Elements of Indigenous Style

A GUIDE FOR WRITING BY AND ABOUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

—Article 31, United Nations Declaration on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007

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Terminology

The goal of Indigenous style is to show respect for Indigenous ways of being the world in the publishing process and on the page.

The last chapter was about the publishing process. This chapter and the next are about the words on the page.

"Getting it right" in terms of words on the page can be difficult. The standard you have to meet as an editor or publisher is basically impossible: it is the standard of each reader, each with their particular context and their own identity. A lot of people would like to talk about Indigenous issues honestly and don't want to cause offence—they can get very stressed out about the proper terms.[21] In addition, the process of decolonizing language surrounding Indigenous Peoples is not finished: terms, names, and styles continue to evolve.

So, plan on not getting it right. Make your best effort to make informed, mindful choices about terminology.

This means, first and foremost, taking direction from the author or from the Indigenous People or Peoples at the centre of a work. It also means declaring your limitations as an arbiter of language: explain the choices and thought that inform the words on the page, in an editor's introduction, for example, or in footnotes; and acknowledge the place of different terminology in other Indigenous works.

Find your way through, and show how you have found your way through.

Inappropriate terms

Although some terminology surrounding Indigenous Peoples continues to evolve, some terminology is clearly *always* not right.

Just as words such as *negro* to describe African Americans and *man* or *mankind* to describe human civilization have fallen out of use because they are generally offensive to African Americans and women, there are many terms associated with Indigenous Peoples that require—at least—rethinking, and, in some cases, complete avoidance.

Chelsea Vowel states the following on inappropriate terminology: "Surprisingly, there are a great number of people who still think the use of some of these terms is up for debate, but I would sincerely like to help you avoid unintentionally putting your foot in your mouth. So, between us, let's just agree the following words are never okay to call Indigenous peoples: savage, red Indian, redskin, primitive, half-breed, squaw/brave/buck/papoose."[22]

This section reviews examples of questionable or culturally inappropriate terminology.

The origins of inappropriate terms

Many inappropriate terms stem from three main sources:

- **Explorer and missionary language.** The connotations of many terms derived from explorers and missionaries are generally biased by the ideas of conquest of territory and conversion of Indigenous Peoples to Christianity.

- **Anthropology and archaeology.** An entire lexicon of terminology commonly used in reference to Indigenous Peoples came out of the discipline of anthropology, and to a lesser extent, archaeology. Both disciplines tend to view Indigenous Peoples as remnants of the past, and many terms tend to denigrate

and dehumanize Indigenous Peoples. They have often presented Indigenous Peoples as "primitive" societies that should be documented before they inevitably develop into modern, Western-based peoples (i.e., "the vanishing race"). These precepts clearly go against the Indigenous cultural principle that Indigenous Peoples have vibrant, evolving cultures based on ancient fundamentals.

- **Kitsch terminology.** A lexicon of terminology used in reference to Indigenous Peoples can be traced to American and Canadian kitsch literature and filmmaking. This particular set of terminology is generally marked by vagueness, meaninglessness, and overt racism, and is thus often extremely offensive to Indigenous Peoples.

Works in each of these areas or genres borrow terminology from the others, and, in some cases, the common use of terms in a particular area has become accepted across the board.

It is also important to note that while many of these terms may be inappropriate or problematic, they are often still used (even by Indigenous Peoples). Many terms retain an ambiguous status as they are used habitually or because no alternate terminology has been proposed.

Examples of inappropriate and offensive terms

artifact: This term is commonly used in anthropology, archaeology, and art history to refer to artworks and functional objects produced by Indigenous Peoples. The etymological *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) has two definitions for *artifact* relevant to its use for Indigenous cultural objects. The first is "an object made or modified by human workmanship, as opposed to one formed by natural processes." The second is specifically from archaeology: "an excavated object that shows characteristic signs of human workmanship or use." Both definitions are problematic in Indigenous contexts.

The first definition, when applied to Indigenous cultural materials, risks stripping the materials of their essential connection to specific Indigenous Peoples and their forms of expression. The second definition risks stripping them of their connection to the present: it can be interpreted to mean that ancient Indigenous artworks, for example, are remnants of the past and disassociated from the contemporary members of an Indigenous People.

When you see *artifact*, you are most likely looking at content that needs reworking and vetting. Consult the Indigenous People at the centre of the content, and ask them for the words to describe the purpose and significance of what is at issue. Do your best to be as specific as possible.

band: This term is commonly used to describe Indigenous groups in anthropology and was adopted, and is still used, by the Canadian government. The relevant OED definition of *band* is "a confederation of persons having a common purpose."

Compare this to OED's first definition of *nation*: "a large aggregate of communities and individuals united by factors such as common descent, language, culture, history, or occupation of the same territory, so as to form a distinct people."

Or compare it to this OED definition of *people*: "the body of men, women, and children comprising a particular nation, community, ethnic group, etc."

Here is an OED definition of *society*: "the aggregate of persons living together in a community, especially one having shared customs, laws, and institutions."

Band describes something looser than *nation*, *people*, or *society*. It does not specify political or national structure, or include historical, cultural, or territorial aspects of identity. It is therefore inappropriate to describe Indigenous Peoples, who have rich and ancient histories, cultural traditions, and governance systems.

