

## Canadian History

# Chapter One

# The First Peoples

### CHAPTER 1 Outcomes

Students will...

- Be able to identify the different First Peoples of North America and understand ways in which they were organized, including:
  - social structures
  - governance
  - what they believed about the creation of the world

**Diversity and Origins of First Peoples in Canada**

<b>Word and Phrase Bank</b>		
the way of the tribe	creation of plant and animal life	mobile
Bison	lessons and to entertain	50
help the listeners learn about the way of the tribe	Northwest Coast	written documents

**Diverse Lands, Diverse Cultures**

- First Peoples everywhere had systems for taking care of their own food, clothing and shelter.
- They also had methods for organizing their societies and interacting with other communities.
- However, the types of food sources and shelter could vary depending on what region a First Nations group lived. For example, First Nations living on the \_\_\_\_\_ lived most of the year in permanent housing because they could obtain food from the Pacific Ocean, while Plains First Nations groups were more \_\_\_\_\_, using temporary homes while hunting \_\_\_\_\_ and obtaining food from a much larger territory.



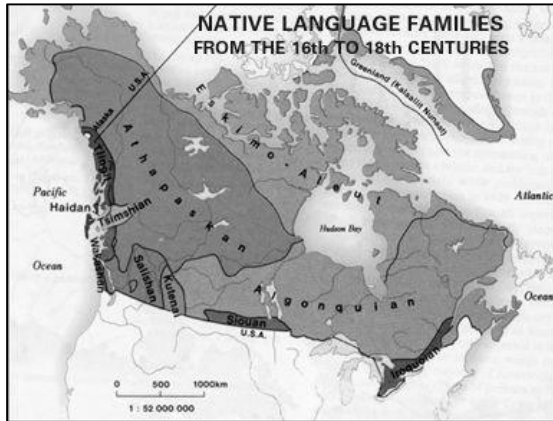
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Title: Tsaunati on Knight Inlet.

**Diverse Lands, Diverse Languages**

- Early 1600s: First Peoples across present-day Canada spoke about \_\_\_\_\_ major languages.
- These have been classified into 12 different language families.
- Take note of the First Peoples and Language Families Map on the next page.

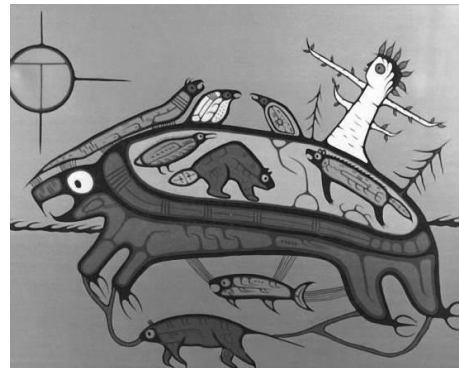


### What are the Origins of First Peoples in Canada?

- A community's account of its own history is called oral tradition. It is the passing on of valuable information about their culture, values, beliefs and ways of life through the telling of stories. This is referred to as oral tradition.
- Oral tradition has been the means by which the First Nations culture, and many other cultures, has survived throughout the years.
- Each time the traditional tales of the First Nations people are shared, the listeners learn something about the beliefs, values, culture and the ways of life practiced by the First Nations people.
- **The Supreme Court of Canada recognizes First Nations "Oral Tradition" as important as \_\_\_\_\_ when looking at legal issues.**

### Creation Stories

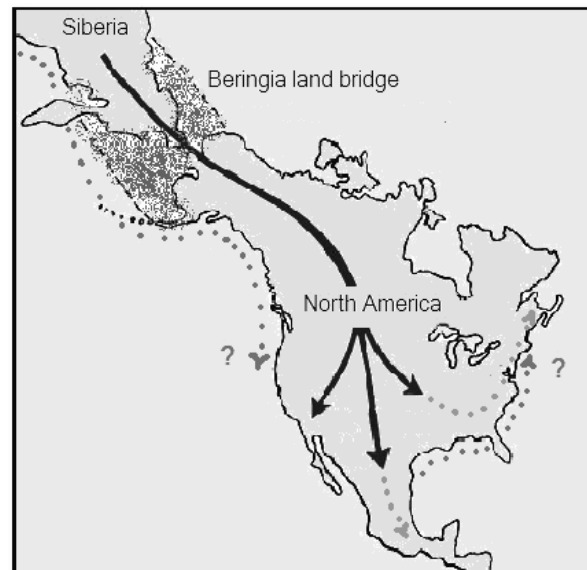
- Myths were told to help explain the \_\_\_\_\_, and to help explain natural phenomena that otherwise could not be explained.
- Trickster tales were told to teach \_\_\_\_\_. Family drama tales and threshold tales were told to \_\_\_\_\_, and the First Nations way of life.
- Read p. 24-26 of the textbook on your own, or we will watch a video on the topic.



