

## Contact to 1763 – Indigenous Peoples’ Encounters with Europeans

As Europeans began arriving in what is now Canada, they encountered Indigenous peoples and began establishing relationships. Europeans attempted to establish dominance over lands and resources, and their interactions with the original inhabitants became increasingly complex, often leading to misunderstandings. Over time, the structure of their relationships became more formalized through agreements, treaties, laws, and acts that would (and often still do) govern the lives of Indigenous peoples.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 is one such document. Following France’s defeat in the Seven Years’ War, King George III declared British control in North America, and established a colonial government where France had surrendered sovereignty. The Proclamation established a framework for Indigenous rights and title to the land, and for negotiating treaties. It sought to earn loyalty by recognizing that lands legally belonged to Indigenous peoples unless a treaty formally gave control to the British. Nevertheless, British and Canadian governments have not lived up to the terms of the Proclamation.

### Activity 3:

**Essential Question: Why did the French and other Europeans come to North America, and how did they interact with the First Peoples?**

#### “First Contact” Case Study: Continuity and Change

No singular “first contact” story applies to all Indigenous peoples. Some stories share elements, but Indigenous encounters with Europeans represent a diverse set of experiences across centuries.

Working in small groups, choose one of the following Indigenous groups to investigate: **Baffin Island Inuit; Beothuk; Cree; Gwich’in; Kainai (Blood); Mi’kmaq; Neutral; Nisga’a; Nuu-chah-nulth; Siksika (Blackfoot).**

Research the group’s experience with European contact and colonization using **The Canadian Encyclopedia**, answering the following:

- Date(s) and location(s) of the group’s first contact(s) with Europeans
- Description of initial interactions
- What was different after contact with Europeans? What stayed the same?
- What were the most important continuities and changes over time?
- What were the immediate consequences, both positive and negative, of contact? (e.g., trade, disease, knowledge exchange, war.)
- What form did contact take? Bear in mind that contact might be physical (a meeting) or not (for example, some groups experienced the arrival of Europeans through trade, or disease).
- How did the relationship between the Indigenous group and Europeans evolve?