

# 150 Acts of Reconciliation for Canada's 150

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On August 4th, there are 150 days left in 2017 – the year of Canada’s 150th birthday. There have been robust discussions this year around reconciliation and we would like to contribute to the conversation. Together, we have written 150 Acts of Reconciliation for the last 150 days of 2017. Many of these are small, everyday acts that average Canadians can undertake, but others are more provocative that encourage people to think about Indigenous-settler relationships in new ways. We encourage you to use #150Acts to share your engagement with each item on the list.

1. Learn the land acknowledgement in your region.
2. Find your local reconciliation organization.
3. If there isn’t one, consider joining together with others to start one.
4. Attend a cultural event, such as a pow wow (yes, all folks are invited to these!).
5. Purchase an item from an Indigenous artist. For instance, if you are interested in owning a dreamcatcher or a pair of moccasins, find an Indigenous artist who can craft these items for you and provide you with information about these special creations.
6. Download an Indigenous podcast, like Ryan McMahon’s [Red Man Laughing](#) or Molly Swain and Chelsea Vowel’s [Métis in Space](#).
7. Read an autobiography written by an Indigenous person. A couple of ideas include Augie Merasty’s [The Education of Augie Merasty](#), Maria Campbell’s *Halfbreed*, and Mini Adola Freeman’s [Life Among the Qallunaat](#).
8. Find out if there was a residential school where you live.
9. Memorize its name and visit its former site.
10. Watch CBC’s [Eighth Fire](#).
11. Choose one plant or flower in your area and learn how Indigenous people use(d) it.
12. Visit your local museum, particularly its section on Indigenous people. If it does not have one, ask the staff why not.
13. Learn a greeting in a local Indigenous language.
14. Register for the University of Alberta’s online [MOOC](#), called “Indigenous Canada,” for free.
15. Initiate a conversation with a friend about an Indigenous issue in the news.
16. Support [Black Lives Matter](#).
17. Eat at an Indigenous restaurant, café, or food truck.
18. Read about the Cornwallis Statue in Halifax.
19. Seriously consider your own position as a settler Canadian. Do you uphold practices that contribute to the marginalization of Indigenous peoples?
20. Learn why headdresses are not appropriate to wear at music festivals (or outside of Indigenous ceremony).
21. Find a book that delves into Indigenous local histories.
22. Donate to the [Emerging Indigenous Voices](#) award.

23. Although Gord Downie significantly contributed to the conversation about residential schools, consider why some Indigenous people might not support his project.
24. Visit a local Indigenous writer- or artist-in-residence.
25. When discussing LGBTQ issues, always include two-spirited peoples (LGBTQ2S\*).
26. Invite your local reconciliation organization to hold a [KAIROS Blanket Exercise](#) at your place of employment.
27. Buy some books for your children that explain the histories and legacies of residential school (see [CBC's](#) list of suggestions).
28. Ask yourself if stereotypes about Indigenous people align with your beliefs (for more on stereotypes, refer to Chelsea Vowel's [Indigenous Writes](#) [2016]).
29. Educate yourself around the issue of carding and consider why this is an important issue for urban Indigenous populations.
30. Learn your family history. Know where your ancestors came from and when they arrived in Canada.
31. In addition, understand how your family story is part of a larger system that sought to dispossess Indigenous people from their ancestral lands.
32. Listen more. Talk less.
33. Ask your child's school to give a daily land acknowledgement. If the Canadian national anthem is sung at their school, ask that the acknowledgement come before the anthem.
34. Acknowledge that as a nation, Canadians choose which histories are celebrated and which ones are erased.
35. Learn the difference between Indigenous, Aboriginal, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit.
36. Support local Indigenous authors by purchasing their books.
37. Research why Joseph Boyden is not Indigenous.
38. Watch an educational documentary, such as [We Were Children](#) or [The Pass System](#).
39. Gently counter racist or stereotypical comments with fact-based information whether you are at a party, the office, or the gym.
40. Write your local councilor, MLA, or MP about the flying of Indigenous flags at local, provincial/territorial, or federal buildings.
41. Understand and acknowledge that Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, was an architect of genocide. Say that aloud with us. "John A. Macdonald was an architect of genocide."
42. Write a letter to your local RCMP Officer in Charge or local Police Chief to inquire about how the police force is actively engaged in fostering connections with local Indigenous communities. If they are not doing so, ask that they start.
43. Show your support on social media. 'Like' pages and 'share' posts that support Indigenous endeavours.
44. Listen to Indigenous music. If you do not know any, listen to CBC's [Reclaimed](#). Or start with an album by Tanya Tagaq or Leonard Sumner.
45. Find the Indigenous section at your local library.
46. Read the TRC. Seriously. Start with the Calls to Action, then the Executive Summary. You can even listen to it online at [#ReadtheTRC](#). Better yet, invite your friends or colleagues to read it with you.
47. Go and see Indigenous scholars and intellectuals speak.
48. Hire Indigenous people for positions at your workplace.
49. If you live in an area where there is a Treaty relationship, read the treaty document.

