Strong Nations Bookstore Authenticity Labels

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This is a fluid document that will be updated periodically.

The following authenticity labels have been developed by the Strong Nations team and/or adopted by Strong Nations Bookstore and can be used by customers to identify resources that meet their needs. They are provided as a guide only, and customers are encouraged to determine what qualifies as authentic Indigenous content for their purposes and to do their own research into the creators and content of a work.

We recognize that labelling Indigenous resources is a practice that is still in an early stage of development worldwide. We are sharing what we deem to be “our starting point” criteria. As more conversations occur, we will continue to respond by refining our criteria.

At Strong Nations we recognize the need to continue to provide support for all educators in understanding the need for authentic resources in the hands of all learners. One source from which we pull strength is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). One of the articles from the declaration states:

Article 11
1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

Sources consulted during the process of developing these labels and from which these definitions have been adapted include:


- First Nation Communities Read selection process guidelines: https://www.sols.org/index.php/about-first-nations-communities-read

- Oyate’s resource pages for evaluating Indigenous resources to ensure they are historically accurate, culturally appropriate, and non-biased: http://oyate.org/index.php/resources


- The First Nations Education Steering Committee’s Authentic First Peoples Resources K-9 guide: https://www.fnesc.ca/authenticresources/
Authentic Indigenous Text Label

Two criteria must be met for a work to be labelled as Authentic Indigenous Text.

1. A work must be written by, or have received substantial contribution or participation of, an Indigenous person(s) (i.e., the work must present authentic Indigenous voices).

2. The work must also portray important themes, issues, or elements of Indigenous culture (historical and/or contemporary), such as Indigenous storytelling techniques or authentic depictions of Indigenous ways of life.

Authentic Indigenous Artwork Label

Two criteria must be met for artwork to be labelled as Authentic Indigenous Artwork.

1. The artwork must be designed by (i.e., illustrated, painted, carved, photographed, etc.), or otherwise involve substantial artistic contribution or participation of, an Indigenous person(s).

2. The artwork must also portray important themes, techniques, or elements of Indigenous culture/artwork (historical and/or contemporary), such as authentic depictions of Indigenous ways of life.

Text Content Label

Products are given a Text Content label, which refers to the territories/nations being referred to within the work (e.g., a book written about the Ktunaxa is given the Text Content label Ktunaxa). Books that contain no Indigenous content are given the label Non-Indigenous Content.

Author, Illustrator, and Editor Territory/Nation Labels

The Indigenous territories/nations of a work's creators will appear after the creators' names. Users may click on creators' names to learn more about them.

Canadian Content Label

Products that have significant contributions – written, illustrated, edited, and/or translated – by Canadians are labelled Canadian Content.
FAQs

Q: If a book is written by an Indigenous author but contains no Indigenous content, is this book labelled Authentic Indigenous Text?

A: A work must fulfill two criteria for it to be labelled as Authentic Indigenous Text.

1. A work must be written by, or have received substantial contribution or participation of, an Indigenous person(s) (i.e., the work must present authentic Indigenous voices).

2. The work must also portray important themes, issues, or elements of Indigenous culture (historical and/or contemporary), such as Indigenous storytelling techniques or authentic depictions of Indigenous ways of life.

Therefore, a book by an Indigenous author that contains no Indigenous content is not labelled as Authentic Indigenous Text, as it fulfills only one criterion. The territory/nation affiliation(s) of the author, however, appears beside the author’s name so it is clear that the author is Indigenous.

Example: A book about plants by an Indigenous author is not labelled as Authentic Indigenous Text if the book contains no Indigenous information regarding plants, such as Indigenous medicinal uses of plants.

Q: If a book is written by a Non-Indigenous author but deals with Indigenous topics (e.g., a biography of an Indigenous person written by a Non-Indigenous author), is this author’s work labelled as Authentic Indigenous Text?

A: A work must fulfill two criteria for it to be labelled as Authentic Indigenous Text.

1. A work must be written by, or have received substantial contribution or participation of, an Indigenous person(s) (i.e., the work must present authentic Indigenous voices).

2. The work must also portray important themes, issues, or elements of Indigenous culture (historical and/or contemporary), such as Indigenous storytelling techniques or authentic depictions of Indigenous ways of life.