Despite its problems, *band* must in some cases be used because

it is established in the Indian Act as the administrative body of a reserve and the collective as a whole. The colonizing Indian Act has also divided Indigenous Nations into bands, and encouraged Indigenous People to identify with their band.[23]

barbarian/barbarism: These terms were first used in explorer logs to denote Indigenous Peoples as lacking in cultural refinement. They carry connotations of "violent and unstructured peoples" with little or no social organization, and also have evolutionary connotations. The terms are obviously inappropriate to describe the hundreds of complex Indigenous societies and political institutions that adhered to such concepts as democracy and gender equality.

brave: An offensive term for an Indigenous man.

buck: An offensive term for a young Indigenous man.

clan: As a lowercase term, this has the same problems as *band*. It conveys loose, informal organization instead of structure, history, and purpose. As an uppercase term, *Clan* describes governance structures, such as the Clan System of the Haudenosaunee, which involves eight Clans that transcend, and so integrate, the individual nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. This is an appropriate use. Many other Indigenous Nations also have Clan Systems, which are an important part of traditional governance, and social and spiritual organization.

discovery: This term, when used to describe European arrival in the Americas and other places occupied by Indigenous Peoples, literally implies that Indigenous Peoples did not exist as social beings with the capacity to occupy territory. It is erroneous and ethnocentric, but still commonly used in anthropological and historical texts. The legal counterpart to *discovery* is *terra nullius* (generally meaning "unoccupied lands"), which along with its various legal implications, has been argued in hundreds of court cases about

land title over the years. In 2014, in *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down *terra nullius* as a concept that applies to lands that Indigenous Peoples lived on and used before the arrival of Europeans. Further, in its 2015 final report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada said: "We call upon all religious denominations and faith groups . . . to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*."[24]

Eskimo: This term came into use in the seventeenth century to describe the Indigenous People who traditionally inhabit the Arctic regions in what are now Canada, Greenland, and Siberia. The term is rooted in explorer lexicon, and sometimes has inappropriate qualifiers depending on the explorer who claimed first contact—hence the so-called *Mackenzie Eskimos* in the Canadian Arctic.

The correct term—*Inuit*—began to emerge as a term in English in the early 1960s and became accepted English-language use, in line with what Inuit have always called themselves. The use of *Inuit* was one of the earliest examples of an Indigenous group in Canada changing terminology to assert their identity.

folklore: This term is commonly used in anthropology, archaeology, and art history to refer to the traditional cultural practices of Indigenous Peoples, the common people or "folk," and other predominantly non-Western groups. It also appears in the title of a UN agency: the World Intellectual Property Organization Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore—which is an example of how archaic terminology continues to persist. The term can be taken to imply that there is a differentiation and hierarchy between Indigenous Peoples' cultural practices and those of Western cultures, especially Western "high culture."

The problematic nature of the term makes it best to avoid: *cultural practice* is more appropriate.

heathen/pagan: These terms describe Indigenous Peoples as non-Christian or non-Hebrew with the connotation that their religions are therefore unenlightened and lacking in spiritual, cultural, and moral codes. They were originally applied to Indigenous Peoples by missionaries, so they also connote that Indigenous religions are morally corrupt. This connotation justified oppressive legislation in Canada, including the outlawing of the Potlatch among Indigenous Peoples of the West Coast and of the Sundance among Indigenous Peoples of the Prairies. The terms *heathen* and *pagan* have largely fallen out of use, but are common in missionary and explorer logs, and early Canadian government documents and legislation. If a current work quotes from these historical sources, it is important to establish that the terminology is no longer appropriate in, for example, a paragraph to introduce the content or in a footnote.

Indian: This term was commonly used to describe the hundreds of distinct nations of Indigenous Peoples throughout North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. It traces back to the explorer tradition and was coined by Columbus as he was "looking for Asia. . . . [He was] going to find India. . . . And so [he] looked at the first peoples . . . on the shores and said, these must be Indians."[25] The term, therefore, was a misnomer from the start, although it was widely used by explorers and missionaries throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and was also commonly used in early anthropological texts, Canadian federal government documents, and Canadian and American mainstream society up to the present day.

Avoid this term as a general descriptor of identity. Use *First Nations* or *Indigenous Peoples* instead, with the clear understanding that *First Nations* describes Indigenous Peoples within Canada who do not identify as Métis or Inuit.

It is appropriate to use *Indian* to refer to the status of individual people under the Indian Act. In these situations, it is better to say *Status Indian*, or even *Status Indian under the Indian Act*, to clarify the specific context of use. Note that the Indian Act is a controversial piece of legislation, often under discussion among Indigenous Peoples. It may, therefore, undergo changes that will alter the context for terminology.

land claim: This term was originally used by Indigenous Peoples in the late 1960s to describe their right to ownership over, or compensation for, lands they traditionally occupied. Largely due to the increased recognition of Indigenous Peoples' title to Traditional Territories by the Supreme Court of British Columbia in the Calder case and the James Bay Project injunction, both in 1973, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) adopted the term and applied it to its land claims policy in 1974. As the DIAND policy did not fully recognize Indigenous Title to land, the term gradually began to fall out of use among Indigenous Peoples, starting in the early 1980s, except when referring to the DIAND policy. The word *claim* in the term is problematic for Indigenous Peoples because it implies that they must apply to obtain ownership over land, not that they have inherent ownership. Due to the problematic nature of the term, *Indigenous Title* is more appropriate.

legends/mythology/myths/tales: These terms are often applied to Oral Traditions. This is offensive to Indigenous Peoples because the terms imply that Oral Traditions are insignificant, not based in reality, or not relevant. The term *legends* can also be construed this way, although *legends* can be acceptable to Indigenous Peoples in the sense that Oral Traditions describe past events that are legendary. To avoid misunderstanding, it's best to use terms such as *Oral Traditions* and *Traditional Stories*.

