

INDIGENOUS TERMINOLOGY

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The collective noun used in the Constitution Act 1982 includes the Indian (or First Nations), Inuit and Metis Peoples so legally it will always have a place at the terminology table. This term can be used interchangeable between "First Peoples" "First Nations" and "Indigenous Peoples".

*Some First Nations prefer not to be called Aboriginal Peoples. If using this term, it should always be "Aboriginal Peoples" together as opposed to "Aboriginal" or "Aboriginals".

FIRST NATION(S)

"First Nation" is a term used to identify Indigenous peoples of Canada who are neither Métis nor Inuit. This term came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the term "Indian" which many find offensive.

*First Nations people include both status and non-status Indians, so there's a need to be careful with its usage, especially if in reference to programs that are specifically for status Indians.

INDIAN

"Indian" is the legal identity of an Indigenous person who is registered under the Indian Act. One story about 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.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

A collective noun for First Nations. There are three categories of Indigenous peoples in Canada: Inuit, Métis and First Nations .

*If using interchangeably with First Nations as some may have more preference for Indigenous Peoples, for example, First Nation communities in Ontario have expressed publicly and politically that they prefer Indigenous Peoples

INUIT

Indigenous 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.

MÉTIS PEOPLES

Métis Peoples are people of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry. "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.

NATIVE

An outdated term referring to Indians (Status, Non-status, Treaty), Métis, and Inuit, but has largely been replaced by Indigenous. While some First Nations individuals refer to themselves as "Native" that doesn't give non-Indigenous people license to do so. Only use if the individual self-identifies using this term.