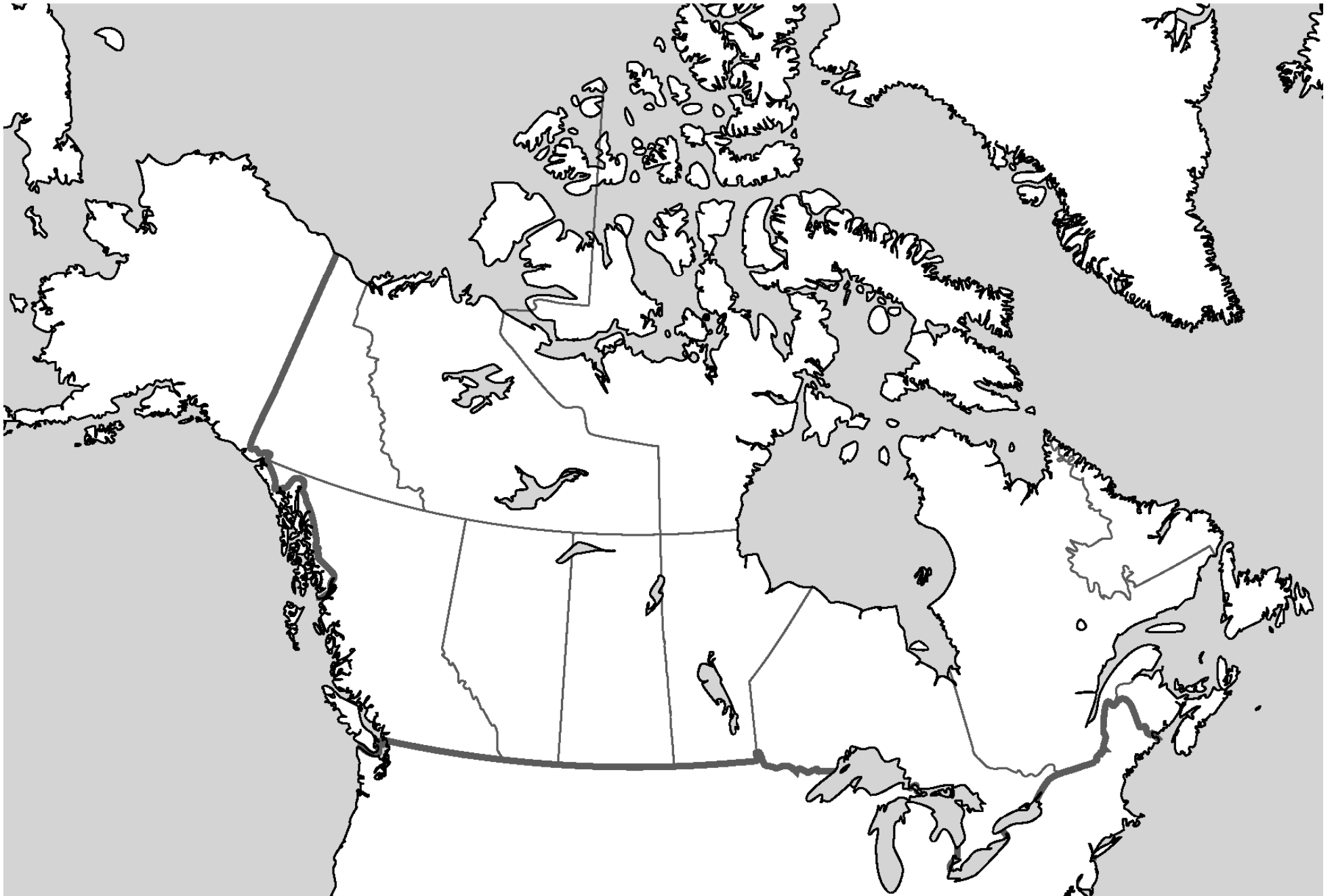


# The First Nations of Canada – Region Map



# The First Nations of Canada – Map Key

Northwest Coast

Tribes:

Plateau

Tribes:

Plains

Tribes:

Eastern Woodlands

Tribes:

Subarctic

Tribes:

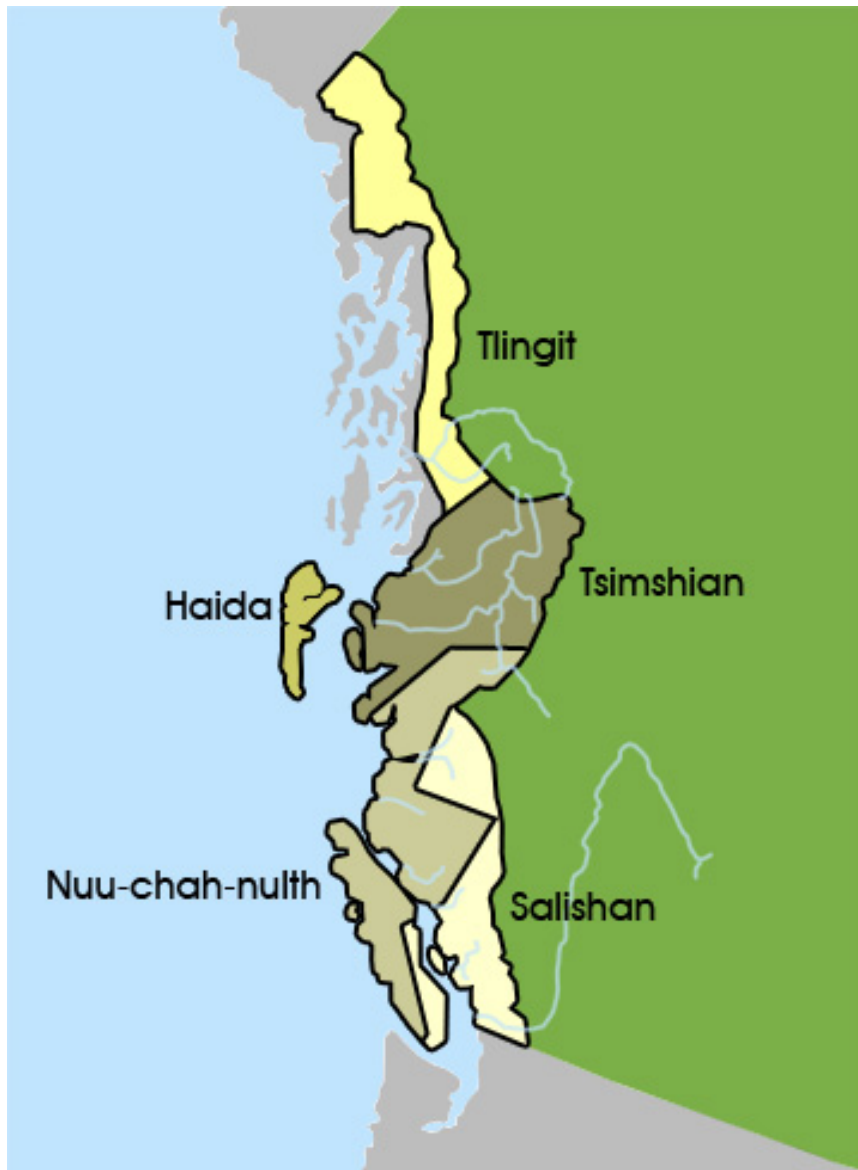
Arctic

Tribes:

# The First Nations of Canada: Regions



# The Northwest Coast

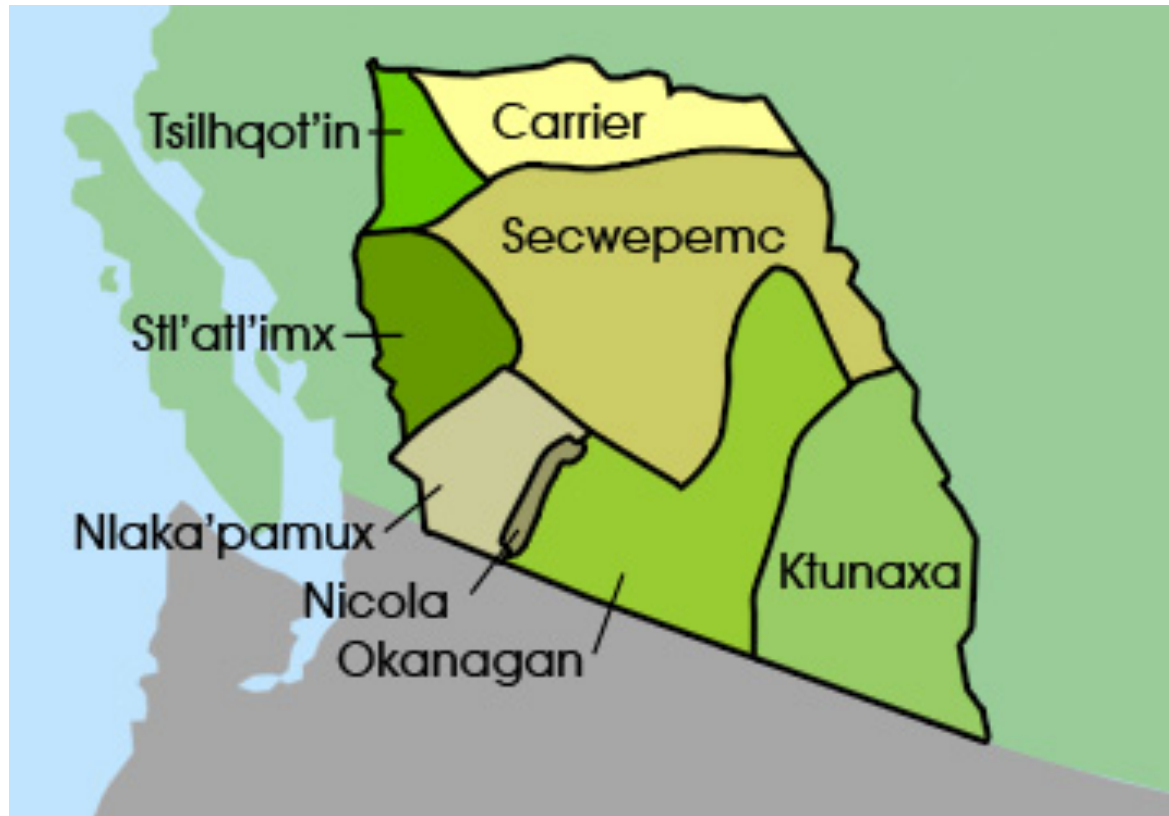


## Historical Summary

Long ago there was an exceptionally diverse First Nation culture that thrived on British Columbia's coast. The people of the Northwest Coast were the original settlers who made the coast of British Columbia their home.

Over the course of a few thousand years, a rich variety of First Nation groups emerged. Some historians believe that at one point in time the Northwest Coast was the most densely populated region with the widest variety of culture on planet Earth! These cultures can be broadly lumped into five unique groups: Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka), and Salishan. Within these five main groups were many sub-groups.

# The Plateau



## Historical Summary

British Columbia is a mountainous region in Canada. Between the coastal ranges of the Pacific Ocean and the Rocky Mountains that run down the border of Alberta, there lies a plateau region that is rich in natural resources. The First Nation groups that settled this region became known as the Plateau People.

The groups who lived on the Plateau include: the Secwepemc, Stl'atl'imc, Nlaka'pamux, Okanagan, Ktunaxa, Tsilhqot'in, Dakelh, Stl'atl'imc, and Nlaka'pamux.

Some of these groups had strong similarities. Such was the case with the Tsilhqot'in and Dakelh - both **Dene** groups who spoke dialects of the Dene language family. The Secwepemc, Stl'atl'imc, Nlaka'pamux, and Okanagan were all part of the **Salishan** language family. The **Ktuknaxa** people, who lived on the border of the Plateau region, spoke a language isolate, meaning there is no clear relationship between their language and any other.

