

Activity 2: Mapping Indigenous Civilizations and Histories

The understanding of geographical borders changes over time. Political and social change can lead to the redrawing of boundaries, and the changing of geographic names, as was the case with the creation of Nunavut as a territory in 1999. Geographical borders are also perspective-dependent. For example, the political borders of Canada's provinces and territories do not reflect the geographical regions of traditional Indigenous lands or languages. Indigenous communities had borders between nations and communities, but these were often mobile, contextual, and under constant negotiation. It is possible to have different perspectives on the meaning and significance of lands and territories.

Working in small groups, visit [Native-Land.ca](https://www.native-land.ca), examine one of the following maps, and read the associated article on The Canadian Encyclopedia. Using your research, complete the **What is Where? Why There? Why Care? Worksheet**.

1. Map: **Indigenous Territories** | Article: **Indigenous Territory**
2. Map: **Indigenous Languages** | Article: **Indigenous Languages in Canada**
3. Map: **Indigenous Treaties** | Article: **Treaties with Indigenous Peoples in Canada**
4. Map: **Provinces and Territories in present-day Canada** | Article: **Historical Boundaries of Canada**

After completing the worksheet in your group, present your findings to the class. After each group has shared its findings, discuss the following questions as a class or write a reflection:

- What are the social, political, economic, and/or environmental implications of these overlapping borders?
- How have borders drawn by the Canadian government affected Indigenous peoples in the past and present?
- Why do you think it is important for Canadians to be aware of the territorial history of their home regions?
- How did Indigenous peoples understand borders? How did relationships between communities affect these borders?

[Native-Land.ca](https://www.native-land.ca) gives users an opportunity to explore North American Indigenous territories, languages, and treaties through maps.

1. You must describe through a 10-word summary what you have learned from these maps.

