

Worksheet: Local First Nations

BACKGROUND

The City of Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples, who have lived on these lands since time immemorial. As a City of Reconciliation, the City of Vancouver has committed to “form a sustained relationship of mutual respect and understanding with local First Nations and the Urban Indigenous community.” This is an ongoing and evolving commitment, and one that is foundational to our work as a City.

The Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations form part of a larger cultural group called the Coast Salish. The City of Vancouver is on the traditional, unceded territories of these three First Nations. They have a special spiritual, cultural and economic connection to this land that goes back thousands of years.

Some of their traditional territories overlap, and they share these lands and resources. It is now a recognized protocol for guests to acknowledge the host nation, its people and its land. You may hear people, groups, or institutions say that they are on unceded land or thank their First Nation hosts.

For example you may hear someone begin an event by saying “We would like to acknowledge the traditional unceded territory of the Coast Salish people.” Vancouver and 95 percent of British Columbia are on unceded First Nations land.

In many parts of Canada, treaties were signed with First Nations that gave incoming settlers rights to much of the land, but in British Columbia very few treaties were signed. “Unceded” means that First Nations people did not give up or legally sign it away to Britain or Canada. As stated in Vancouver Dialogues, “The land where we live is both unceded Coast Salish territory and the City of Vancouver.” You may have seen the Welcome Figures at the Vancouver International Airport. Musqueam artist, Susan Point, designed these traditional Coast Salish figures to welcome travelers to Coast Salish Territory (**Source:** [First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers](#), p. 13).

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For more information please refer to the websites of the Nations:

- <https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/>
- <https://www.squamish.net/>
- <https://twonation.ca/>

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1: TALK ABOUT IT



After reading the background summary about local First Nations, can members of your group name our three local First Nations and the larger cultural group that they belong to? Did anything about the background summary surprise the members of your group? What did members of your group already know? What did you learn?

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2: TALK ABOUT IT



The video: “[Why UNDRIP matters and the impacts it will have](#)” features City of Vancouver and Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh representatives sharing what UNDRIP means to them and their hopes for its impact. What are your hopes for the impact UNDRIP will have on Vancouver? What changes or new practices would you most like to see introduced, and why?

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3: TALK ABOUT IT



The video: “[Why UNDRIP matters and the impacts it will have](#)” shows people from the City of Vancouver and Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations talking about truth-telling, ceremonies, legal recognition and building relationships under UNDRIP. Which of these do you think will help Vancouver the most, and why? Can your group suggest other events or projects that would bring UNDRIP’s ideas to life in our city?