# The Plains

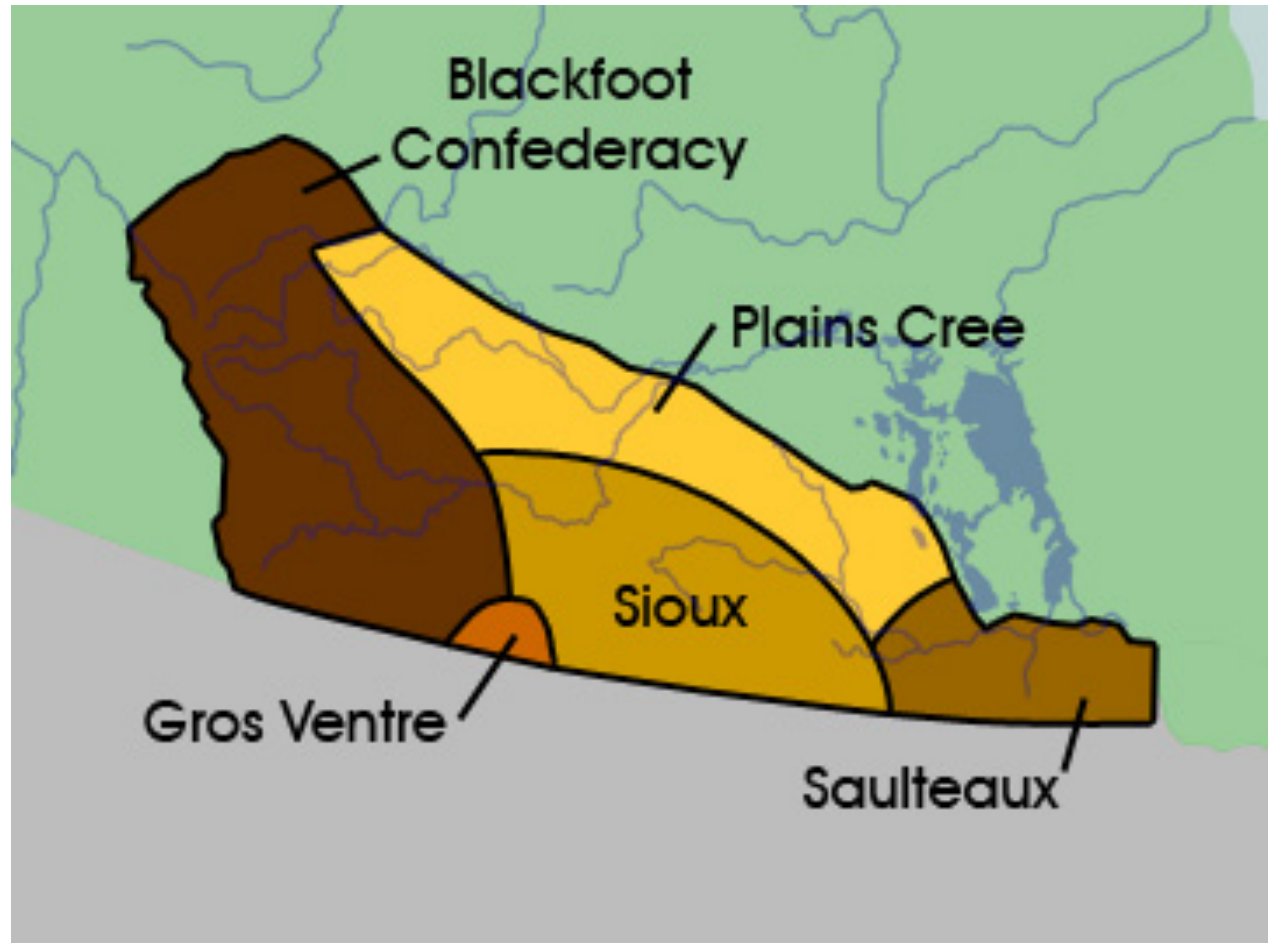
## Historical Summary

The Plains People were the First Nations who lived in the interior of North America. The plains of North America consist of flat landscapes and a dry climate with hot summers with cold winters.

Like other First Nation groups, the Plains' ancestors most likely came over a land bridge from Siberia many thousands of years ago.

The Plains People who lived in Canada are broken up into six unique cultural groups: *Blackfoot*, *Cree*, *Ojibwa (Saulteaux)*, *Assiniboine (Gros Ventre)*, *Nakota (Sioux)*, and *Dakota (Sioux)*.

These six groups spoke languages that can be traced to three distinct language groups: Algonquian, Siouan, and Dene. Within these three unique groups, many **dialects** also existed.



# The Eastern Woodlands



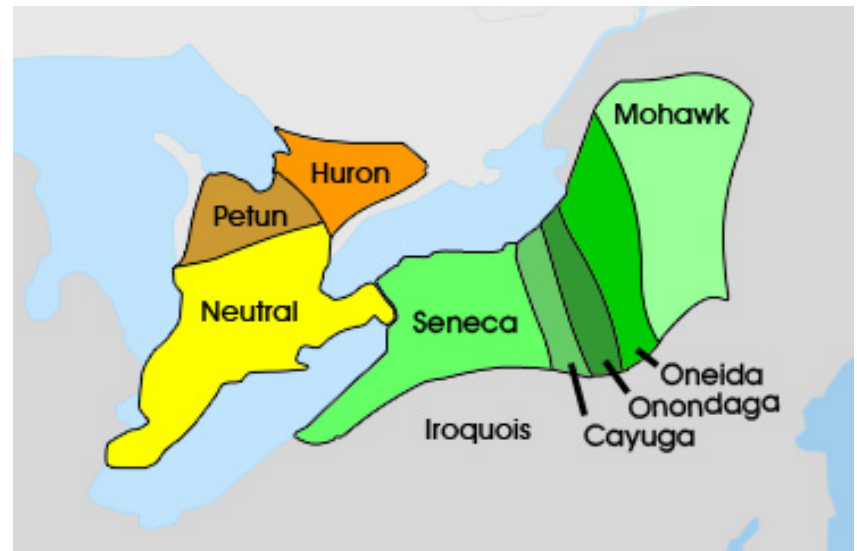
## Historical Summary

Stretching from Nova Scotia in the east, across southern New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, and even through parts of the Prairies lays the “Eastern Woodlands” region. The environment consists of deciduous and coniferous forests, along with rich soil deposits that are useful for growing crops. Nestled on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, the Eastern Woodlands region was, and still is, rich in natural resources.

