

Notes on language and terms

Important notice about language in historical documents

Sometimes language and terms used in historical documents are not what would be acceptable today. These incorrect, insensitive, or offensive terms appear because they were used in authentic primary sources. Such terms have been left as is in these sources in order to preserve the integrity and authenticity of the source, and to give you a sense of the historical perspective that prevailed at the time.

Important notice about language in educational media (videos, activities, web pages, etc.) from external sources

Sometimes language and terms used in the recent past may not be the currently accepted terminology. Out of date, inaccurate, insensitive, or even offensive terms will sometimes appear because they were standard terminology at the time and place in which the media were produced. Such terms have been left as is in these sources. This will give you an opportunity to consider the implications of the use of such terms.

Important notice about multiple names used for Indigenous groups

In this course, the goal is to use the original name or title that members of the group itself prefer. You'll become familiar with the preferred names and terms (and their translations) as you get more exposure. The point is to raise your awareness of these issues rather than to simplify or avoid them. As you review primary and secondary sources, you'll come across a variety of terms that you may not be familiar with or that you may not know how to use. Some of these terms were commonly used in previous times and/or other locations. For example, an Indigenous group may be referred to by different Indigenous, English, American, regional, and/or French names. There can also be different acceptable spellings of a group's name.