**Scientific Evidence of Origins (p. 27-30)**

<u>Word Bank</u>		
25 000	Duck Bay	Bering Strait
	12 000 years ago	

- Science offers another kind of evidence for the origins of First Peoples in North America.
- Archaeologists have several theories about how human history began in the Americas.
- **Land Bridge Theory:** during the last Ice Age, people used a land bridge that covered the \_\_\_\_\_ between North America and Russia, to migrate across North America over thousands of years. Archaeological evidence suggests that most of this migration occurred between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ years ago.
- However, recent radiocarbon-dating of objects from archaeological sites does not completely support or disprove the theory.
- Other theories suggest that people could have travelled to the Americas by crossing the Bering Strait by boat or by walking across the strait when it was covered with ice. Another theory has humans migrating from present-day Europe to the Americas by travelling along the edge of the Atlantic ice cap as they followed food sources.
- DNA studies suggest that all human beings descend from a group of people whose home was Africa, some 60 000 years ago. Some object to studies that may threaten the validation of certain creation stories.
- In Manitoba, archaeological evidence of human habitation has been found that dates back to 3000 years ago. Evidence of bone tools, ceramics and agriculture has been found along the Red River.
- \_\_\_\_\_, located on the shore of Lake Winnipegosis, has evidence of a community dating back 800 years, with advanced forms of pottery.



**World Views and Societies of First Peoples (p. 31-35)**

<b>Word and Phrase Bank</b>		
<i>potlatch</i>	historical	religion, life experiences, traditions, language, and culture
all parts of the universe		beliefs or assumptions

- A world view is a person's set of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ about the world and how it works.
- Many things can influence a person's worldview, such as \_\_\_\_\_.
- People from the same culture and time period tend to have similar worldviews.
- Taking a \_\_\_\_\_ perspective means trying to understand events from the world view of someone in the past.

**Spirituality and Beliefs**

- Spirituality from a First Nations perspective is a person's understanding of their relationship to the universe. Their worldview was based on their spirituality, which played a major role in life.
- One key feature of First Nations spirituality is interconnection between \_\_\_\_\_.
- Another key feature is the value placed on balance and harmony between people and the rest of the world.
- Often this spirituality was present in hunting techniques, so that the hunting was done in accordance with belief systems.

**Land Use**

- The traditional worldview of First Peoples did not have a sense of ownership of land. Instead First Peoples

saw themselves as caretakers of the land in a give-and-take relationship.

- Communities did have territories defined by natural or geographic features (bodies of water, mountains, forests, etc)
- The well-being of the land was linked to the well-being of communities
- The resources of the land were not to be exploited or abused. Decisions that were made by leaders had to consider any consequences they would have on future generations and the land.
- Mobile communities did not wander randomly, but rather moved seasonally through traditional territory that allowed them to take advantage of resources available in an area at a certain point in time.

**Language**

- Most First Nations' languages are verb-based, as opposed to European languages, which are noun-based. Verb-based languages focus on connections and relationships rather than differences.

**Values**

- Traditional important values for First Peoples include cooperation, autonomy, sharing and diversity.
- Sharing was especially important. All members of the community contributed to the community's well-being. Those

who shared the most with the community were admired. An example of this sort of high-level sharing was the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Oral Traditions**

- Origin stories are only part of a community’s heritage.
- Stories are also shared to entertain, educate, preserve cultural ideas and traditions and share moral values.
- Some stories were also a form of record-keeping and might make a record of treaties or alliances.

