

This conversation guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study. It is designed to give each reader parts of “truth” that will lead individuals and groups in the direction of reconciliation. This guide is not a substitute for engaging in meaningful conversations with the indigenous community. Consult the *Advancing Reconciliation Conversation Guide*.



## References

The Inuit Way

[https://www.relations-inuit.chaire.ulaval.ca/sites/relations-inuit.chaire.ulaval.ca/files/InuitWay\\_e.pdf](https://www.relations-inuit.chaire.ulaval.ca/sites/relations-inuit.chaire.ulaval.ca/files/InuitWay_e.pdf)

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

<https://www.itk.ca/about-canadian-inuit/#nunangat>

Essential Terminology

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16a%20-%20Terminology.pdf>

## Modern Treaties

The Inuit did not sign treaties like the First Nation groups across Canada; nor do the Inuit have settlements like the Métis in Alberta. Inuit communities settled comprehensive land claims with the Government of Canada. Comprehensive land claim agreements – also called modern treaties – are created when Indigenous land and resource rights have not been addressed by the numbered treaties.

Modern Inuit land claims represent a relationship between an Indigenous signatory, the Government of Canada or a province or territory. These agreements provide the Inuit people of the North with an opportunity for sustainable development and continued use of their traditional lands and resources.

When modern treaties or land claims of the north were approved, the rights written into the agreements became constitutionally recognized and protected. These agreements provide Inuit with a number of benefits, including rights to land, cash payments and the establishment of new political and economic entities that ensure that land claim agreements are fulfilled. These agreements provide important tools and resources that enable Inuit to exercise a great degree of control over their lives, both in the present and in the future.

## Inuit Regions In Canada

Currently, there are four Inuit regions (land claims) in Canada, collectively known as *Inuit Nunangat*. The term “Inuit Nunangat” is a Canadian Inuit term that includes land, water and ice; all three are integral to Inuit culture and way of life. *Inuit Nunangat* encompasses roughly 35 percent of Canada’s landmass and 50 percent of its coastline.



## Acknowledgement:

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## Inuit Groups (Land Claims)

**Inuvialuit** (meaning “The Real People”) is the Western Arctic. People in this location are called *Inuvialuit*. Their language is *Inuvialuktun*. This was the First Land Claims Agreement, which was signed in June 1984.

**Nunavut** (meaning “Our Land”) is Canada’s Arctic. People in this location are called *Inuit*. Their language is *Inuktitut*. This is the largest Aboriginal Land Claims Agreement at 1.9 million square miles, 1/5 the size of Canada. It was signed in April 1993, creating the newest Canadian territory in 1999.



**Nunavik** (meaning “Great Land”) is Northern Quebec and a portion of Labrador. People in this location are called *Inuit*. Their language is *Inuktitut*. Their Land Claims Agreement was signed in December 2006 and came into effect in February 2008. An additional Land Claims Agreement came into effect in July 2007 and applied to the offshore region around Quebec and northern Labrador.

**Nunatsiavut** (meaning “Our Beautiful Land”) refers to Inuit located in Labrador and Newfoundland. People in this location are called *Labradormiut*. Their language is *Inuttitut*. This was the first Inuit region to achieve self-government. Their Land Claims Agreement was signed in January 2005. Although the Inuit do not own the whole area, they were granted special rights related to traditional land use.

### Inuit Regions Today in Canada

In the 2011 census, 59,440 people identified as Inuit. They represented 4.2 percent of the total Indigenous population and 0.2 percent of the total Canadian population. 73.1 percent of the Inuit population in Canada live in Inuit Nunangat, in one of 53 communities spread across the four Inuit regions of Canada.

According to the Government of Canada, the urban centres with the largest Inuit populations in 2011 were Edmonton (1,115), Montreal (900), Ottawa (735), Yellowknife (735) and St John’s (680). This number has grown substantially with more Inuit moving to these centres for education, employment and medical treatment.

### Today in Canada

Despite adopting various features of modern life and southern culture, many Inuit continue to live according to traditional values that arise from their own rich cultural heritage. Many Inuit continue to have close ties to the land and consider this relationship to be essential to their culture and their survival as a distinct people. Children today are taught Inuktitut and learn traditional games early. There are many opportunities for Inuit youth to go out on the land to learn traditional land skills, including hunting and fishing, how to travel safely, how to make clothing and the importance of treating the land and its resources with respect. While differences exist among modern Inuit about how closely traditional values are followed, all Inuit are proud of their culture and recognize the importance of keeping it alive.

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## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Reflect on and discuss the following questions after reading this conversation guide.

- **What new information did you learn from this conversation guide? What resonated with you?**
- **What important lessons can we draw from learning about Inuit People?**
- **What messages should be conveyed about Inuit People?**

Take turns sharing your thoughts and building upon your ideas.

### **Education**

According to the Government of Canada, the urban centres with the largest Inuit populations in 2011 were Edmonton (1,115), Montreal (900), Ottawa (735), Yellowknife (735) and St John's (680). This number has grown substantially with more Inuit moving to these centres for education, employment and medical treatment.

**How does the gradual migration of Inuit families in southern cities such as Edmonton affect your practice? How will this impact the school community in 5 or 10 years? What do we need to start doing for Inuit students in Alberta schools?**

### **For More Information**

The Story of Resolute Bay

[http://www.qtcommission.ca/sites/default/files/community/community\\_histories\\_resolute\\_bay.pdf](http://www.qtcommission.ca/sites/default/files/community/community_histories_resolute_bay.pdf)

Inuit Cultural Online Resource

<http://www.icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com/>

Education

<http://pauktuutit.ca/abuse-prevention/residential-schools/>

The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools

<http://weweresofaraway.ca/>

Matthiasson, John S., *Living on the Land*

Broadview Press, 1996

Forced Relocation

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-get-federal-apology-for-forced-relocation-1.897468>

Project Surname

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/project-surname/>

Map of Modern and Historical Inuit Settlements, Canada

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016900/1100100016908#chpiv>

The Story of the Canadian \$2 Bill

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/human-flagpoles-dark-story-behind-inuit-scene-on-2-bill-1.2632380>

Balikci, Asen, *The Nestsilik Eskimo*

Waveland Press Inc, Long Grove Il, 1970

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