Stage 1
Pre-Contact
Separate Worlds

Old World of Europe and
Old World of Turtle Island
The Language

"Just as the birds are recognized by their song, and each being within creation recognized by their voice, so too is the Anishnaabe recognized by the creator through our language..."  Anishnaabe Elders

"Language is our unique relationship to the Creator, our attitudes, beliefs, values and fundamental notions of what is truth. Our Languages are the cornerstone of who we are as a People. Without our Languages our cultures cannot survive."


"Most, if not all, Aboriginal/First Nations languages are currently critically endangered. This is a direct result of deliberate government policy in the previous centuries. These policies were partly based on the uninformed biases of the day, which advocated that these languages were "inferior and lacking expressive power" compared to the dominant European languages. Linguists have shown that Aboriginal/First Nations languages are equally developed systems of communication with equally rich structures and expressive power. Therefore, linguists have a special obligation to speak out against such uninformed biases, which are unfortunately still cited in the mainstream media."

(Canadian Linguistic Association (CLA) Statement on Aboriginal Language Rights, May 2004)

Contact Language

Contact languages—those languages that developed as a result of ‘contact’ between Europeans and the First Nations—resist genetic classification in terms of language or isolates, because they do not descend from a single parent language. Michif is a fascinating example of a contact language unique to Canada’s Métis, who are (mostly) descendants from Cree or Ojibway women and French Canadian fur trappers. This language uses Plains Cree words and grammar for its verbs, and French words and grammar for its nouns. Still, Michif is not mutually intelligible with either Cree or French. Of the thousand or so modern speakers of Michif in the Canadian Prairies (as well as in Montana and North Dakota in the US), few know French, and even fewer know Cree.

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Contact Languages
Michif - Métis language largely derivative of Cree and French

6 Cultural Areas of Aboriginal Peoples

11 Major Language Groups
60 + subgroups / dialects in Canada

Source of Map: Aboriginal Languages by Community 1996
http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/peopleandsociety/lang/aboriginallanguages/bycommunity
Prevalent Perspectives Throughout the Communities of Canada's First Peoples

A Traditional Code of Ethics

- Give thanks to the Creator each morning upon rising and each evening before sleeping.
- Seek the courage and strength to be a better person.
- Showing respect is a basic law of life.
- Respect the wisdom of people in council. Once you give an idea it no longer belongs to you; it belongs to everybody.
- Be truthful at all times.
- Always treat your guests with honour and consideration. Give your best food and comforts to your guests.
- The hurt of one is the hurt of all. The honour of one is the honour of all.
- Receive strangers and outsiders kindly.
- All races are children of the Creator and must be respected.
- To serve others, to be of some use to family, community, or nation is one of the main purposes for which people are created. True happiness comes to those who dedicate their lives to the service of others.
- Observe moderation and balance in all things.
- Know those things that lead to your well-being and those things that lead to your destruction.
- Listen to and follow the guidance given to your heart. Expect guidance to come in many forms: in prayer; in dreams; in solitude; and, in the words and actions of Elders and friends.

Source: Four Worlds Development Project, University of Lethbridge, Alberta, 1982.

Traditionally spirituality has played an important role in the lives of Canada's First Peoples. The spiritual connection to the Creator was evident in every aspect of life. Traditionally, all parts of creation are believed to have spirit. Both historical and contemporary traditional leaders of the Aboriginal community have declared that spiritual concerns are and always will be central to the culture and way of life.

Educators should be aware that contemporary Aboriginal communities have a range of religious and spiritual beliefs including Christianity. It would be an error to assume that all Aboriginal students practice, or are even knowledgeable about, traditional spirituality.

Some traditional teachings have restrictions or protocol in the sharing of them. However, there are many stories for everyone to hear, and they are not necessarily steeped in ceremony. There are many ordinary stories told for entertainment or instruction.

(more information on First Nation Spirituality can be found at http://wblrd.sk.ca/~abspirit_dev/index.htm)
The many original cultures of Canada all have a variety of stories to communicate their understanding of the world. Their basic assumptions about the universe and their place in it differ somewhat from non-Aboriginal thought and the European tradition.

The oral tradition of storytelling typically combines the physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual aspects of life. It would be a great disservice to Canada's original cultures to continue to mythologize oral tradition to accommodate a sense of validity in the Western perspective of history.

As a result, oral teachings of our First Peoples really can't simply be categorized. Terminology such as 'teachings' or 'narratives' are more suitable than 'myths' or 'legends'.

