

JUNE IS

National Indigenous History Month

Explore the history, cultures, and lasting contributions of Indigenous peoples across Canada.



Indigenous Author Suggestions

Joseph Boyden (Métis and Anishinaabe)

Canadian novelist and short story author Joseph Boyden writes deeply moving literature about Indigenous history, culture, and heritage. *Three Day Road* is set during World War I and follows two Cree soldiers as they navigate the horrors of war. While there is controversy surrounding his claim to Indigenous ancestry, Boyden has received many literary awards for his works depicting the historical and contemporary experiences of First Nations peoples.

- Start with: [*Three Day Road*](#).

Cherie Dimaline (Métis)

Cherie Dimaline is an award-winning Metis author and editor based in Canada. She writes fiction for both teens and adults in various genres, often with a speculative bent. A member of the Georgian Bay Métis Council, Dimaline is celebrated for her storytelling that feature characters connecting to their heritage and which address contemporary Indigenous issues.

- Start with: [*The Marrow Thieves*](#) (Teen); *VenCo* (Adult).

Louise Erdrich (Chippewa)

Louise Erdrich is one of the most acclaimed and well-known Native American novelists and she uses complex plots and an array of characters to draw the reader into an exploration of life in rural North Dakota. Drawn from her own heritage, her Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Night Watchman* is inspired by the efforts of her grandfather to protect indigenous rights.

- Start with: [*Love Medicine*](#).

Michelle Good (Cree)

A life-long advocate for Indigenous rights, Good became a lawyer at the age of 43 and began fighting for survivors of Canada's residential school system. In 2014, while still practicing law, she earned a master's degree in creative writing. Her debut novel, *Five Little Indians*, which won the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction, is a haunting examination of the horrors and after-effects of residential schools from the perspectives of five young friends.

- Start with: [*Five Little Indians*](#).

Tomson Highway (Cree)

After graduating university, Tomson became a social worker in Indigenous communities. His writing career began as a playwright, and he went on to create novels, children's books, and songs and his work combines humor with cultural storytelling. All speak bluntly of tragedies endured by Indigenous peoples. *Maclean's* magazine once listed Tomson as one of the 100 most important people in Canadian history.

- Start with: [Permanent astonishment; a memoir.](#)

Thomas King (Cherokee)

Thomas King is widely regarded as one of the most influential Indigenous writers in Canada. His work often blends Indigenous storytelling traditions with postmodern techniques, humor, and political critique. *Green Grass, Running Water* is a critically acclaimed novel that explores themes of identity, colonialism, and Indigenous resistance. In *The Inconvenient Indian*, he explores Indigenous identity and history.

- Start with: [Indians on Vacation.](#)

Lee Maracle (Sto:lo)

A pioneering Indigenous author, Maracle's works address a range of Indigenous issues but focus on the liberation of Indigenous women as a key to decolonization and fundamental progress. She often challenges colonial narratives and explore the intersections of gender, race, and identity.

- Start with: [Celia's song.](#)

Tommy Orange (Cheyenne and Arapaho)

Tommy Orange was born and raised in Oakland, California and is a graduate of the MFA program at the Institute of American Indian Arts. His first book, *There There*, was one of the buzziest new releases in 2018 and was a finalist for the 2019 Pulitzer Prize receiving also the 2019 American Book Award.

- Start with: [There There.](#)

Amanda Peters (Mi'kmaq)

Of mixed European and Mi'kmaq heritage, Peters was born and raised in the Annapolis Valley region of Nova Scotia. She was nominated for an Indigenous Voices Award in the Unpublished English Prose category in 2019 for her short story "Pejipug (Winter Arrives)", and won in the same category in 2021 for "Waiting for the Long Night Moon". Her debut novel, *The Berry Pickers*, won numerous accolades and awards.

- Start with: [The Berry Pickers.](#)

Rebecca Roanhorse (Navajo)

A speculative fiction author of Navajo descent, Roanhorse incorporates Indigenous themes into science fiction and fantasy. She has written short stories and science fiction novels featuring Navajo characters and her work has received both Hugo and Nebula awards, among others.

- Start with: [*Black Sun*](#).

Eden Robinson (Haisla and Heiltsuk)

From British Columbia, Robinson's writing blends the supernatural with stark realism, often addressing issues of family, identity, and trauma. Known for being page-turners and tinged with the gothic, her books are set on a reservation in Canada. *Monkey Beach*, which is a dark and evocative coming-of-age story, explores the Haisla culture and the tensions between tradition and modernity.

- Start with: [*Monkey Beach*](#).

Tanya Tagaq (Inuit)

Tanya Tagaq, the Juno-Award winning throat singer from Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, is also a must-read writer. Her debut novel, *Split Tooth*, was published in 2018 to critical acclaim. Based on Tagaq's teenage journals—she was a survivor of the residential school system—and Inuit folklore, *Split Tooth* tells the story of an unnamed teenage girl in the 1970s who becomes pregnant in a tiny Nunavut town.

- Start with: [*Split Tooth*](#).

Katherena Vermette (Métis)

A 2017 Governor General's Literary Award nominee, Vermette's *The Break* is a critically acclaimed novel that explores the lives of women in a Winnipeg neighborhood, focusing on issues of trauma, violence, and family dynamics within an Indigenous context. Vermette's use of spare language to relay deep emotion and celebrate unwavering resilience is moving and effective and her work reflects the complexities of urban Indigenous life.

- Start with: [*The Break*](#).

Richard Wagamese (Ojibwe)

Richard Wagamese's novels focus on themes of healing, identity, and the impact of residential schools and reflects his journey of reconnection with his heritage. *Indian Horse* is a powerful novel about a young boy's experience in residential schools and his eventual escape through hockey. Wagamese's work is celebrated for its emotional depth and exploration of Indigenous resilience and has won numerous awards.

- Start with: [*Indian Horse*](#).