Therefore, a book by a Non-Indigenous author that contains Indigenous content is not labelled as Authentic Indigenous Text, as it fulfills only one criterion.

Example: A biography of the historical Métis leader Louis Riel is not be labelled as Authentic Indigenous Text if its author is Non-Indigenous. The work does, however, receive the Text Content label Métis.

At Strong Nations Bookstore we make every effort to ensure that books by Non-Indigenous authors that contain Indigenous content are culturally accurate and that the creators of these works have not attempted to claim, appropriate, or skew Indigenous peoples’ cultures. These authors have received permission from the cultural territories/nations that they are writing about and/or have a portfolio that reflects their cultural knowledge. In most instances, books dealing with Indigenous content by non-Indigenous authors and illustrators are non-fiction, based on historical documents or interviews with Indigenous peoples. We include them to supplement the Indigenous resources Strong Nations Bookstore carries.
Q: Why do products created by Non-Indigenous people appear on your website?

Products by Non-Indigenous creators appear on Strong Nations Bookstore website because many of these books are non-fiction, factual books or useful supplemental resources that support our Indigenous titles.

At Strong Nations, we seek to highlight voices from around the globe and are frequently adding more multicultural products to our website. These products, if not by Indigenous creators, do not receive Authentic Indigenous Text or Authentic Indigenous Artwork labels, and most often are labelled as Non-Indigenous Content, so that it is clear they are not Indigenous resources. If these Non-Indigenous creators’ works portray Indigenous content, the territory/nation referred to in each work is given a Text Content label. Furthermore, Indigenous peoples’ works from other countries are noted with their territory/nation following their names (e.g., an Indigenous Australian author is listed with Indigenous Australian appearing beside his or her name).

While Strong Nations Bookstore focuses on offering Indigenous books, we also value inclusivity and the sharing of a multitude of voices and experiences.

Q: If a book has a Non-Indigenous author but an Indigenous illustrator, how is the book labelled?

A: If an illustrator is Indigenous and his or her illustrations in a work incorporate Indigenous elements, designs, or features, the work is labelled as containing Authentic Indigenous Artwork. If an illustrator is Indigenous but his or her illustrations do not reflect Indigenous elements, the work is not labelled as containing Authentic Indigenous Artwork. And because the work is not from an Indigenous author, even if it discusses Indigenous peoples or cultures, it is not given the Authentic Indigenous Text label.

Example: A book about shapes that is written by a Non-Indigenous author but illustrated by an Indigenous illustrator is labelled as containing Authentic Indigenous Artwork if the illustrator’s illustrations incorporate Indigenous designs and themes. It is not labelled as containing Authentic Indigenous Text.

Q: How is a book with an Indigenous author but a Non-Indigenous illustrator labelled?

A: Because this book has an Indigenous author, it is labelled as containing Authentic Indigenous Text if the work also incorporates or includes Indigenous themes, issues, or elements, such as Indigenous storytelling techniques. Because the illustrator of this book is Non-Indigenous, the book does not receive an Authentic Indigenous Artwork label, even if the artwork contains Indigenous designs or depicts elements Indigenous peoples or cultures.

Example: A book written by a Cree author on Cree culture receives the Authentic Indigenous Text label. The book does not receive the Authentic Indigenous Artwork label if the illustrator is Non-Indigenous, regardless of whether or not the illustrator’s artwork depicts Indigenous peoples, designs, etc.

Q: What if a Non-Indigenous person is adopted into a tribe or nation? Will this person’s work be given the Authentic Indigenous Text and Authentic Indigenous Artwork labels?

A: In most cases, Strong Nations Bookstore considers works of people who have been adopted into a tribe or nation that contain Indigenous content to be authentic. Therefore, the works of these people receive an Authentic Indigenous Text and/or Authentic Indigenous Artwork label. It is typically noted in the creator’s biography and/or in the book description that this is a special authenticity case. It is up to customers to determine whether these works qualify as authentic Indigenous resources for their purposes.

Example: If an author is adopted into a Lakota tribe and given a Lakota name, a book he or she writes on the Lakota is labelled as Authentic Indigenous Text.