THE ANISHNAABE

"All My Relations" - A Teaching

Anishnaabe people and many other First Nations people have a teaching that is called All My Relations. This teaching is a fundamental part of our way of life. It is said that the first beings that were created were the Plant people. The plant beings are our eldest brothers and sisters. The next created were the animals, winged, the swimmers and the two legged. Last in creation were the human beings.

When the first Anishnaabe were born to Geezhigo-Kwe (Sky woman). They were born on what Anishnaabe people and many other tribes call Turtle Island. The first Anishnaabe had the animals and the plant beings to thank for their survival. Later the Anishnaabe would become lazy and have animals, who at first sacrificed themselves so the Anishnaabe could live, turn against each other. They would have the eagle hunt the fish or the wolf hunt the deer. Soon the animal beings became sick of this and held a secret meeting. They decided that they would not serve the Anishnaabe anymore and they would each go their own way and speak different languages.

The teaching of this is that we are all related we are made from the same energy and should respect each and every one of the Creators creations. This includes mountains, lakes, trees and father sun and Grandmother moon. Since we are all made from the same energy 'All My Relations' includes every human being on Mother Earth. This means that we are all related no matter what race or color we are. Without our eldest brothers and sisters the plant beings and the animal beings we could not survive. The plant beings and the animals could survive without us. So it is imperative that we respect and honor all of Creation and be grateful for what it gives us. If you happen to look up in the sky and see an Eagle or look on the ground and see an animal. Pay attention because they are trying to tell you something. They may not serve us anymore but they are our older brothers and sisters and still look after us to this day. 'All My Relations' reminds us that we are all in relationship with one another.
The Anishnaabe Creation Story provides a meaningful view of the beginning of life on earth, the first human being, and original laws and responsibilities for all creation. Creation stories illustrate in words the legacy of relationships with ancestors from the beginning of time to the present. Each of us is born with a spirit, a sacred name, a clan or nation, a set of beautiful gifts or talents and a destiny in which we will face many challenges. Knowing where we come from helps us understand our purpose here on earth as well as our eventual destination when our spirits leave Mother Earth. In life, we are spirit having a human experience.

The Seven Grandfathers

Tradition tells of the Seven Grandfathers who were given the responsibility by the Creator to watch over the Earth's people. When they recognized that life was not good for the people they sent their helper back to Earth to try and find a person worthy enough to see the Seven Grandfathers. The Helper found an innocent and very young boy, yet untouched by the corruption and pain of the world. The Helper left tobacco for the boy's parents so they would know that he was in a good place. The Helper was instructed to show the boy all of Creation and the four quarters of the universe. From this lesson we are taught the importance of teaching children from a very young age what they need to guide them in their lives. The boy was seven when he returned to the lodge of the Seven Grandfathers. The lodge was the source of all knowledge. The first Grandfather pointed to a vessel that was covered with a cloth made of four different colours. Each colour stood for one of the Four Directions. The Grandfather said, “Of these colours, red stands for the south, black stands for the west, white stands for the north and yellow stands for the east. These colours represent the four colours of humans that the Creator placed on this earth. The boy was instructed to look into the vessel. When he did he felt a peace that he had never known before. Each of the Seven Grandfathers gave the boy a gift that they pulled from the vessel as it was passed around to each of them. The boy left for the journey back to earth with his chosen helper, the otter. The meaning of each of the seven gifts were revealed to the boy on each of the seven stops that the boy made on his way back to earth. The boy’s duty was to take these back and teach his people the right way to use each gift.

The gifts are:

**Wisdom** - Is to gather and use knowledge; to know the results of your actions, that each choice you make has consequences.

**Love** - Is to know when people are weak they need you the most, to know that your love is given freely and you cannot put condition on it for then your love is not real.

**Respect** - To honour all of Creation by respecting others, and respecting yourself. If you can’t show respect, you cannot expect to be respected

**Bravery** - To do something right, even if it is hard to do.

**Honesty** - To live well and good and to recognize who you are.

**Humility** - To humble yourself by recognizing that no matter how much you think you know, you know very little because learning is lifelong.