Native: This term was one of the most common descriptors of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and other parts of the world,

throughout the colonial period and into the 1980s. It has fallen out of use in Canada for the most part, but still has currency in the United States (i.e., the term *Native American*). The term is problematic because of possible confusion with its wider definition of a "local inhabitant or life form," and because it does not denote that there are many distinct Indigenous groups.

peace pipe: A made-up, erroneous "Indigenous object" or "Indigenous ceremony," which may or may not be about the authentic Indigenous practice of the Sacred Pipe (Ceremony).

prehistory: This term remains common in anthropological, historical, and art history texts. It implies that only written documents count as legitimate "history," and that Indigenous Peoples were not making and documenting history until they came into contact with Europeans. The term is erroneous and ethnocentric because it does not acknowledge Oral Traditions. The Supreme Court of Canada, however, does. In 1997, in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, the court noted that "the laws of evidence must be adapted in order that [oral histories] can be accommodated and placed on an equal footing with the types of historical evidence that courts are familiar with."

primitive: This term was commonly used to describe Indigenous Peoples by explorers and missionaries throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and was also commonly used in anthropological texts and in early Canadian federal government documents and letters. The relevant OED definitions of *primitive* are "an original inhabitant, an aboriginal; a person belonging to a preliterate, nonindustrial society," and "that which recalls an early or ancient period; simple, unsophisticated or crude things or people as a class." The term gradually faded from common use, starting around the 1940s, and is now widely considered unacceptable. The term is considered degrading and inappropriate, as well as carrying evolutionary connotations.

rain/war dance: Made-up, erroneous terms for "Indigenous dances" supposedly done before going to war or to bring rain. These terms may or may not be referring to authentic Indigenous spiritual practices to show reverence for, and ask help from, the Creator.

Redman/Redskin: An offensive term for an individual Indigenous man or for Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere as a whole.

ritual/ritualistic: These terms were first used by missionaries in reference to Indigenous religious ceremonies, such as the Potlatch, the Sundance, and the Sweat Lodge. The terms imply that Indigenous religions are not legitimate religions, but rather more cult-like, thus implying an element of evil. The term is judgemental, Christiancentric, and inappropriate.

savage: This term was commonly used to describe Indigenous Peoples by explorers and missionaries throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and was also commonly used in early anthropological texts as late as the nineteenth century. The term also had currency in Canadian federal government documents and letters concerning "Indian affairs" up to the early twentieth century. The relevant OED definition for *savage* is "living in a wild state; belonging to a people regarded as primitive and uncivilized." Around the 1940s, the term began to gradually fade from common use and is now widely considered unacceptable. The term is clearly degrading and not appropriate to describe complex Indigenous societies that exist throughout the world. It also has evolutionary connotations.

self-government: This term was originally conceptualized and used by Indigenous Peoples in the late 1970s to describe their right to govern their own affairs. DIAND adopted the term and applied it to its community-based self-government policy in 1984. As the DIAND policy was more of a municipal government model and did not fully recognize governmental powers to the extent that

most Indigenous Peoples were asserting, the term began to fall out of use among Indigenous Peoples starting in the late 1980s, except when referring to the DIAND policy. Due to the problematic nature of the term, *self-determination* is more appropriate. *Self-determination* is also the term used in UNDRIP.

squaw: An offensive term for an Indigenous woman.

tomahawk: An erroneous umbrella term for Indigenous axe-type weapons.

tom-tom: An erroneous term for an Indigenous drum, or a term describing a stereotyped drum beat.

tribe/tribal: This term has a somewhat ambiguous status among Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

As a general descriptor of Indigenous Peoples, it is problematic. Like *band*, *tribe* describes something looser than *nation*, *people*, or *society*. The relevant OED definition is "a particular race of recognized ancestry: a family." This alone makes *tribe* a less-than-accurate descriptor of Indigenous Peoples. *Tribe* also has older, more degrading meanings that cling to it. For example, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, Sixth Edition*, published in 1998, defines *tribe* as "a group of primitive families under a recognized chief."

The term *tribe* (lowercase) is still used in certain instances, however, such as *tribal police*, to describe a reserve policing unit. In Canada, some Indigenous Peoples use *Tribe* (uppercase) as a way to refer to themselves, as in the Blood Tribe. These are acceptable uses.

It should also be noted that *tribe* still has currency in the United States among Indigenous Peoples.

uncivilized: This term traces back to explorer and missionary logs (and was later adopted by anthropology and Canadian government bureaucratic and legislative text). Like *barbarian*,

it is evolutionary in nature and carries connotations of "violent unstructured peoples" with little or no social organization, who are far less refined than European-based societies, or even unrefined. In the missionary context, the term also carries a connotation of a people who are "un-Christian" and therefore backward, evil, and in need of conversion.

PRINCIPLE 11: INAPPROPRIATE TERMINOLOGY

Works should avoid inappropriate terminology used in reference to Indigenous Peoples, except when:

- specifically describing or discussing this terminology as terminology
- referring to a proper name, or the name of an institution or document, that contains the terminology
- quoting from a source that contains the terminology (e.g., a historical source)

If a work quotes from a historical source that uses inappropriate terminology, it is important to flag this content. This means discussing the terminology in a footnote or endnote, or, better yet, in a paragraph in run of text.

Appropriate terms

This section reviews a sampling of appropriate terminology as applied to Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples have their own terms in their own languages for most of these terms (not for terms related to the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples, because these arose in legislative and legal contexts during the twentieth century). So, many of the words presented in this section are English translations. Translations came about partly because English has become the language spoken by the greatest number of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The primacy of English among Indigenous Peoples comes from encroachment by Canada's dominant culture and from enforcement of the English language in the residential school system.

Many terms in this section are capitalized counter to the recommendations of conventional style guides. For a discussion of capitalization in Indigenous style, see chapter 7.

Aboriginal: This term gained currency in the 1990s as an appropriate way to refer to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. It is embedded in Section 35 of Canada's constitution and in Section 25 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (although lowercase there). It is also part of the language of many court cases and legal documents. The term's currency may stem from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which was established in 1992 and concluded in 1996, and which was key in setting a context for reconciliation in Canada.

