

## Optional Activity 2: These Lands

This place is the unceded and ancestral homelands of the **hə́h̓q̓mí̓h̓m̓** and **S̓k̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh** speaking peoples, the **x̓w̓m̓ə̓θ̓k̓w̓ə̓y̓əm** (Musqueam), **S̓k̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh** (Squamish) and **səlilwətał** (Tseil-Waututh) Peoples (MST), and has been traditionally stewarded by them since time immemorial. Vancouver is a City of Reconciliation and has committed to a sustained relationship of mutual respect, understanding and working with the three host First Nations, whose unceded and ancestral homelands we occupy as settlers.



Territorial acknowledgements are kind of like traditional protocols that were used as part of complex relationships among Nations and communities on these lands long before colonization. Today land acknowledgements are typically given before events, gatherings, or occasions and are part of recognizing the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and affirming the unique connections they have maintained to this land since time immemorial.

Territorial acknowledgements are a small step in our path towards reconciliation, but they can allow settler Vancouver residents the opportunity to reflect on the ongoing impacts of colonization, learn more about Indigenous Peoples and commit to further action to support reconciliation in their own lives. Recent national conversations about residential schools highlight the ongoing impacts of colonialism and the importance of reconciliation.

### Drafting Your Territorial Acknowledgement:

As a class, or in small groups, work together to develop a territorial acknowledgement. As a starting point, it is most common to first recognize the local Nations, so you might start:

“Today, we are gathered here on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the **x̓w̓m̓ə̓θ̓k̓w̓ə̓y̓əm** (Musqueam), **S̓k̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh** (Squamish) and **səlilwətał** (Tseil-Waututh) Peoples.”

From there you can build on this acknowledgement with personal reflections about your relationship to the land, how you came to be here and how you benefit from living here. Try the questions below to prompt reflection and give everyone in the group the chance to add their own perspective to the land acknowledgement:

- What is your relationship to the territory? How did you come to be here?
- How do you benefit from living on this land? How do you benefit from colonialism?
- What are the impacts of colonialism on this land?

We would like to offer Indigenous students the option to take this time to think about how the Vancouver Plan and the City generally can support you, as an Indigenous youth, your friends and family and community. We encourage you to share these reflections with your teacher, who can pass them on (anonymously if you like) to City staff.