**Truth** - To know all of these things; to live with truth, to walk with truth and to speak the truth.
The Medicine Wheel has been an important cultural symbol to the Anishnaabe people portraying the Anishnabe belief system of life-long learning and an understanding of a society based upon the Clan system or Totems. The basic teachings can vary from each region and community. Typically, the story of the Medicine Wheel can be told by a local Elder, Healer, Medicine person or community member. The Medicine Wheel story and symbol is important to a variety of Aboriginal nations across North America because it can represent many different teachings relating to life, nature and Aboriginal culture. The Medicine Wheel can represent Unity with all nations and people. With Unity all of us can create peace, harmony, mutual understanding and respect. The Medicine Wheel story relays important cultural information such as the teachings around the four directions. The number four has a special significance for many Aboriginal nations. For example, there are the four sacred medicines of Tobacco, Sage, Sweetgrass and Cedar, the four seasons Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall, four elements, Earth, Wind, Fire and Water, there is the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual elements for each human being, and there are the four stages of life, Childhood, Youth, Adult and Elder. The Medicine Wheel is in the shape of a circle. The circle has no beginning or ending and we all play a part. In the circle we are all equal and need to be respected.

(An excellent lesson plan is available from: http://www.ltta.ca/lesson_plans.html (search Medicine Wheel)
THE ANISHNAABE

THE FOUR SACRED MEDICINES The four sacred medicines of the Anishnaabeg are tobacco, sage, cedar and sweetgrass. They are used in everyday life and in ceremonies. They can all be used for smudging but may also serve many other purposes. It is said that tobacco sits in the eastern door, sweetgrass in the southern door, sage in the west and cedar in the north. These medicines are sacred in the fact that they are gifts directly from the Creator. Great care must be taken when using them or handling them and usually after having been given instruction or teachings from an Elder. To be respectful of these sacred medicines, keep them in a dry place. Many Elders teach that if you have been using alcohol or drugs, it may take four to seven days to be cleansed enough to touch the medicines.

Tobacco

Many Elders teach that tobacco is always first. Tobacco is offered to the Creator or to all things of creation and in every ceremony. We were given traditional tobacco to allow us to communicate with the Creator and the spirit world. It is like a conduit of communication to all within the spirit world. Tobacco has a great gift of communication between all beings of creation like the plants and animals. Tobacco is offered when any of the lives within the plant and animal worlds is required to assist us in our life. When you seek the help and advice of an Elder, Healer or Medicine Person, tobacco makes that request sacred and respectful. We express our gratitude for the help the spirits give us through our offering of tobacco. It is put down, often in a fire, as an offering of thanks in many ceremonies and many traditional people make an offering of tobacco each day at sunrise. Some people lay tobacco in a body of water when asking for safe journeys.

Sage

Sage is often used to prepare people for ceremonies and teachings. As a medicine of stronger strength than sweetgrass, for example, it is often used more frequently in ceremonies. Sage gives the gift of releasing negative energy from our person or from an area. For example, it is used for cleansing homes and sacred items. Other medicinal uses included its use as an anti-convulsive, on wounds to stop bleeding, and as a stimulant. Sometimes it is also used as poultice on long-standing sores. Considered to be ‘woman’s’ medicine, there is also a male sage.
Cedar

Like sage and sweetgrass, cedar is used to purify the home or other areas and has also many restorative medicinal uses. Cedar tea can ward off the onset of colds, or provide a steam to ease the pain of rheumatism. It is said that cedar attracts positive energy.

Sweetgrass

Sweetgrass is seen as the sacred hair of Mother Earth. The braid signifies mind, body and spirit working together. It also represents the strength in numbers as a braid is harder to break than a single blade of grass. The braid is also representative of unity and often a component of unity baskets. The sweet aroma of reminds people of the gentleness, love and kindness Mother Earth has for the people. Sweetgrass used in ceremony has a calming effect and like sage and cedar, it is also used for smudging and purification.

Smudging

Smudging is a traditional, usually daily, occurrence used to help center oneself. Generally any of the four sacred herbs mentioned: tobacco (ah-say-ma), sweetgrass, sage, and cedar are used in smudging. The medicine is slowly burned in a shell or bowl and fanned with a feather. The room is smudged, slowly walking clockwise (Anishnaabe way—Counter clockwise is Haudensaunee way) around the perimeter of the room, fanning the smudge pot, keeping it lit and wafting the smoke about. Smudge any medicine tool you will be using such as pipe, jewellery, outfit, etc. It is a good practice to smudge each person in a group, circle, ceremony, and lodge. Starting from the East and holding the smudge pot lit, each person can bathe themselves in the smoke. Many people smudge the heart area first, next the head area, and then the arms, then downward toward the legs. This isn’t the only way you can smudge. It isn’t wrong to smudge another way. We can purify and cleanse fairly regularly in this day and age with so much sickness and bad feelings around.