Aboriginal is still an appropriate term, but is being replaced by *Indigenous*—a choice often made by Indigenous Peoples themselves—possibly in recognition of UNDRIP, which dates from 2007. The process has been gradual. For example, the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, completed in 2015, uses *Aboriginal* and *Indigenous* interchangeably. In other contexts, *Aboriginal* has been dropped. For example, the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation changed its name to Indspire in 2012, and describes itself as an "Indigenous-led registered charity." CBC Aboriginal changed its name to CBC Indigenous in 2016.

Aboriginal is always an adjective, never a noun: an Aboriginal person, Aboriginal Peoples. For more details on how to use *Aboriginal*, see the entry for *Indigenous*. It follows the same rules.

the Creator: This term has become widely accepted by Indigenous Peoples to describe the supreme being who made the world and all life, placed peoples on specific territories, and gave them laws to live by. It is also the divine figure that is worshipped in various religions and ceremonies. The term has become the most widely accepted English term by Indigenous Peoples and is generally preferred over, and should replace, other terms such as *God* and *the Great Spirit.*

First Nations: This term was originally coined by Indigenous Peoples in the late 1970s, partly as an alternative to inappropriate terms such as *Native* and *Indian*, which were in common usage at the time. It was adopted by the national political organization, the Assembly of First Nations (previously the National Indian Brotherhood), in the early 1980s. In the 1990s, the term gradually became adopted by the general Canadian population.

The term has strong political connotations: it refers to separate nations that occupied territory before the arrival of Europeans. The term also has a double meaning in that it is sometimes used to describe a reserve or a group within a larger nation (e.g., the Westbank First Nation, which is actually a small portion of the Okanagan Nation).

First Nations refers to a segment of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. To use it in a context that describes all Indigenous Peoples in Canada, you need to say "First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis"; or, depending on your meaning (see the entries for *Inuit* and *Métis*), "First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples." In that context, critics of the term, such as Métis leader Howard Adams, have pointed out that the word *first* can be interpreted as elitist.

It is also worth noting that *First Nations* is not used in reference to Indigenous Peoples in the United States—in fact, it is sometimes used to distinguish between Indigenous Peoples on either side of the border. For example, a welcome at a powwow in the United States might go "Welcome to all the First Nations people here," which would mean "Welcome to all the Indigenous people from Canada here."

First Nations as an adjective is always plural:

- A *First Nations person* is an individual who comes from a First Nation. You can also say, "She is First Nations."
- *First Nations people* are people who come from First Nations, but whose particular First Nations are not at issue—as in the example of the welcome to an American powwow.

It can also be a noun, which can be plural or singular:

- For example, *the First Nations of the Prairies* are all of the First Nations that live on the Prairies.
- You can also talk about a First Nation in particular, such as Buffalo Point First Nation.

First Peoples: This term is rarely used by Indigenous Peoples to describe themselves, although it is also not considered particularly offensive or problematic. It recognizes that Indigenous Peoples are distinct groups, without the political connotations of the term *First Nations*. It is not widely used in the literature, and some organizations have stopped using it, such as the Canada Council for the Arts. Other organizations have not: the Canadian Museum of History—Canada's national museum of history and identity—uses it for one of its permanent exhibitions, the First Peoples Hall.

Indigenous: This term is gaining currency, replacing *Aboriginal* in many contexts (except, notably, Canada's constitution, where Section 35 affirms "the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada," and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms where Section 25 talks about "aboriginal, treaty or other rights and freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada"). It is used in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, which has perhaps driven an increasing preference for *Indigenous*. The Canadian government department DIAND (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs) is currently Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.

The term *Indigenous Peoples* is used to refer to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada collectively, and also to refer to Indigenous Peoples worldwide collectively. In some contexts, specific language adds useful clarity, as in *the Indigenous Peoples in what is now Canada* or *Indigenous Peoples around the world.*

Indigenous is always an adjective. In Canada, use of the term goes like this:

- An *Indigenous person* is an individual who identifies as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis.
- *Indigenous Peoples* are the distinct societies of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. This term recognizes the cultural integrity and diversity of Indigenous Peoples.
- An *Indigenous People* is a single one of the distinct societies of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. Inuit, for example, are an Indigenous People. So are the Nisga'a, the Siksika, and the Haudenosaunee.
- *Indigenous people* refers to people who identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis in a context where their specific identity is not at issue. In chapter 1, Wendy Whitebear uses the term in reference to anyone who identifies as Indigenous—a use I also occasionally need in this book. In chapter 3, Lee Maracle uses it as a way to note the tendency of mainstream society to think of Indigenous Peoples as "all the same."

Indigenous Right: This term describes an inherent and original right possessed collectively by Indigenous Peoples, and, in some cases, by individual Indigenous people. Some Indigenous Rights have legal recognition in Canada, and some do not. So, the term can assert a moral and ethical imperative.

For example, hunting and fishing is a collective Indigenous Right: Indigenous Peoples in Canada have this right. It is also an Indigenous Right of individual Indigenous hunters and fishers. This right has some recognition in law—for example, the Supreme Court decision *R. v. Powley* in 2003 recognized hunting and fishing as an "aboriginal right" within section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 that includes the Métis. Some jurisdictions, however—notably Alberta—contest the legal basis of Métis hunting and fishing.

Ownership and control of Indigenous cultural property is another example of an Indigenous Right, but a right only exercised collectively and without, so far, legal recognition in Canada.

Indigenous Title: This term refers to the Indigenous Right to collective ownership and jurisdiction over land and resources. Some Indigenous Peoples have successfully negotiated title to their Traditional Territories, but not all. So, like *Indigenous Right*, *Indigenous Title* can express a moral and ethical imperative.

