAND)

A Status Indian who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown. (INAC)

Treaty Rights

First Nations signed treaties with various British colonial and, later, Canadian governments before and after Confederation in 1867. No two treaties are identical, but they usually provide for certain rights, including reserve lands, annuities (a small sum of money paid each year), and hunting and fishing rights. The treaty rights of an individual Treaty Indian will depend on the precise terms and conditions of the treaty that his or her First Nation signed.

Special rights to lands and entitlements that Indian people legally have as a result of treaties. (AAND)

Worldview

The worldview of the Aboriginal cultures is distinct from the worldview of the mainstream culture in Canada. This worldview presents human beings as inhabiting a universe made by the Creator and striving to live in respectful relationship with nature, one another and oneself. Each Aboriginal culture expresses this worldview in different ways, with different practices, stories and cultural products. (WCP)