- Some stories had to be told in great detail and with a great deal of accuracy. Stories like this were seen as belonging to the community, and often only certain people were allowed to tell the stories.
- Other stories could vary, depending on the storyteller, and could have many variations.

**Traditional Methods of Social Organization (p. 36-41)**

<b><u>Word and Phrase Bank</u></b>		
mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of life	vision quest	a group of people relate to one another
men	patrilineal	Women
	matrilineal	

- Social organization is the way \_\_\_\_\_.
- First Peoples traditionally lived in social groups based on kinship (family) relationships. The exact makeup and size of a kinship group varied depending on the culture, community, region and (sometimes) time of year.
- For many First Peoples, the basic social group was the extended family. (i.e. – couple, children, aunts, uncles, cousins, parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, etc)
- Some First Nations and Inuit people felt a clan was their primary social group. A clan is based on a common ancestry. Some clans were \_\_\_\_\_, where people inherited their father’s clan

membership. Other clans were \_\_\_\_\_, where people took their mother’s clan membership.

- The size of a community usually depended on the availability of resources. Social groups had be large enough to take care of basic needs, but not so large that they did not have enough resources to meet their needs
- In some regions, the food supply varied or was spread over a wide territory, causing communities to be small and mobile.

**Roles and Contributions**

- Most First Nations’ communities depended on a network of mutual support.

- This mutual support resulted from traditions that gave them responsibilities for their relatives, be they blood relations or members of the community.
- Young \_\_\_\_\_ worked as hunters and defenders of the community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ usually organized the camp or village, prepared game and harvested crops.
- Most communities showed some flexibility in gender roles.
- First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities turned to elders for advice and leadership.
- Elders often teach by example – by the way they lived their lives.



### Traditional Education

- In First Nations communities, children were viewed as gifts of the Creator, and were mentored and taught by the whole community, instead of just parents and teachers.
- Children were taught their community's history, spiritual ideals and practical skills that would help them and their community. A child's responsibilities increased as they grew older.
- Some learning was gained through dreaming or visioning. Some dreams

were believed to be messages. Some cultures had adolescents undergo a \_\_\_\_\_, where they would be isolated to fast and pray until they received a vision (teaching) from a spirit guide.

- A person's education was holistic – it placed equal importance on \_\_\_\_\_ . aspects of life. Much education was accomplished through storytelling.

### Justice and Conflict Resolution

- In traditional First Nations and Inuit communities, rules were rarely broken because individuals did not see their own needs as separate from those of the community.
- Most goods were shared freely, making theft rare.
- Those who showed disrespect to others, the environment or the belief system were seen as being out of balance.
- For less serious offences, humour and shaming were used discourage negative behaviour.
- Conflict between individuals was usually handled through having them consider the opposing point of view.
- Individuals committing offenses against a community were often encouraged to make amends to those who were wronged, in an attempt to restore harmony and balance.
- Hunting offenses were among the most serious because hunting could affect the community's well-being. In some communities, hunting offenders could be excluded from future group hunts or could be exiled to the fringes of a community.

- Many provinces and territories today work with aboriginal communities to create restorative justice programs,

combining First Nations approaches to conflict resolution with provincial and federal legal systems.

**Governance and Relations between Nations (p. 42-45)**

<u>Word and Phrase Bank</u>		
obsidian	League of Six Nations	Great Law of Peace of the People of the Longhouse
League of Five Nations	consensus	Red and Assiniboine

- Most groups made decisions through discussion and \_\_\_\_\_ (group agreement).
- In some communities, leaders were often chosen from the same families, so long as they had the confidence of the community.
- Leadership was sometimes granted depending on individual strengths (hunting ability led to leadership during hunts, diplomatic individuals might lead during times of conflict, etc.)