For example, you can talk about the Indigenous Title of the Nisga'a, which was recognized in a land allocation under the treaty the Nisga'a concluded with British Columbia in 1998. You can also talk about the Indigenous Title of the Lubicon Lake Cree in Alberta, who have no treaty and who continue to assert sovereignty over their Traditional Territory. Indigenous Title also has currency in the context of the Numbered Treaties, concluded between First Nations in what is now western Canada and Canada's government in the late 1800s, as in "What terms did First Nations negotiate in exchange for ceding Indigenous Title, and how well has Canada met those terms?"

Inuit/Inuk: *Inuit* is the term for the Indigenous People who traditionally inhabit the Arctic regions of what is now Canada, Greenland, and Siberia.

Inuit can be an adjective, as in "an Inuit agreement" or "an Inuit musician."

Inuit is also a collective noun. It means *the people*, so it does not take an article or the qualifier *people*. For example, you can say "Inuit are traditional hunters of the whale." (The following are incorrect: "The Inuit are traditional hunters of the whale"; "The Inuit people are traditional hunters of the whale.")

Inuk is a singular noun for an individual. Examples of its correct use include the following: "This Inuk is a celebrated Inuit

musician." (The following are **incorrect**: "The musician is an Inuk"; "He is an Inuk musician.")

Métis: This term has many contexts in Canada. People who self-identify as Métis do so for different reasons.

In one of its meanings, *Métis* describes an Indigenous People who emerged during the fur trade from the intermarriage of people of European descent and people of Indigenous descent. These people were at the centre of the Red River Resistance of 1869–70 and the Riel Resistance of 1885. The term *the Métis*—a collective noun with the definite article—can be taken to refer exclusively to this group (some commentators refer to them as "the historic Métis"). The Métis who lived at Red River at the time of the Red River Resistance were both French-speaking and English-speaking—a result of the involvement of France in the fur trade through Montréal, and of England in the fur trade through Hudson Bay. *Métis*, of course, is a French term that means "mixed." The English-speaking Métis at Red River sometimes referred to themselves as Half-breeds, which is a term that has fallen out of use, although it is not necessarily offensive.

In another of its meanings, *Metis*, without the accent, is a way English-speaking people of mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestry might refer to themselves, including those of Red River heritage and those of other heritages. Generally, *Métis*, with the accent in place, has currency as an umbrella term, even in contexts where other words from the French language are rendered without accents. For example, a 2017 article in the *Globe and Mail* used *Montreal* (no accent) and *Métis* (with the accent).

Métis also refers to people who identify as having mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage and who do not descend from the Métis of Red River. The term *Métis peoples* (lowercase and plural *peoples*) recognizes the complex of possible identities, and can be used as an unambiguous umbrella term to encompass

everyone of mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage, including people of Red River heritage and others.

As a substitute for the term *Indigenous Peoples*, the phrase "First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis" could imply a focus on the Métis of Red River heritage in the final term. The phrase "First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples" indicates a broad focus on all people of mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage in the final term.

As a noun, *Métis* can be plural or singular: "He is Métis"; "Alberta is the only province in Canada that has designated land for the Métis."

Métis is also an adjective: Métis heritage, a Métis person.

Nation: This term has become widely accepted by Indigenous Peoples to describe separate Indigenous groups as political entities. It is an assertion that Indigenous Peoples meet the four criteria of nationhood under customary international law (as first set out in the Montevideo Convention of 1933), which are a permanent population, a definite occupied territory, a government, and the ability to enter into relations with other nations.

Nation is usually embedded in the name of a particular Indigenous People, and as such is capitalized—for example, Six Nations of the Grand River, the Métis Nation of Alberta, and Bigstone Cree Nation.

You might use *nation*, lowercase, where you wanted to emphasize the nationhood of Indigenous Peoples in a general context, as in "the nations of North America before contact with Europeans."

self-determination: In international law, this term is referred to as "The Divine Right of People," which was born out of the American (1776) and French (1789–99) revolutions. The term denotes the right of peoples to choose freely how they would be governed. This term has currency among Indigenous Peoples, replacing the term *self-government*. *Self-government* is still used in the specific context of discussing DIAND policies dating from the 1980s.

Status Indian: This term describes the status of individual people under the Indian Act. This is an appropriate term in this particular context and is accepted by Indigenous people as describing this context. Because of the problematic nature of *Indian* in general, however, it is best to clarify that you mean *Status Indian under the Indian Act.*

Note that the Indian Act is a controversial piece of legislation, often under discussion among Indigenous Peoples. It may, therefore, undergo changes that will alter the context for terminology.

Treaty Right: This term describes a right held by Indigenous Peoples collectively, and by individual Indigenous people, because of treaties Indigenous Peoples negotiated with Canada's government. Examples of Treaty Rights in Canada include provision of reserves, provision of education, and provision of health care (health care was originally negotiated under Treaty Six and later extended to all First Nations covered by treaty).

Names of particular Indigenous Peoples

Before the arrival of Europeans in North America, all Indigenous Peoples had names to identify themselves that, in most cases, were a variation of the words *the people* in their own language. During the colonial period in North America, English terms for Indigenous Peoples—coined in a variety of ways—emerged. Indigenous Peoples themselves maintained their own terminology, but the coined English terms became widespread in colonial society because Indigenous people often did not speak English and did not have access to colonial society.

Explorers, missionaries, and anthropologists coined most of these terms. The most common derivations included the following:

- a name associated with the first European to encounter an Indigenous group (e.g., Thompson Indians, Mackenzie Eskimos)
- an arbitrary English name based on some observation about an Indigenous group (e.g., Blackfoot, Flathead)

- an anglicized name based on a word heard in the language of an Indigenous group (e.g., Kwagiulth, Navajo, Salish, Nootka)
- an anglicized name based on a word for the group they heard in the language of another Indigenous People (e.g., Chipewyan, based on what they were called in Cree)
- a name based on a reasonable approximation of the word an Indigenous group used to identify themselves in their own language (e.g., Haida, Dene, Okanagan)

This last method, although the most appropriate, was also the most rare.

