



Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Read-Aloud for All Grades

What is a Land Acknowledgement?

A Land Acknowledgement is a statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards and caretakers of this land. It also identifies the enduring relationship and connection that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

"It is important to understand the longstanding history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation." – Northwestern University

"When we talk about land, land is part of who we are. It's a mixture of our blood, our past, our current, and our future. We carry our ancestors in us, and they're around us. As you all do."
– Mary Lyons (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe)

A Land Acknowledgement acknowledges not only the ancestral lands, but also the historical and complex intersections of settler impacts on Indigenous histories, economies, ecologies, livelihood, well-being and governance structures. Land Acknowledgements are an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. We share the Land Acknowledgement with our students to create space for reflection and to inspire support for Indigenous communities. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol.

Examples for Read-Aloud for All Grades:

If you wish to share a Land Acknowledgement with your students, we present four examples of Portland-specific Land Acknowledgements to be read aloud to your class. We invite you to use these examples or modify them to meet your specific needs. We suggest sharing the Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of class time.

Example 1:

We acknowledge the land on which we hold our AKA Science class.

"The Portland Metro area rests on traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River creating communities and summer encampments to harvest and use the plentiful natural resources of the area." – Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable, 2018

We take this opportunity to thank the original caretakers of this land and we honor them as we observe and study our natural world together in AKA Science class.



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Example 2:

We acknowledge that this AKA Science class is being held on the stolen, traditional territory and homeland of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla tribes and many others whose communities gathered and thrived along these two great rivers.

We take this opportunity to thank the original caretakers of this land.

Example 3:

We acknowledge the land on which we hold our AKA Science class.

"The Portland Metro area rests on traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River creating communities and summer encampments to harvest and use the plentiful natural resources of the area." – Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable, 2018

This land was stolen, and this country and land were built upon the genocide of First Peoples who continue to suffer today from misrepresentation, betrayal of treaties, and suppression of culture from the very individuals whose colonial ancestors came to this land to seek refuge.

We seek to stand with and support the Indigenous tribes of this land—tribes who were the original keepers of the land who helped it flourish in a time when others were determined to steal and exploit it for its resources. We recognize that Indigenous people not only of this land we know as Portland today but all land – who some Indigenous tribes call Turtle Island – are the traditional guardians and enduring caregivers of the place we know as the United States.

We take this opportunity to thank the original caretakers of this land and we honor them as we observe and study our natural world together in AKA Science class.

Example 4:

We recognize the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous People and their traditional territories. We acknowledge that we are on the historic homeland of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla tribes.

Let this acknowledgement serve as a reminder of our ongoing efforts to recognize, honor, reconcile and partner with the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla peoples whose lands and water we benefit from today.

Example questions to reflect on after sharing a Land Acknowledgement:

- Who lives in the community?
- What actions, events, celebrations or values do members in the community share?
- How do members interact to form their community?
- How do organisms in the natural world interact to form its community?
- What makes a healthy community?
- What words or ways do community members support one another?
- How does the community rely on the land (natural environment)?
- What relationships do humans share with non-humans?
- How do people show respect to the land and others?
- What makes you healthy (mind, body, spirit)?
- What can you do to support healthy communities?
- How do you celebrate the diversity of people in your community?
- How are we stewards of our natural environment?
- How can we interact with our natural environment's resources in a way that is respectful and enduring?