Traditionally, Haudenosaunee, along with many other Nations on the North American continent, use only Tobacco with which to pray. Haudenosaunee do not generally use all of the Medicines and do not generally Smudge, but some have adopted these traditions on the journey to rediscover balance (mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually) and to find the way "HOME".
Approaching a Traditional Healer, Elder or Medicine Person

A Traditional Healer, an Elder or a Medicine Person can provide great assistance in a personal healing journey.

An Elder does not necessarily have to be an elderly person but someone who has many teachings and specifically has earned the respect of their community by the contributions that they have made.

When in the presence of a Healer, Elder or Medicine Person, be yourself, be respectful to them and to yourself. Take tobacco to give as an offering. Tobacco is meant for that communication between you, the Healer and the Creator.

For more detailed information on approaching a Traditional Healer, Elder or Medicine Person, on the Sacred Medicines, Sweatlodge, Traditional Healing, Fasting, Clans and other Anishnaabe heritage based activities can be found on the Anishnaabe Health Toronto website www.aht.ca through the brochures link.

Another good source of information can be found on: http://www.geocities.com/redroadcollective/SacredTobacco.html
The Iroquois Confederacy (also known as the "League of Peace and Power", the "Five Nations"; the "Six Nations"; or the "People of the Long house") is a group of First Nations that originally consisted of five nations: the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Seneca. A sixth tribe, the Tuscarora, joined after the original five nations were formed. Although frequently referred to as the Iroquois, the Iroquois Confederacy Nations refer to themselves collectively as Haudenosaunee.

All had matrilineal social structures - the women owned all property and kinship was determined by birth, through the mother. The six individual Iroquois nations are divided into nine clans, turtle, bear, wolf, heron, eel, hawk, deer, snipe, beaver - each headed by the clan mothers and chiefs. After marriage, a man moved into his wife's longhouse, their children were members of her clan, by birth. Iroquois villages were generally fortified and large. The distinctive, communal longhouses of the different clans could be over 200' in length and were built about a framework covered with elm bark, the Iroquois' material of choice for all manner of things. Villages were permanent in the sense they were moved only for defensive purposes or when the soil became exhausted (about every twenty years).

Agriculture provided most of the Iroquois diet. Corn, beans, and squash were known as "deohako" or "life supporters." They are also referred to as "The Three Sisters". Their importance to the Iroquois is clearly demonstrated by the six annual agricultural festivals held with speeches of thankfulness and acknowledgement for their harvests. The women owned and tended the fields under the supervision of the clan mother. Men usually left the village in the fall for the annual hunt and returned about midwinter. Spring was fishing season. Other than clearing fields, hunting and building villages, the primary occupation of the men was warfare. Warriors wore their hair in a distinctive scalplock (Mohawk of course), although other styles became common later. While the men carefully removed all facial and body hair, women wore theirs long. Tattoos were common for both sexes. The False Face society is an Iroquois healing society which utilized wooden and corn husk masks to frighten the evil spirits believed to cause illness.

It was the Iroquois political system, however, that made them unique, and because of it, they dominated the first 200-years of colonial history in both Canada and the United States. Strangely enough, there were never that many of them, and the enemies they defeated in war were often twice their size. Although much has been made of their Dutch firearms, the Iroquois prevailed because of their unity, sense of purpose, and superior political organization. Since the Iroquois League was formed prior to any contact, it owed nothing to European influence. Rather than learning political sophistication from Europeans, Europeans learned from the Iroquois, and the League, with its elaborate system of checks, balances, and supreme law, almost certainly influenced the American Articles of Confederation and Constitution as well as the United Nations Charter.
THE HAUDENOSAUNEE

The Iroquois were farmers whose leaders were chosen by their clan women - rather unusual for warlike conquerors. Founded to maintain peace and resolve disputes between its members, the League's primary law was the Kaianerekowa, the Great Law of Peace which simply stated Iroquois should not kill each other. The League's organization was prescribed by a written constitution based on 117 wampums and reinforced by a funeral rite known as the "Condolence" - shared mourning at the passing of sachems from the member nations. The council was composed of 50 male sachems known variously as lords, or peace chiefs. Each nations representation was set: Onondaga 14; Cayuga 10; Oneida 9; Mohawk 9; and Seneca 8. Nominated by the tribal clan mothers and confirmed by the clan, the nation and the whole of the confederacy, Iroquois sachemships were usually held for life, although they could be removed for misconduct or incompetence. The emblem of their office was the deer antler head dress, and guided by an all-male council, a clan council and a women's council, the sachems ruled in times of peace. War chiefs were chosen on the basis of birth, experience, and ability, but exercised power only during war. During times of peace, the War Chief had other duties that included being a messenger between clans or between the men's and women's councils.