**Relations between Nations**

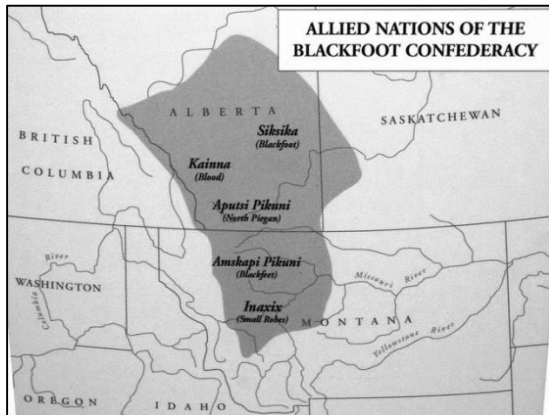
- First Nations had traditional territories, with the size depending on the availability of resources and ability to maintain sovereignty over the territory.
- The longstanding tenure on land meant that neighbouring communities often had long traditions of interaction. Many of these interactions involved trade, friendship and political alliances.
- Archeologists have found valuable trade items such as \_\_\_\_\_ (volcanic glass used as a sharp cutting tool) and silica (stone that could be flaked into tools).
- By using analysis to find where the sources of these minerals have been found and comparing these sites to

where artifacts have been found, theories can be made about trade relationships and routes.

- Trade also included constructed goods and technology, such as canoes and arrowheads. Some goods were traded from community to community, making their way across the continent.
- Trading events could last for weeks and were often combined with social events. Trading sometimes involved cultural and technological exchanges, as well as friendships, marriages and military alliances.
- Some locations appear to have been major trading centres. Many communities travelled to these places to use certain resources and trade with other groups. One such place was The Forks, at the confluence of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Rivers, which may have been the site of trading for over 6000 years.
- Many nations had informal friendships and alliances
  - Plains Cree and Assiniboine
  - Had overlapping territories and friendly relationship.
- Other nations had more formal alliances:



- Blackfoot Confederacy had three large nations of clans: Kanai, Peigan and Blackfoot
- The Confederacy gathered annually, intermarried and continues to commemorate their bonds to the present.



- The \_\_\_\_\_ included the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. The Tuscarora nations joined the confederacy 200 years later, making it the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - These nations lived along a 180 km stretch of the southern shores of the Great Lakes. Each nation had similar, but not identical languages and cultures.
  - Prior to the formation of the Confederacy, the Iroquois nations were often at war with one another. Peace was founded by Skennenrawawi the Peacemaker, who carried a message of peace from the Creator. He recommended using compromise and peace instead of war as a means of resolving conflicts.
  - The Great Law of Peace was passed down orally over generations until it was written down for the first time in 1880.
  - The Great Law of Peace established a Grand Council of 50 chiefs representing the nations of the confederacy. The Grand Council met annually to settle the social and political disputes among member nations, as well as decisions about defending confederacy territory and resources.
  - The Grand Council still meets today using the protocols established in the Great Law of Peace.
- Alliances were maintained by regular gatherings, gift giving, mutual support, marriages, adoptions and shared ceremonies.
  - Some communities created formal treaties to share resources and settle conflicts.
  - The \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the earliest-known treaties between first Nations.
  - Oral history and eclipse data show that the treaty was reached in 1142, when a solar eclipse occurred.
  - The treaty includes 117 articles governing the relationship between the five Iroquois Nations.

**Chapter 1 Questions**

**Before you begin...**

Was there anything in this chapter that you knew before the class studied it?

Write down one or two things...

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Did you learn anything in this chapter that you had never heard of before?

Write down one or two things...

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What do you think was the most interesting fact that you learned in this chapter?

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If reading this chapter has made you think of a question you have about this chapter or Canadian History, write it down. I will try to get you an answer as soon as I can.

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- 1. Think about the term oral tradition
  - a. What does this term mean?

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- b. Which cultures use an oral tradition?

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- c. How is oral tradition viewed by the Supreme Court of Canada?

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- 2. What is the Land Bridge Theory?

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- a. How do you think the Land Bridge Theory can explain the beginnings of the First Peoples?

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3. Watch the website presentation from <http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com/main.html> (and look at least two different cultures) or read pages 32, 34 and 35 of the textbook handout. Review the topics of “Spirituality”, “Caretakers of the Land”, “Languages and Oral Traditions” and “Values”. Finish the topic summary by writing down two distinct and clear summarizing points.

Traditional World Views of First Peoples in North America	
Spirituality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship to the universe</li> <li>• Interconnection to all parts of the universe</li> <li>• Balance and harmony</li> </ul>
Caretakers of the Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not have a sense of land ownership</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>
Languages and Oral Traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World is experienced and described</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation, autonomy, sharing and diversity</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>