In the later colonial period in Canada, as generations of Indigenous children were introduced to English and systematically denied access to their languages through the residential school system, most Indigenous Peoples acquiesced to the terminology that had become established in English. This general trend, however, began to reverse in the early 1980s, when many Indigenous Peoples began to reestablish their original names.

This process has often involved awkward anglicizations, and the names of Indigenous Peoples in English often have several spellings.

For example:

- The name *Ojibway* originates in the colonial period based on an anglicization of a word the Cree used to describe this Indigenous People. Although a single Indigenous People, groupings of this nation have separate names, such as "Chippewa" or "Assiniboine." In the 1980s, this Indigenous People began to assert their original name, which means *the people* in their language. Common spellings for the original name varied—for example, Nishnabwe, Anishnabay, Anishinabek, and Nishnawbay. In the 1990s, this Indigenous People generally agreed that the spelling Anishinaabe was a closer approximation of a phonetic English spelling. A variety of spellings remain in circulation, however, including Anishnaabe, Anishnawbe, Anishnabe, and Anishinaabeg.

- The Kwagiulth were termed *Kwakiutl* in the early 1800s by the anthropologist Franz Boas, who produced a vast body of literature about them. In the 1980s, this Indigenous People generally agreed that the spelling Kwagiulth is a closer approximation of a phonetic English spelling. More recently, Kwakwaka'wakw is gaining currency as the name for this Indigenous People, but the previous spellings also have currency. For example, the Kwakiutl District Council in Campbell River, BC, has nine member Nations.

The work of reestablishing and establishing the traditional names of Indigenous Nations (and appropriate spellings) is ongoing and being done by several institutions, including Indigenous institutions and Indigenous Nations. Here is a sampling of some other appropriate names:[26]

Carrier becomes:	**Dakelh**
Gitkasanin becomes:	**Gitxsan**
Iroquois becomes:	**Haudenosaunee**
Blood becomes:	**Kainai**
Mohawk becomes:	**Kanien'keha:ka**
Kootney becomes:	**Ktunaxa**
Micmac becomes:	**Mi'kmaq**
Assiniboine becomes:	**Nakoda**, or **Nakota**
Blackfoot becomes:	**Niisitapi**
Nishga or Nisga becomes:	**Nisga'a**
Thompson becomes:	**Nlaka'pamux**
Nootka becomes:	**Nuu'chah'nult**, or **Nuu'chah'nulth**
Bella Coola becomes:	**Nuxalk**
Peigan becomes:	**Piikuni**
Shuswap becomes:	**Secwepemc**
Lillooet becomes:	**Stl'atl'imx**
Okanagan becomes:	**Syilx**
Sarcee becomes:	**Tsuut'ina**, or **Tsuu T'ina**

There is no complete standard reference on correct names and spellings for all the Indigenous Peoples in Canada. As an editor or publisher trying to do the right thing in terms of accuracy, consistency, and showing respect on the page, you have two options.

First, you can ask the Indigenous Peoples at the centre of a work for the spelling of their names. This is the most respectful procedure, and is practical most of the time.

Second, you can choose to follow names and spellings compiled by others in consultation with Indigenous Peoples. In Canada, two current and useful compilations include the guide from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) on acknowledging Traditional Territories and the list of First Nations in British Columbia developed by the X̱wi7x̱wa Library at the University of British Columbia. Other compilations—useful for the broader context of North America and as second references on Indigenous names in Canada—include Tribal Nations Maps and the website of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. (This book includes an appendix about these resources.)

Compilations such as these are evolving documents. As they are used—and considered and reconsidered by Indigenous scholars— they will no doubt undergo corrections and grow in detail. Make sure you have the most current version.

The method you choose to follow for Indigenous names in a work needs acknowledgement and explanation in the work. Perhaps, for example, you have consulted the Indigenous People at the centre of a work for their correct name and how to spell it; for Indigenous Peoples that the work names only in passing, you have followed the CAUT guide. It would be good to say this in an editor's introduction, for example, or in a note attached to the first instance of one of the names in the work.

PRINCIPLE 12: THE NAMES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous style uses the names for Indigenous Peoples that Indigenous Peoples use for themselves. It establishes these names through consultation with Indigenous Peoples, and compilations of names done through consultation with Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous style provides notes of explanation about editorial decisions related to names. This is to acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples' names in English have evolved and are evolving.

Exceptions to this principle include:

- specifically describing or discussing another term that has been used as a name for an Indigenous People
- referring to a proper name, or the name of an institution or document, that contains another name
- quoting from a source that contains another name (e.g., a historical source)

that emphasize the autonomy of researchers. An important consequence of these trends is a decline in the diversity of perspectives as researchers are putting aside their academic freedom to share authority over the research with participating communities. Our analysis suggests that … not all Indigenous-focused research should use a community-based research partnership model.[22]

The authors go on to argue that noncollaborative academic research and publication can still, and should, follow recognized ethical guidelines.

As someone working in Indigenous publishing, how should you approach works by non-Indigenous academics that conflict with the principle of Indigenous collaboration?

First, before you make a decision to publish or not publish a non-collaborative work, and with the consent of the author, open lines of communication to the Indigenous Peoples at the centre of the work. They may already be aware of the author and the work, and it's possible that they will see value in the work, despite not collaborating in it.

Second, ask the author to provide a commentary that might open the work and that speaks directly to its gaps in collaboration or its rationale for being noncollaborative. Ask whether the author might consider including a response to that discussion by the Indigenous Peoples at the centre of the work.

Third, if you are non-Indigenous, have an Indigenous editor evaluate the work and your editorial changes. Or, if you are Indigenous, get another Indigenous editor to give you a second opinion.