The central authority of the Iroquois League was limited, leaving each nation free to pursue its own interests. By 1660, however, the Iroquois found it necessary to present a united front to Europeans, and the original freedom of its members had to be curtailed somewhat. In practice, the Mohawk and Oneida formed one faction in the council and the Seneca and Cayuga the other. The League's principal sachem (Tadodaho) was always an Onondaga, and as "keepers of the council fire" with 14 sachems (well out of proportion to their population), they represented compromise. This role was crucial since all decisions of the council had to be arrived at through consensus.

"We are instructed to carry love for one another, And to show great respect for all beings of the earth. We must stand together, the four sacred colors of man, as the one family that we are, in the interest of peace.... Our energy is the combined will of all the people. With the spirit of the natural world, To be of one body, one heart, and one mind." Chief Leon Shenandoah (Onondaga)
Think not forever of yourselves, O Chiefs, nor of your own Generation. Think of continuing generations of our families, think of our grandchildren and of those not yet unborn, whose faces are coming from beneath the ground"
Words spoken by the Peacemaker, prophet and founder of the Iroquois Confederacy Circa 1000 AD

"One good mind" to make decisions, that's the way we proceed. When the Confederacy was born, each nation agreed to act as a part of a league. There is autonomy for each nation, each nation has its own fire. Each nation has its own chiefs, its own Clan Mothers, but when it comes to matters that impact the entire Confederacy, then we act as one. The Peacemaker used as a symbol of our Confederacy not a flag, but a tree, the great white pine. The Tree of Peace. And at the base of that tree grow four white roots in the four cardinal directions of the earth: north, south, east, and west. And any nation that can embrace the concepts of peace, power, and righteousness can follow back one of those roots to the tree of Peace and join there with us."
G. Peter Jemison, Faithkeeper, Cattaraugus Reservation of the Seneca Nation

The Hiawatha Wampum Belt is a visual record of the creation of the League of the Haudenosaunee (also known as the Six Nations or Iroquois). Haudenosaunee oral tradition of that event has remained constant. At the center of the Hiawatha Belt is the Confederacy's symbol, the "Great White Pine," also known as the "Tree of Peace." The center figure also represents the Onondaga Nation where the central council fires reside -- all issues involving the entire Confederacy are debated and decided there. The other Haudenosaunee nations are visualized as squares: on the outer edges are the Mohawks, guardians of the Eastern Door; and the Seneca, Keepers of the Western Door. The Oneida and Cayuga are depicted in the two inner squares; the Tuscarora, the sixth nation in the Confederacy, joined after this Wampum was created and are said to sit with the Cayuga. The Hiawatha Wampum Belt also represents the origins of the Haudenosaunee's guiding principles, which were first described to them by a man called the Peacemaker. Two prophets, Ayonwentah (frequently thought to be Hiawatha due to the Longfellow poem) and Dekanawidah, The Great Peacemaker, brought a message of peace to squabbling tribes. Once they ceased most infighting, they rapidly became one of the strongest forces in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century north-eastern North America.

Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Perspectives on Life and Death

Birth, life, death and afterlife are integral aspects of Haudenosaunee cosmology. In order to understand death and to accept the journey to the Sky World, it is crucial to understand the origin of life, its laws, codes of conduct, challenges and consequences. The Haudenosaunee Creation Story provides deeper insights into the beginning of life, the first human beings, and all aspects of creation. It defines the relationships between all life on Mother Earth to the spirits in heavens and the beings in the Sky World.
More About the Three Sisters

The Three Sisters - Corn, Beans and Squash. A long time ago, the human started taking for granted some of the beings of the plant and animal world. The Three Sisters wanted to leave this world, but the humans agreed to acknowledge them at ceremonies every year to encourage them to stay. The strength of the sturdy corn stalks support the twining beans and the shade of the spreading squash vines trap moisture for the growing crop. Research has further revealed the additional benefits of this "companion planting." The bacterial colonies on the bean roots capture nitrogen from the air, some of which is released into the soil to nourish the high nitrogen needs of the corn. To the Haudenosaunee, however, the meaning of the Three Sisters runs deep into the physical and spiritual well-being of their people. Known as the "sustainers of life," the Iroquois consider corn, beans and squash to be special gifts from the Creator. The well-being of each crop is believed to be protected by one of the Three Sister Spirits. Many a Haudenosaunee teaching has been woven around the "Three Sisters" -sisters who would never be apart from one another- sisters who should be planted together, eaten together and celebrated together.
Haudenosaunee Confederacy Policy On False Face Masks

Today most First Nations use masks for dances, cultural drama, decoration, and as crafts for sale.

