

Culturally Respectful Acknowledgement of Mi'kmaw Territory in Nova Scotia



Office of Aboriginal Affairs, 2011

The following are some supporting statements that educators may use to guide age appropriate discussions as we acknowledge Mi'kmaw Territory in our province.

Primary-Grade 3

- The Mi'kmaq people were the first people to have lived in Nova Scotia.
- They have lived here for a very long time.
- This land in the Mi'kmaw people's language is known as Mi'kma'ki (MEEG-MA-GEE).
- The Mi'kmaq people have shared their land in peace. A long time ago when people from other countries first came here, they signed agreements called treaties that promised to always live in peace and friendship. Today all Nova Scotians agree to keep this promise and continue to live here in peace and friendship.
- At our school we respect the Mi'kmaq people and are proud of how they took care of this land and work to make sure we keep taking care of the land for all of us.

- We also want to show we are thankful for the way the Mi'kmaq people welcomed us to this land.

Grades 4-6

- We are honouring Mi'kmaq people.
- For many thousands of years Mi'kmaq people have inhabited Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, large parts of New Brunswick and Newfoundland, and the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec.
- The Mi'kmaq people were the first people to have lived on this land.
- In the Mi'kmaw language the land is known as Mi'kma'ki (MEEG-MA-GEE).
- Mi'kma'ki is considered the ancestral land of the Mi'kmaq people.
- We want to show we are thankful for the way Mi'kmaq people welcomed new people from other countries and helped them to survive in these lands.
- The original settlers of these lands signed agreements with Mi'kmaw people, called treaties, promising to live in peace and friendship.
- Today, all Nova Scotians, both Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq, agree to keep this promise and continue living in peace and friendship together on these lands we share.
- We honour Mi'kmaq people who have taken care of this land and, at our school, we show respect for this land and work to make sure we keep taking care of it for all of us.

Grades 7-12

Teachers are to use the provincial *Guide: Culturally Respectful Acknowledgment of Mi'kmaw Territory in Nova Scotia*.

Why should we acknowledge Mi'kmaw traditional territory?

- We are all Treaty people, and our relationship is based on peace and friendship.
- Acknowledging Mi'kmaw traditional or ancestral territory is a way of showing respect for and honouring our shared Treaty relationship. It is one of many important steps we can take toward reconciliation.
- Mi'kma'ki is the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq, and includes seven districts which are found in what is now known as Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland & Labrador, and the Gaspé region in Quebec.
- In the 18th century, Mi'kmaq people and the British Crown entered historic Peace and Friendship Treaties, that created treaty relationships within Mi'kma'ki.
- An acknowledgment is not intended to create any legally binding obligations or recognition of asserted claims.

When could Mi'kmaw traditional territory be acknowledged?

- At public events, or at the start of a speech or presentation that includes Mi'kmaw attendees.
- An acknowledgment/welcome is usually the first item on the agenda.
- For larger events, a Mi'kmaq Elder (or community member) may be invited to provide an opening and share a welcome, prayer, song and/or smudge.
 - Please note that it is acceptable to provide honorariums to Elders and speakers. Honorariums / fees should be discussed in advance.
 - A gift of loose tobacco wrapped in red cloth is customarily offered to an Elder following their welcome as a way of demonstrating respect and honour.
 - If you do not have a specific contact, it is best to reach out to the nearest Mi'kmaw community or organization.
- For smaller events or presentations, an acknowledgment of traditional territory would be more appropriate.
- It would not be necessary or appropriate to acknowledge traditional Mi'kmaw territory in writing in a provincial government document, strategy or report.

Who may acknowledge Mi'kmaw territory?

- Only Mi'kmaq people should *welcome* others to their traditional territory.
- All other speakers are encouraged to *acknowledge* Nova Scotia is Mi'kmaw traditional territory.

Sample acknowledgement:

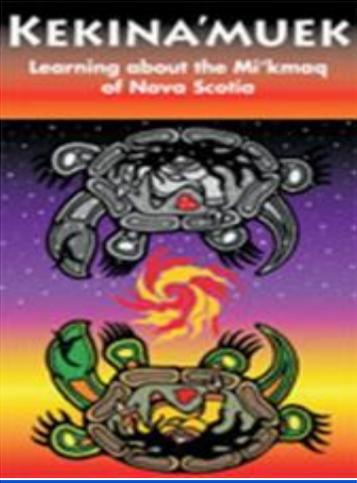
- "I/we would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional (or ancestral) territory of the Mi'kmaq people".



Additional Resources

The following is a working list of resources and sites that can provide additional information for professional development, assist lesson planning, classroom use, or school site use.

| Resource | The following resources have been approved and produced by the EECD and/or the Province of Nova Scotia |
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|  <p><i>Mi'kmaw'e'l Tan Teli-kina'muemk Teaching About the Mi'kmaq</i></p> | <p>Through the stories and knowledge of Mi'kmaw Elders, educators, and other experts, this volume will share content and teaching strategies for grades primary to nine.</p> |
| <p><i>Wabanki- Learning Guide</i> <i>Wabanaki People of the Dawn</i> <i>Part I, II and III</i></p> <p><i>Snapshots of Mi'kmaq</i> <i>Treaty Day Videos</i></p> | <p>This learning guide and video series shares a snapshot of the cultural and historical context of Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia. Culturally relevant activities are included in the learning guide. This resource is intended to address the outcomes in Mi'kmaq Studies 10, Canadian History 11, or high school social studies courses applying an inquiry approach.</p> |

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|  <p><u>Kekina'Muek - Learning About the Mi'Kmaq of Nova Scotia</u></p> | <p>This publication tells the story about the aspects of Mi'kmaw life and history (past and present). There are 10 chapters each with a theme. You will also find suggestions for lessons, a vocabulary list, and historical timeline to be used by teachers and students across Nova Scotia.</p> |
| <p><u>Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1760</u></p> | <p>This fact sheet gives some context to the Peace and Friendship Treaties in the Maritimes and Gaspé. They are important historical documents that can be viewed as the founding documents for the development of Canada. The Treaties were signed with Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy First Nations prior to 1779. Treaties are solemn agreements that set out long-standing promises, mutual obligations and benefits for both parties.</p> |
| <p><u>Signing of the Treaty Education Memorandum of Understanding, Treaty Day 2015</u></p> | <p>As stated by Chief Leroy Denny (2015) this video highlights the "...journey towards ensuring that Mi'Kmaq contributions will be highlighted and taught by all teachers, in all grades, in all schools...Treaties are the building blocks of all of Canada [and Nova Scotia]...By acknowledging our shared Treaty relationship, we begin the process of reconciliation."</p> |
| <p><u>Drum Day Oct. 2017 Video</u></p> | <p>This video shows a grade four class from Truro Elementary learning about the origin and purpose of the honour song.</p> |