

WHICH TERM SHOULD WE USE?

Currently, the most common and acceptable term to use is *indigenous* as it is a word used to describe a person's connection to the lands of their origin. However, we must remember that this term must also be used appropriately as it is another umbrella term to describe First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples. Furthermore, should not be used to describe these peoples at all times as each group has their own distinct languages, cultures, and traditions.

For more information please contact your local First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Liaison.

How should we refer to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Students?

A Guide for teachers

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What does First Nations, Metis, and Inuit mean?

1. What is a Status Indian (First Nations)?

The Indian Act was originally written in 1867 to legislate assimilation and civilization policies for First Nations peoples. This document legally defines who is a "Status Indian" and entitled to be a registered Indian. This is Canadian legislation that governs matters concerning Indian Status, bands, and reserves.

2. What is a Non-Status Indian?

A Non-Status Indian is a First Nations person who has First Nations ancestry but legally does not hold Status as a First Nations person according to the Indian Act.

3. Bill C-31 (1985)

In 1985 many First Nations people were granted Status as a result of Bill C-31 which attempted to rectify previous laws that led to many families losing their Status as a result of females marrying a Non-Status person as well as forcible enfranchisement.

4. Metis

Often thought of as a "mixed blood" person who is half Indigenous & half European (French, Scottish, etc.) According to the Metis Nation of Alberta website "*Métis means a person who self-identifies as a Métis, is distinct from other aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation.*" Many of these people can trace their roots back to the Red River region of Manitoba or received "scrip" in place of signing any treaties.

5. Inuit

People who inhabit the Arctic regions of the world and have a distinct culture, language, and traditions that are different from First Nations and Metis peoples.

TERMS USED HISTORICALLY

- Indian: a legal term given by the Canadian government to describe First Nations peoples.
- Native
- Aboriginal
- First Nations
- Indigenous
- FNMI

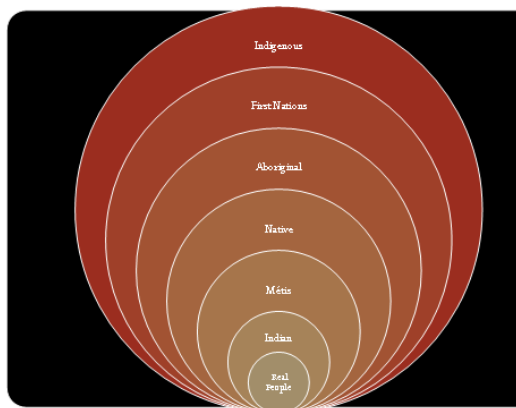


Photo credit: Dr. Dwayne Donald

TERMS TO NOT USE

- Indian
- FNMI

WHY NOT FNMI?

Our experience with the way 'FNMI' has been used has not always been positive and below is an explanation of why educators should move away from using this term:

1. FNMI strips the identity away from our students

and becomes another label given by dominant society. Educators & colleagues have used FNMI in the following ways when describing a single student: "he/she is FNMI." "Are they FNMI?" or even ask "are you FNMI?"

2. 'FNMI' is often seen being used in meetings, emails, presentations, during PD sessions, and also at university lectures or workshops. An honest mistake but, this terminology is meaningless and is a result of having an initialism to describe a group of people that allows others to misuse it.
3. Our students are First Nations (Anishnaabe, Nehiyaw, Isga i?abi, Niitsitapi, Dene, etc.), Metis, and Inuit and it is important to acknowledge and honour these names as they hold meaning within who each of these groups are as a people.

WHAT ARE FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES ACTUALLY CALLED?

Although there are many prescribed names for First Nations peoples in Canada, First Nations peoples do have their own names for themselves that are not often heard or referred to by our institutions. Here is a list of names for local First Nations peoples who have traditional territory in Alberta:

- Nehiyaw (Cree)
- Dene
- Isga i?abi (Nakoda Sioux)
- Nitsitaapi (Blackfoot)