

# ac·knowl·edge

/ək'nɒləj/

to accept or admit the existence or truth of.

## to remember

To properly acknowledge Indigenous territory, the speech must reflect intent, purpose, and a commitment to action, explicitly describe the historical and existing power dynamics between settlers and Indigenous people on this land, as well as the obligation of settlers to redress it. It must be personal to the speaker, and relevant to the organizers.

The speaker should also address how the land acknowledgement speaks to the event in question and how the organizer of the event intends to better serve – in concrete terms – the Indigenous people and the land that they acknowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Moving beyond territorial acknowledgments means asking hard questions about what needs to be done once we're 'aware of Indigenous presence'. It requires that we remain uncomfortable, and it means making concrete, disruptive change. How can you be in good relationship with Indigenous peoples, with non-human beings, with the land and water?<sup>2</sup>

## to do

**Use words like** acknowledge, honour, traditional territory, land, treaty, First Nation name(s), commitment

To learn which traditional territory you are on, visit

<https://native-land.ca/>

## to avoid

**Using words like** gratitude, thanks, play, Canada, citizen, guest

Having/Asking Indigenous people to draft the acknowledgment

Doing it as a token.

Repeating it automatically.

Drafting a superficial/generic one without learning the history.

Repeating the same phrase across events, groups and time.

# Territory Acknowledgment

# ask yourself

How can I make this land acknowledgment personal?

What will be my contribution to righting historical harms?

What commitment am I making?

What are my reasons for making this land acknowledgment?

## examples

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

*-University of Victoria*

I want to begin my remarks by recognizing the traditional keepers of this land, the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation and Pikwakanagan First Nation, as we meet on their unceded territory.

*- Senator Murray Sinclair in the Senate*

We acknowledge that Camp NeeKauNis is situated on the ancestral lands of the Wendat and Anishnaabeg and, more recently, Haudenosaunee peoples, in Upper Canada treaties territory that has seen thousands of years of rich Indigenous history and is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island today. We honour the covenants of the Dish with One Spoon and Two Row Wampum Belts. As we gather, we remind ourselves to respect and nurture our sacred relationship to this land as well as to its First Peoples both past and present.

*-Camp NeeKauNis*

<sup>1</sup> C. Vowel, 2016. Beyond territorial acknowledgments. <https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>  
<sup>2</sup> The Varsity Editorial Board, 2019. To properly acknowledge Indigenous territory, go off script. <https://thevarsity.ca/2019/03/16/to-properly-acknowledge-indigenous-territory-go-off-script/>