One big exception is the Haudenosaunee False Face Mask. These Masks are for strict use in ceremonies. The following policy was developed to address the use of Masks. Teachers who have masks in their possession to use within the classroom would be best advised to further research the origin of that mask.

The Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee, The Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, issued in 1995 the following policy statement regarding all medicine masks of the Haudenosaunee:

**Medicine Societies**

Within the Haudenosaunee there are various medicine societies that have the sacred duty to maintain the use and strength of special medicines, both for individual and community welfare. A medicine society is comprised of Haudenosaunee who have partaken of the medicine and are thereby bound to the protection and perpetuation of the special medicines. Such medicines are essential to the spiritual and emotional well-being of the Haudenosaunee communities. The medicine societies are a united group of individuals who must uphold and preserve the rituals that guard and protect the people, and the future generations.

Among these medicine societies are those that utilize the wooden masks and corn husk masks, which represent the shared power of the original medicine beings. Although there are variations of their images, all the masks have power and an intended purpose that is solely for the members of the respective medicine societies. Interference with the sacred duties of the societies and/or their masks is a violation of the freedom of the Haudenosaunee and does great harm to the welfare of the Haudenosaunee communities.

**Status of Masks**

All wooden and corn husk masks of the Haudenosaunee are sacred, regardless of size or age. By their very nature, masks are empowered the moment they are made. The image of the mask is sacred and is only to be used for its intended purpose. Masks do not have to be put through any ceremony or have tobacco attached to them in order to become useful or powerful. Masks should not be made unless they are to be used by members of the medicine society, according to established tradition.

**Sales of Masks**

No masks can be made for commercial purposes. Individuals who make masks for sale or sell masks to non-Haudenosaunee undermine the intended use of the masks, and such individuals must cease these activities as they do great harm to the Haudenosaunee and by extension to themselves and the purchaser. The commercialization of medicine masks is an exploitation of Haudenosaunee culture.
Exhibition Of Medicine Masks

The public exhibition of all medicine masks is forbidden. Medicine masks are not intended for everyone to see and such exhibition does not recognize the sacred duties and special functions of the masks. The exhibition of masks by museums does not serve to enlighten the public regarding the culture of the Haudenosaunee as such an exhibition violates the intended purpose of the mask and contributes to the desecration of the sacred image. In addition, information regarding medicine societies is not meant for general distribution. The non-Haudenosaunee public does not have the right to examine, interpret, or present the beliefs, functions, and duties of the secret medicine societies of the Haudenosaunee. The sovereign responsibility of the Haudenosaunee over their spiritual duties must be respected by the removal of all medicine masks from exhibition and from access to non-Haudenosaunee.

Reproductions, castings, photographs, or illustrations of medicine masks should not be used in exhibitions, as the image of the medicine masks should not be used in these fashions. To subject the image of the medicine masks to ridicule or misrepresentation is a violation of the sacred functions of the masks.

The Council of Chiefs find that there is no proper way to explain, interpret, or present the significance of the medicine masks and therefore, ask that no attempt be made by museums to do so other than to explain the wishes of the Haudenosaunee in this matter.

Return Of Medicine Masks

All Haudenosaunee medicine masks currently possessed by non-Haudenosaunee, including Museums, Art Galleries, Historical Societies, Universities, Commercial Enterprises, Foreign Governments, and Individuals should be returned to the Grand Council of Chiefs of the Haudenosaunee, who will ensure their proper use and protection for the future generations.

There is no legal, moral, or ethical way in which a medicine mask can be obtained or possessed by a non-Haudenosaunee individual or institution, as in order for a medicine mask to be removed from the society it would require the sanction of the Grand Council of Chiefs. This sanction has never been given. We ask all people to cooperate in the restoration of masks and other sacred objects to the proper caretakers among the Haudenosaunee. It is only through these actions that the traditional culture will remain strong and peace will be restored to our communities.

Nia'weh Chi Miigwech Thank you very much to Barbara Gray-Kanatiiosh for her permission to use her written work as given in 'The Haudenosaunee', the 'Haudenosaunee Confederacy Policy on False Faces' - a wealth of information is available on http://www.peace4turtleisland.org/ or by searching 'Kanatiiosh' on the world wide web.