50. Write to your municipal, provincial, and federal representatives and ask them how they are implementing the [Calls to Action](#).
51. Follow up with your representatives about the Calls to Action.
52. Read Marilyn Poitras' [reasons](#) for resigning her Commissioner's position with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Inquiry.
53. Find an organization locally that has upcoming programming where you can learn more. In many areas, this is the Native Friendship Centre.
54. Learn about how the child welfare system is failing Indigenous families. Write a letter to your elected representative asking for change.
55. Remember when Stephen Harper's government sent body bags to the Wasagamack First Nation during the H1N1 influenza outbreak instead of trained medical professionals with vaccines?
56. Did you know there was a separate and inferior health care system for Indigenous peoples? Read Maureen Lux's book, [Separate Beds](#) (2016).
57. Be aware that Indigenous people were restricted from voting in federal elections until 1960.
58. Do you have access to clean drinking water? You are lucky. Also, 'luck' really has nothing to do with it; these conditions were historically engineered.
59. In a country that is 'safe,' such as Canada, [57%](#) of Indigenous women are sexually assaulted during their lifetimes.
60. Recall that First Nations people were forced to choose between maintaining their Status under the Indian Act and going to university or serving in the armed forces, and women lost their status by marrying a non-Indigenous person.
61. Find out who was forced out of your area before you moved there, whether centuries ago or more recently with new housing developments.
62. Imagine living for six weeks on a hunger strike, with no sustenance but broth. To get a meeting with the prime minister. Hello, Chief Theresa Spence.
63. Write to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and ask that the government implement the [promises](#) he made to Indigenous people in the 2015 election.
64. Does your child have a school nearby? Realize that it receives better funding than on-reserve schools. By at least [30%](#).
65. Actively seek out Indigenous heroes and role models. How about Dr. [Nadine Caron](#), the first First Nations woman to become a surgeon? Or Métis artist, [Christi Belcourt](#)? Or a historical figure, such as [Thanadelthur](#)?
66. Do you have an Indigenous political candidate in your area? Even though they might not be affiliated with your political party of choice, phone or email them and start a conversation.
67. Who was the last Indigenous person to win the Polaris Prize?
68. Support the rights of Indigenous nations to exercise their sovereignty. For example, learn about the Haudenosaunee Confederacy [passport](#).
69. Recognize that Indigenous legal orders and laws guiding society existed in this land before the authority of the Canadian nation state.
70. When travelling, know whose land you are visiting while on vacation or travelling for work.
71. Do more than google.
72. If you are talking about or researching Indigenous peoples, have you included any of their voices?
73. Support Indigenous parents by learning the issues that they are faced with, which are often scenarios that settler Canadians take for granted. For instance, the use of Indigenous names on

government documents and how that can be [problematic](#). But also how these ‘issues’ can be [resolved](#) by speaking out!

74. [#NODAPL](#).
75. Yes, this all might seem scary! Keep going, if you are committed.
76. Acknowledge that current (and sometimes vexed) First Nations politics are governed by the Indian Act.
77. Learn about why the opinions of Senator Lynn Beyak are [problematic](#).
78. Consider the diverse family forms that existed here before settlers arrived. This included strong matrilineal families in various forms, such as polyamorous relations.
79. Did you know that in the [Northwest Territories](#) and [Nunavut](#), territorial law acknowledges Indigenous custom adoptions?
80. Write [Robert-Falcon Ouellette](#) a letter of support for speaking Cree in the House of Commons.
81. This year was the twenty-seventh anniversary of the so-called ‘Oka Crisis.’ What do you know about it?
82. Ever wonder why only English and French are Canada’s official languages when there are at least sixty Indigenous languages in this land?
83. Read about the [Daniels Decision](#) and why it is important.
84. Learn about Chanie Wenjack’s story by watching this [Heritage Minute](#). Know that his story was shared by thousands of other Indigenous children.
85. Remember that good intentions can be harmful too.
86. Did you know that Indigenous peoples had sophisticated ways of caring for our landscapes to prevent massive fires, floods, and other natural disasters? Learn more about these methods.
87. That fish you are going to catch during this long weekend? Learn the Indigenous word for it and local teachings about it.
88. Did you know that two remarkably successful Hollywood films included Indigenous actors? Watch The Revenant’s Melaw Nakeh’ko and Wonder Woman’s Eugene Brave Rock!
89. Watch Alethea Arnaquq-Baril’s [Angry Inuk](#).
90. Hold businesses accountable to your personal ethics and ideologies.
91. Do not assume that you are entitled to attend a local sweat or other spiritual ceremony.
92. BUT if you are invited to ceremony – definitely go. This is an honour!
93. If you actually want to see the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people change, and commit to making reconciliation a part of your every-day ethos.
94. When visiting a museum, do so critically. Ask who tells the story, how that item got there, and what processes are in place around repatriation.
95. Consider the line between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation. Chelsea Vowel has a good [blogpost](#) about this.
96. Follow [@Resistance150](#) on Twitter and learn why Canada 150 is not something to celebrate for many Indigenous peoples. After all, Canada does not celebrate the fact that Indigenous Nations have existed in this land since Time Immemorial.
97. Observe what is celebrated and recognized in the monuments, parks, and street names in your city. Think about how public history could be [told differently](#).
98. Learn the original names of places. Learn what places were and are important to Indigenous people.
99. Discover the world of Indigenous blogging. [Zoe Todd](#), [Erica Violet Lee](#), [Billy-Ray Belcourt](#), and [Chelsea Vowel](#) are among the best.

