



# Life Before contact with the Europeans

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**Cluster 1:** Canada's First  
Nation, Métis, and Inuit  
People



# Life before contact with the Europeans

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- Who were the First Peoples and how did they structure their world?

# Early History

A decorative graphic of a feather, rendered in a light beige color, is positioned on the left side of the slide. It has a central rachis with numerous barbs extending outwards, creating a fan-like shape. The feather is oriented vertically, with the base at the bottom and the tip at the top. It is partially overlaid by the text area.

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- Canada's history dates back thousands of years
- History, archaeology, genetics and oral traditions provide us with differing explanations of how and when the First Peoples came to live in the land now called Canada
- 2 Theories:
  - Beringia
  - First Nation Perspectives

# Who?



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- The First Peoples were self-governing nations with a wide variety of dynamic cultures.
- 6 major groupings in Canada:
  - Arctic, Subarctic, Eastern Woodlands, Plains, Plateau, Northwest Coast

# Who?



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- 6 major cultural groups can be divided into 50 different First Nations (once called tribal groupings)
- These major cultural groups roughly correspond with the physiographic regions of Canada
- [Map](#)

# Relations



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- **Governance:** patriarchal and matriarchal organization, clan systems, role of elders, collective decision-making
- **Social structures:** family, clans, gender roles, justice, holistic education, and community responsibilities, economics, roles of Elders
- **Relations between nations:** alliances and confederacies

# Aboriginal World View



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- The First Peoples occupied all geographical environments of North and South America
- Their means of survival was intricately linked to their respective environment

# Aboriginal World View



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- The relationship between people and place is conceived fundamentally in spiritual terms, rather than primarily in material terms.
- Many Aboriginal peoples consider all the earth to be sacred and regard themselves as an integral part of this holistic and living landscape. They belong to the land and are at one in it with animals, plants, and ancestors whose spirits inhabit it. ([www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca))



# Aboriginal World View

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- Is there a difference between the Aboriginal world view and the view held by the rest of Western Civilization?
- How can the Aboriginal world view be of benefit to today's society?
- First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples have a long history in North America and their diverse and complex cultures have always had to adapt to changing conditions. What evidence do we see of this today?