For more information, please see: http://www.tolatsga.org/iro.html
http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/6Nations/BasicC1C.html

For a complete account of the Haudenosaunee Great Law and the account of the Peacemaker, visit:
http://sixnations.buffnet.net, or http://www.constitution.org/cons/iroquois.htm,

The Three Sisters: http://www.cqsb.qc.ca/svs/434/fn3sis.htm
THE INUIT

The Inuit and the Land

The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the ITK) is the national Inuit organization in Canada, representing four Inuit regions – Nunatsiavut (Labrador), Nunavik (northern Quebec), Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Northwest Territories. Much of the following information on this section “The Inuit and the Land” has been taken from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Mary Simon’s Speaking Tour—"Inuit and the Canadian Arctic: Sovereignty Begins at Home" Speech to The Canadian Club of Ottawa on October 23, 2007

Inuit live in four Arctic regions: The Inuvialuit Region of the Northwest Territories; Nunavut, Canada’s newest territory; Nunavik, which is northern Quebec; and Nunatsiavut - northern Labrador. Currently approximately 55,000 Inuit live in Canada, spread from Labrador in the east to the Northwest Territories in the west. The Arctic is one third of Canada’s land mass with 50% of the Canada’s shore line. Inuit are the vast majority of the permanent population in Arctic communities. Inuit are also becoming more numerous in some southern cities, such as Ottawa, Montreal, and Edmonton. The Arctic is Inuit homeland. Inuit call it Inuit Nunnaat. Inuit have occupied this vast territory for thousands of years and have a culture and language deeply rooted in the physical surroundings. The Arctic defines who Inuit are. In turn, Inuit presence and way of life help define the Arctic. Unlike many First Nation communities, today Inuit do not live on reserves. Inuit have chosen municipal status within the respective territories and provinces. With few exceptions, there are no road connections to the rest of Canada. Transportation is by air and sea. The cost of living is staggering with even hunting becoming very expensive.

All regions have achieved comprehensive land claims agreements. These are Constitutionally-protected treaties between Inuit and the Government of Canada. There is a great desire in the Arctic to achieve economic self sufficiency in ways that build Inuit cultural values into the new economy.

Inuit are not the only people living in the Arctic. The polar region is shared with other indigenous cultures. Canadian Inuit have close ties with the Yupik and Inupiat of Alaska and Russia and with the Inuit of Greenland. There are more distant biological and linguistic links with the Aleut. There are other indigenous cultures occupying the circumpolar regions of Europe and Russia each having a distinct history and cultural tradition.
The Inuit Culture and Family

The Inuit past is preserved and explained through the telling of stories and the passing of information from one generation to the next through what is called the oral tradition. Inuit recognize the importance of maintaining the oral tradition as a part of the culture and way of learning.

Inuit society was structured around the immediate family, plus the extended family of grandparents, cousins and other blood and marriage relationships comprising a family group with whom they lived in close proximity. All kinship relations, once established, remained in force until death. Whaling in particular required the cooperative efforts of the family group to hunt, skin, secure the food and make clothing. The interdependence of the family group was essential for survival.

The spiritual beliefs of the Inuit pervaded every aspect of their culture. They were shaped by their need to obtain food and to face the extreme and unpredictable forces in their environment. All things whether living or inanimate had "a spirit". The shaman or "angakog" was the person in the family group able to communicate with the spirit world and exercise control over physical forces and events. The shaman acted as mediator between man and the greater forces of the universe. Shamans held a central place in the Inuit culture. Although shamans could be evil as well as good, the first shamans arose specifically to help man. The position of shaman was open to all but only those with inherent "supernatural" faculty could become a shaman. The role of shaman often passed from an older to a younger member of the family. There was an apprenticeship period from five to twelve years, during which time the apprentice was under special taboos or restrictions such as abstinence from eating the liver, head, heart or intestines, or having sexual relations. His training involved learning stories with information about the various techniques during ceremonies; instruction in taboos.

