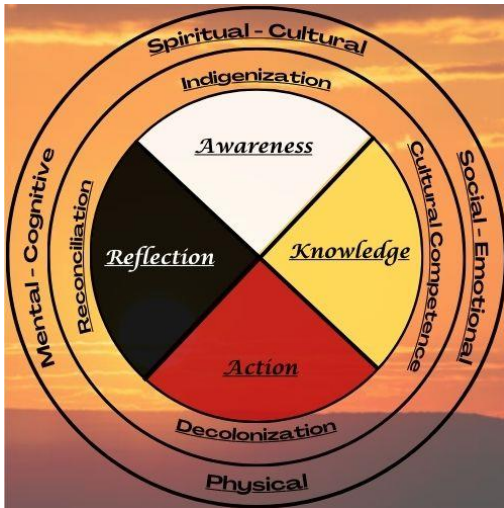


TERMINOLOGY



<http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indigenous-aboriginal-which-is-correct-1.3771433>

"Which is correct? Indigenous or Aboriginal?"

"What is the difference between First Nations and Métis?"

These questions and more are why we decided to give some basic 'protocols' for terminology use.

Considerations (from <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1529102490303>):

- There are over 50 different Indigenous Nations in Canada, living in over 600 communities
- The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples: Indians (more commonly referred to as First Nations), Inuit and Métis. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.
- More than 1.67 million people in Canada identify themselves as an Aboriginal/Indigenous person
- Indigenous Peoples are the fastest growing and youngest population in

Note: The term "Indigenous" is increasingly replacing the term "Aboriginal", as the former is recognized internationally, for instance with the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, the term Aboriginal is still used and accepted in some places. (from <https://www.national.ca/en/perspectives/detail/no-perfect-answer-first-nations-aboriginal-indigenous/>)

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

| TERM | DEFINITION |
|----------------------|---|
| Aboriginal | In the Canadian Constitution Aboriginal includes the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada. The preferred term is Indigenous. |
| First Nations | The proper term for those who are Indigenous but do not identify as Inuit or Métis. There are approximately 630 First Nations communities in Canada. |
| Indian | This term refers to the legal identity of a First Nations person who is registered under the Indian Act. Only to be used within this <u>legal</u> context (otherwise considered offensive). |
| Indigenous | This term is being used inter-changeably with Aboriginal Peoples (and is usually the preferred term). It includes the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada and is important to be used as it affirms the international recognition established by the United Nations. |
| Inuit | Indigenous people who live in the Arctic regions of Canada, Greenland, Russia and Alaska. |
| Innu | A First Nation in eastern Canada (mostly Labrador). They are not Inuit |
| Métis | An Indigenous group with formal recognition equal to that of the First Nations and Inuit. Their ancestors were European men who migrated to North America in the 17th and 18th centuries to work in the fur trade and who had children with First Nations women, and developed a unique and distinct culture. |

Indigenous or Aboriginal Which is correct?

Author: Bob Joseph, President of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. www.ictinc.ca

A collective noun for the original inhabitants of Canada has been a challenge ever since Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492. Believing he had landed in India, it followed that the existing population would be referred to as "Indians." Despite it being blatantly incorrect, it became the de facto collective noun. Initially "Indians" included First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Usage of the word Indian in Canada is decreasing due to its incorrect origin and connections to colonizer policies and departments such as the Indian Act, the Indian Department (precursor to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada), Indian Agent, Indian residential schools etc. Some communities continue to use Indian in their tribal name — Osoyoos Indian Band is an example. Some individuals still refer to themselves as Indians, but in terms of a collective noun, it is rarely used.

"Native" was also formerly a common term but is considered uncivil and rarely used in respectful conversations.

Aboriginal Peoples moved into popularity as the correct collective noun for First Nations, Inuit and Métis and was widely adopted by government and many national groups. This distinction was made legal in 1982 when the Constitution Act came into being. Section 35 (2) of the Act states, "Aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

Aboriginal Peoples was a fresh step, although there was resistance to its use from some groups.

And now the federal government has moved to embrace Indigenous and all of its legal ramifications. By recognizing First Nations, Inuit and Métis as Indigenous Peoples, the government is acknowledging their internationally legal right to offer or withhold consent to development under the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

On the topic of correct terminology, here's a tip — avoid using the possessive phrase "Canada's Indigenous Peoples (or First Nations/Inuit/Métis)" as that implies ownership of Indigenous Peoples. A better approach would be "Indigenous Peoples in Canada."

One of the key messages I give in my workshops and training: "Go with what they are calling themselves."

At the community level, if someone uses First Nation, as in Aamjiwnaang First Nation, then go with that. Some communities use band, as in Burns Lake Band, while others use nation, as in Squamish Nation. Some use Indian, as in the Osoyoos Indian Band.

In Canada, there is a tendency to cringe when Indian is used, as it has been used as a racial slur toward so many generations of First Nations. We can thank Christopher Columbus for that misnomer being introduced.

But it's not about your comfort level — it's about showing respect and using the term that individuals and organizations have chosen for themselves. (*Bob Joseph is founder of **Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.**, and member of the Gwawaenuk Nation.*)

Other sites for further explanation/exploration:

<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-terminology-guidelines-for-usage>

<https://teachingcommons.lakeheadu.ca/indigenous-terminology>

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1529102490303>