Finally, if you decide to publish, keep all lines of communication open at all times. *Your* process, as a publisher or editor of works by or about Indigenous Peoples, should aim for collaboration.

Biased language

Indigenous publishing requires an alert ear for how the attitudes of colonialism are embedded in word choices.

This section presents some common examples of subtle bias.

Indigenous agency

Colonial language communicates paternalism—the idea that Indigenous Peoples are not capable of thinking and acting for themselves.

Paternalism shows up in word choices like this: "The Numbered Treaties provided First Nations with reserves, education, and health care." The problem here is that First Nations sound like passive recipients of benefits, instead of active negotiators of Treaty Rights. Here are some better, more accurate wordings: "First Nations negotiated the Numbered Treaties with Canada's government to secure reserves, education, and health care for their people and future generations"; or "Through the negotiation of the Numbered Treaties with Canada's government, First Nations established their present-day and continuing Treaty Rights to reserves, education, and health care."

Another example: "The fur trade swept up Indigenous Peoples in a new economy based on supplying beaver pelts to French and English traders." This wording suggests Indigenous Peoples were *acted on*, instead of *acting*. A better, more accurate wording: "Indigenous Peoples engaged in the new economy of the fur trade, in which they supplied beaver pelts to French and English traders in exchange for European goods such as metal implements and guns."

Indigenous goals

Subtle bias shows up in word choices to describe the political goals of Indigenous Peoples. Consider the difference between *demanding* something and *asserting* something. You might use *demand* to describe a complaint or a whine: a child, for example, might demand dessert. You would use *assert* to describe a justified action: you *assert* authority, you *assert* rights.

In the context of Indigenous Title, *assert* is the appropriate word. The Nisga'a did not spend a century *demanding* Indigenous Title to their Traditional Territory (because this is an Indigenous Right they always had and still possess): they spent a century *asserting* Indigenous Title to their Traditional Territory.

Indigenous resilience

Pessimistic language is another form of subtle bias. For example, compare these statements: first, "Indigenous Peoples struggle with the legacy of the residential school system"; second, "Indigenous Peoples acknowledge the legacy of the residential school system, and the importance of appropriate compensation and apology from Canada's government in moving forward." The first statement makes Indigenous Peoples victims and casts doubt on their power to overcome trauma. The second statement recognizes their resilience, agency, and future.

Capitalization

Indigenous style uses capitals where conventional style does not. It is a deliberate decision that redresses mainstream society's history of regarding Indigenous Peoples as having no legitimate national iden tities; governmental, social, spiritual, or religious institutions; or co lective rights.

This section presents a sample of terminology: not every term that should be capitalized appears here. When you come across a term that is not here, and you are wondering whether to capitalize it, look for a parallel example in this section. Also consider whether the term relates to Indigenous identity, institutions, or rights—in which case, capitalization is probably in order. If you're not sure, ask the Indigenous Peoples at the centre of the content how they view the term.

Capitalized terms for Indigenous identities

Chelsea Vowel says: "I always capitalize the various terms used to describe Indigenous peoples. This is deliberate; the terms are proper nouns and adjectives referring to specific groups. 'To captalize or not to capitalize' ends up being a heated debate at times, but I feel it is a measure of respect to always capitalize our names."[28]

For a discussion of the meaning and currency of the following terms, see chapter 6.

Aboriginal
The annual conference of Aboriginal educators took place in Vancouver.

First Nations
Northern Cree is a First Nations recording group that performed at the Grammy Awards in 2017.

Some First Nations in British Columbia have chosen to fight wildfires instead of evacuating their communities, noting that living in a fire zone "is not new to us."

First Peoples
European settlement in North America posed challenges for First Peoples.

Indigenous
The University of Toronto has more than four hundred Indigenous students.

Indigenous Peoples are diverse and culturally distinct.

Inuit/Inuk
Inuit are celebrating the creation of a marine protected area in Tallurutiup Imanga (Lancaster Sound), a successful conclusion to almost forty years of Inuit lobbying.

Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner, a 2001 film from Inuit director Zacharias Kunuk, presents the Traditional Story of the Inuk who battles an evil spirit disrupting his community.

Métis
The Métis have a long history in Canada, dating from the beginnings of the fur trade in the 1600s.

Canada's constitution recognizes Métis peoples among the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Survivor
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission documented testimonies from more than seven thousand residential school Survivors.

I am an Intergenerational Survivor.

Capitalized terms for Indigenous institutions

Chief
He is Chief of Driftpile Cree Nation.

Several Chiefs attended the First Ministers conference.

Clan; Clan System; Matriarch
The Haudenosaunee Confederacy has a total of nine Clans. Three Clans are common to all member nations, and five Clans are common to two or three member nations. A ninth Clan, the Eel Clan, is unique to the Onondaga.

The Clan System is a matrilineal social and political institution of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

She is Matriarch of the Bear Clan.

Creator; Creation
The meeting began with a prayer to the Creator.

People have a responsibility to care for Creation.

Elder
The students start every day by smudging, led by an Elder from the community.

Indigenous Voice
The Indigenous Voice is among the literatures of the world, and comes from Indigenous Peoples speaking for themselves, with connection to their past, present, and future, and in an evolving conversation with their Traditional Knowledge and Oral Traditions.

Longhouse
The Longhouse is a democratic institution based on consensus.

But: Many families lived together in longhouses, which were the living quarters of people of the same Clan.

Medicine Man; Medicine Woman
Medicine Men and Medicine Women have spiritual significance in Indigenous societies.

Midewiwin/Midewin
Like Christianity, Midewiwin is a religion.

Oral Tradition
The Oral Tradition of the Secwepemc includes a Traditional Story about the creation of salmon.

Respect for Oral Traditions includes following cultural Protocols about

Sacred Stories and seasonal stories, such as Winter Stories and Summer Stories.