String Games

The Inuit have created some of the most complicated and beautiful string figures. This activity was seen as a form of art, however it also was used to help develop stories that were told in the igloo in winter time. All you need to play a string game is a single loop of string about 1 metre long, and your two hands. Many of these string games can be seen in pictorial form with instructions on the ARCTIC STRING FIGURE PROJECT website, http://www.isfa.org/arctic/jenness.htm
Inuit Throat Singing

There are two types of singing in the vast Inuit Arctic: regular songs, generally accompanied by hand drums and dancing; and throat-singing, generally done by two women facing each other (and nowadays by a few men, too). In many regions, throat-singing was forbidden by Christian priests for many decades. With the religious ban now lifted, it has been resurfacing in the last 20 to 30 years. Inuit throat-singing is not singing per se but really vocal games or breathing games. Traditionally, they are considered 'games in which one makes noises', as the Inuit would say. Because of the way they use the voice, the throat, deep breathy sounds, rhythms, it is now called throat-singing. Traditionally, they are games the women employed during the long winter nights to entertain the children, while the men are away hunting (sometimes for up to a month or more). As already mentioned, they are generally done by two persons, but sometimes we can find four or more performers singing together.

Inuit throat-singing is done the following way: two women face each other; they may be standing or crouching down; one is leading, while the other responds; the leader produces a short rhythmic motif, that she repeats with a short silent gap in-between, while the other is rhythmically filling in the gaps. The game is such that both singers try to show their vocal abilities in competition, by exchanging these vocal motives. The first to run out of breath or be unable to maintain the pace of the other singer will start to laugh or simply stop and will thus loose the game. It generally last between one and three minutes. The winner is the singer who beats the largest number of people. Women of Araviat, Nunavut practice a unique form of throat singing. These women are able to throat sing by themselves, using a large bowl or kettle held near the singer's mouth to give resonance.

Inuit Technology

Kayak—The Arctic skin boat known to Inuit as the kayak was protected from waves, spray and the elements by a watertight, covered deck. Some local varieties had long, thin end horns that could serve as handholds in the event of a capsize rescue. These kayaks were designed for great speed and were therefore well suited to one of their primary functions: the pursuit and capture of swimming caribou at inland lakes and rivers. Kayaks would have traditionally been made of caribou skins and bones. No nails were used in the kayak construction. Caribou sinew was used to lash the kayak together.
Igloo—An igloo translated some times as snow house is a shelter constructed from blocks of snow. Its is generally in the from of a dome. The best snow to use for this purpose is snow which has been blown by wind. Their homes were wonderfully well constructed. These early people are credited with the invention of igloos. They fit blocks tightly together. Then, using lamps, they applied heat to the walls of their home, both inside and out. The ice melted a little, and quickly refroze. This sealed the blocks into one sheet of ice, and made their homes nearly air tight. One oil lamp could heat a home. Homes had windows made of clear sheets of ice. They had doors of ice that could be opened and closed. During construction, they built in an ice shelf around the entire inside wall. They used the shelf to spread out bedding and for a place to sit. The ice shelves stayed frozen because one side of the shelf was part of the outside wall. The people stayed warm while sleeping on the shelves because they were tucked inside fur sleeping bags.

Other Technologies—

The ulu—this women’s knife with varying blade lengths is used for skinning and cleaning animals, cutting a child’s hair, cutting food and, sometimes for trimming blocks of snow and ice.

The quilliq— is the small stone stove that was their only stove that was their only source of heat and light during long winter months.

The Parka—The ingenuity of the Parka reflected the varied roles of the men and women and were constructed to accommodate the actions required of these roles. For example, the hood of the men’s parka was more close-fitting to allow better vision out in the tundra. The shoulders were roomy to allow him to pull in his arms for warmth or to aid movement during a hunt. The woman’s parka was better suited to the caring of children in that the hood was large and was better suited to actually serve as a carrier of the children for the first couple of years of their lives. The parka was also roomy enough to allow it to be moved from from back to front to easily accommodate breast feeding.
This significance of the Inuit inukshuk is so popular that it has been incorporated into the flag and coat of arms for the Nunavut territory of Canada as well as the flag of Nunatsiavut which represents the Inuit region in Labrador. It is also the symbol representing the 2010 Olympics.

Many thanks to the very helpful staff of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami for their suggestions, clarifications and permission. Excellent information is available at http://www.itk.ca/

For more information on Inuit culture, heritage and lifestyles, please see:

http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/famlit/howtokit/culture/culture.pdf  (excellent resource for primary lesson planning)
www.civilization.ca
ARCTIC, VOL. 47, NO. 2 (JUNE 1994) P. 193-195
http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/famlit/howtokit/culture/culture.pdf
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igloo  - site was the source for most images
http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/inuit.htm
http://www.freespiritgallery.ca/inukshuk.htm
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http://www.histori.ca/minutes/lp.do?id=10692  — Lesson