The Iroquois tribes lived primarily along the St. Lawrence River and in parts of Southern Ontario.

A large grouping of Iroquoian nations lived just south of lake Ontario, in Upper New York State. They would later migrate to southern Ontario. Some of the Iroquois First Nation tribes included Erie, Neutral, Wenro, Wendat (Huron), Petun, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk (these last five were part of a confederacy called “Haudenosaunee”).

The Algonquian tribes lived primarily in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario. The Algonquian tribes included Ojibwa, Odawa, Nipissing, Algonquin, Abenaki, Maliseet, and Mi'kmaq. In the Maritime region some of the Algonquian tribes became organized with one another in a larger alliance called the “Wabanaki Confederacy”.



# The Subarctic

## Historical Summary

The Subarctic region stretches from Newfoundland in the east all the way across Canada to British Columbia and the US state of Alaska in the west. The southern range of the region comes as low as Lake Superior while the northern border extends up through Hudson's Bay and even further north in some areas.

The Subarctic region is known for its rich boreal forest. These forests are full of coniferous trees, bogs, and marshes. The forest is home to many types of animals and it contains thousands of fresh water lakes and rivers.

The **Eastern Subarctic Peoples** included Ojibwa, Cree, Atikamekw, Beothuk, and more. Most of these groups spoke languages that were part of the Algonquian language family.

The **Western Subarctic Peoples** include the Dene Nation, Tlingit, Tagish, Tahltan, Tutchone, Kaska, Han, Tsetsaut, Sekani, Dane-zaa and T'atsaot'ine. Most of these groups spoke languages related to the Dene language family. Despite there being two major language families across the region, all tribes shared similar characteristics and ways of living.



# The Arctic



## Historical Summary

The **Arctic region** of Canada generally refers to the area of land beyond the boreal forests of the Subarctic. This part of Canada is characterized by a cold and barren landscape. **Permafrost** exists year round, snow is the norm most of the year, and in some regions they experience 24 hours of darkness in the winter and 24 hours of light in the summer. The Arctic is

considered to be one of the most difficult climates for human survival on planet earth.

When the ancient First Nations first came to North America, they worked their way south to live in comfortable climates. Over thousands of years, some groups moved across the continent and came back north. As recently as 1000 years ago two First Nation groups inhabited the western arctic regions: the **Dorset and Innu**. Only the Innu have survived into modern times.

The Inuit are part of the **Aboriginal Peoples of Canada** but are not considered part of the First Nations of Canada. This is because they came into North America well after the First Nation ancestors. Despite being late to the land, the Inuit completely dominated the Arctic region with ingenious adaptations to existing technology that allowed them to survive and thrive. Today the Inuit live not only in Arctic Canada, but in Arctic Siberia, Alaska, and Greenland as well!

# How to Use This Resource

*The primary purpose of this activity is to have students create a map of the regions in Canada where various First Nation Peoples lived at the time of European contact.*

- 1) Set up the activity by dividing students into table groups of 3-6.
- 2) Give each student a blank map and key.
- 3) Give the entire table group the “Historical Summary” package, along with the “First Nations of Canada: Regions” map.
- 4) Allow the table groups an entire period or two to work on creating their own individual region map, filling out the map key using the shared “Historical Summary” package.

## **Extension:**

Have your students further subdivide their map into tribal regions. They will most likely not have room on their map to squeeze every tribe name in (by writing). A numbering system connected to their map key is the best way to do this!

**Variation:**

- 1) Set up 6 table stations – one for each region. Each station will have a different Historical Summary page.
- 2) Have groups travel to the different regions of Canada to investigate the tribal groups that lived there. Part of each student's investigation includes creating a regional map of the tribes, complete with a map key.
- 3) In this variation, you may not want to show students the big picture “First Nations of Canada: Regions” map until after they are done their map work. See what type of regional map they create on their own by just using the information given on the historical summary pages.
- 4) Use the provided “First Nations of Canada: Regions” map to grade their mapping accuracy.