Potlatch
Guests play an important role in the Potlatch as witnesses to gifts that acknowledge a family's inheritance.

The family held a Potlatch to honour the passing of the Elder.

But: The family potlatched to name their first son.

Protocols (cultural)
Indigenous Peoples have cultural Protocols about respecting Elders and Oral Traditions.

Sacred Pipe Ceremony; Pipe Carrier
During the Sacred Pipe Ceremony, the people pray not only for their own well-being, but for that of all human beings and the whole of Creation.

The Pipe Carrier, entrusted with the care of the Sacred Pipe on behalf of the people, brings the Sacred Pipe to the centre of the circle and unwraps it.

Seven Fires
The Oral Tradition of the Anishinaabe records the prophecy of the Seven Fires, which is also recorded in a Wampum Belt.

Sundance
No filming or photography is allowed during the Sundance, which is a sacred ceremony held during the summer.

Sweat Lodge
Amiskwaciy Academy invites Edmontonians to experience the spiritual, physical, and emotional cleansing of the Sweat Lodge as part of reconciliation.

Traditional Knowledge
The preferred method of harvesting wild rice by hand—by poling a canoe and knocking the rice—is part of the Traditional Knowledge of the Anishinaabe.

Vision Quest
The young man is going on a Vision Quest, where he will fast alone, and seek spiritual guidance and purpose.

Warrior Society
During the traditional hunts of the Plains Cree, the Warrior Society maintained discipline.

Wampum; Wampum Belt
In 1989, New York State returned twelve Wampum Belts to the Onondaga.
Guswenta (Kaswentha), the Two Row Wampum, records a treaty that began in 1613 between the Haudenosaunee and European settlers.

Capitalized terms for Indigenous collective rights

Indigenous Land; Indigenous Title; Traditional Territory
Indigenous Peoples' assertion of Indigenous Title flows from their unbroken occupation and use of their Traditional Territories.
We celebrate the Indigenous Lands on which our city is located.

Indigenous Right
The inherent, collective right of Indigenous Peoples to speak their own languages and practise their own cultures is an Indigenous Right.

Status Indian
Filmmaker Howard Adler is a Status Indian under the Indian Act from Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation in Ontario.

Treaty Right
The First Nations who negotiated the Numbered Treaties with the Crown have education as a Treaty Right: it is not "free education," but rather education paid for in advance by the terms of the treaties.

PRINCIPLE 13: TERMS THAT SHOULD BE CAPITALIZED
Terms for Indigenous identities; Indigenous governmental, social, spiritual, and religious institutions; and Indigenous collective rights should be capitalized.

Indigenous colloquial English

As early as the late nineteenth century, so-called "Indian humorists" in the United States, such as Creek author Alexander Posey, began

~~The Red River Resistance was successful in the sense that it nego-tiated the creation of Manitoba as a province that joined Confed-eration with language rights for French-speaking peoples. The rest of the west (except what became the province of British Columbia) "joined" Canada in a land transfer from the Hudson's Bay Company, which had "owned" Rupert's Land as a colonial fur-trading entity.~~

~~The Red River Resistance was not successful, though, in its aim of establishing a land base for the Métis. Instead of directly confer-ring land, Canada's government allotted 140,000 acres to the heads of Métis families under the scrip system. The system was flawed: it worked to dispossess families of their land, because the stipulations for exchanging scrip for land were not achievable for most Métis. Speculators bought the scrip and took the land.~~

~~The Métis settlement at Batoche came about as the Métis left Red River looking to maintain their way of life in lands further west under less settlement pressure. After the Riel Resistance of 1885 at Batoche, they moved west again.~~

~~The Road Allowance People were essentially small Métis com-munities situated on the Crown land that existed in the easements between roads. The Métis lived there because racism and discrimina-tion prevented them from living in settler towns. Because they lived on Crown land, they did not pay taxes and their children were not allowed to attend school. As settler towns grew, the Road Allowance People often found themselves evicted from their homes, again.~~

Pan-Indigenous terms

This guide uses a pan-Indigenous term, *Indigenous Peoples*, because it is talking about issues in publishing and editing that cut across all Indigenous identities.

In general, however, it is best to avoid blanket terms.

For example, it is not appropriate to say "Theresa Cardinal is an Indigenous person." A better wording is "Theresa Cardinal is Cree

from Saddle Lake Cree Nation." Names are part of the way we render identity. Use the words that individual people use for themselves, and, if you don't know what words to use, ask.

Here's another example. It is not appropriate for a work about Winnipeg to refer generally to "First Nations and their Traditional Territories" in an acknowledgement (especially since this wording would exclude the Métis). It should name the particular Indigenous Peoples. In the context of Winnipeg, the guide from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) on acknowledging Traditional Territories mentions specifically the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene, and the Métis Nation.

Precision is important. It shows respect by acknowledging the diversity and distinctness of Indigenous Peoples.

Possessives that offend

It is a common error to use possessives to describe Indigenous Peoples, as in "Canada's Indigenous Peoples," or "our Aboriginal Peoples," or "the First Peoples of Canada." These possessives imply that Indigenous Peoples are "owned" by Euro-colonial states.

Indigenous Peoples assert sovereignty and many do not identify as Canadian.

To describe Indigenous Peoples as located in Canada, appropriate wordings include "Indigenous Peoples in Canada" or "Indigenous Peoples in what is now Canada."

PRINCIPLE 18: INAPPROPRIATE POSSESSIVES
Indigenous Peoples are independent sovereign nations that predate Euro-colonial states and are not "owned" by Euro-colonial states. Indigenous style therefore avoids the use of possessives that imply this, such as "Canada's Indigenous Peoples," "our Indigenous Peoples," and "the Indigenous Peoples of Canada."