100. Consider the words that you use. For example, do not call your group of friends a “tribe,” describe a meeting as a “pow-wow,” or call a non-Indigenous leader “Chief.”
101. Learn the stories behind some of your favourite music. For example, read about how [Lillian Shirt’s](#) grandmother may have inspired the song “Imagine” by John Lennon.
102. Visit the website of the nearest First Nation(s) or Indigenous communities. Read their short introduction and history.
103. Find opportunities to learn about how Indigenous people experience the place where you live. Look for a local speaker’s series or an online resource.
104. Volunteer your time to an Indigenous non-profit organization.
105. Support Indigenous media (newspapers, radio stations, social media sites, and TV stations).
106. If you read a news story that feeds into stereotypes, write a letter to complain and ask for Indigenous perspectives on local, national, and international news.
107. Read the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). Our government has committed to implementing it.
108. Read the [Indian Act](#).
109. Read the report on the [Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples](#).
110. Is there any public art by Indigenous artists in your area? If so, visit it and learn about the artists.
111. Read [In This Together: Fifteen True Stories of Real Reconciliation](#) (2016) and write down your own “lightbulb” moment when you realized the harsh reality of colonization in Canada.
112. Make reconciliation a family project and complete items on this list together. Bring your children to events, learn words in an Indigenous language together, and organize a youth blanket exercise, for example.
113. Start your own [Heart Garden](#) with messages of support for residential school survivors.
114. Start to learn and understand cultural protocol. Know this will change according to Indigenous nation and region.
115. Commit to being a lifelong student beyond Canada 150.
116. Look up and learn about an Indigenous athlete. We have NHL players and Olympians among the mix!
117. The Bering Land bridge is one way of telling migration history. But Indigenous people have their own explanation of ancient histories and that needs to be respected. Read about these conversations [here](#) and [here](#).
118. Share this list on social media.
119. Look for and share the positive stories about Indigenous people, not just the negative ones.
120. Invite local Indigenous people in to your event or organization.
121. Know that when you are inviting an Indigenous person in, they are often overburdened and overworked.
122. Give an honorarium if you expect an Indigenous person to contribute their time and effort.
123. Cite Indigenous authors and academics in your work.
124. Consider using Indigenous research methodologies in your work. Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) is the singular most important book for this.
125. Want to incorporate Indigenous elements or policies into your workplace? Hire an Indigenous consultant.
126. Ask yourself how to support Indigenous families who have lost loved ones as the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls unravels.

127. Seek opportunities to collaborate that span forms of both Indigenous knowledge and western knowledge.
  128. Update your email signature to reflect the territory you live and work on.
  129. Encourage the institution you work for or study at to formally acknowledge the territory.
  130. Check out *Remember, Resist, Redraw: A Radical History Poster Project*. Find more about the project [here](#) and support the cause [here](#).
  131. Make a financial donation to a local Indigenous organization.
  132. Get behind the initiatives to rename Langevin Block and Ryerson University and learn why this is important.
  133. Support initiatives to change the racist names of sports teams. Learn why this is so important to many Indigenous people.
  134. Support and celebrate the persistence of land-based economies, such as the seal hunt.
  135. Read fiction by Indigenous authors. A good place to start is the most recent copy of *The Malahat Review*, which you can read online for free, [here](#).
  136. If you own property, revisit the documents that gave you ‘title’ to your land. Think about who has the authority to grant this title and who does not.
  137. Order a “Colonialism 150” t-shirt [here](#).
  138. Next time you want to talk to an Indigenous person about their background, try your best not to frame the discussion in terms of blood quantum (i.e. how “much” Indigenous or white blood they have). Instead, ask what community they belong to and learn the name of their people.
  139. Actively commit to eliminating stereotypes about Indigenous identities by gently correcting people. For instance, being “mixed blood” does not make one Métis.
  140. Make a financial or in-kind contribution to the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#).
  141. Contact your alma mater and inquire about the number of Indigenous people on the Board of Governors or the Senate.
  142. Check out some of the videos by the [1491s](#) for a laugh.
  143. Visit [Walking With Our Sisters](#) website and discover if they are coming to your region.
  144. Read about the story of one missing or murdered Indigenous woman in your region.
  145. Memorize her name and learn about her life.
  146. Familiarize yourself with Cindy Blackstock’s [important work](#).
  147. Find out if your local hospital has an [All Nations Healing](#) room or something similar. If not, ask your employer to help fund one.
  148. Here is a shout out to all the amazing aunties, kokums, jijuus, and aagaas! Hai cho’o for your continued guidance and support.
  149. Understand that reconciliation is not about “feeling guilty.” It is about knowledge, action, and justice.
  150. Why stop at 150? After all, Indigenous nations are celebrating millennia on this land. Build on this list or start and share your own.
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