**Mi’kmaq**

The First Nations group we commonly refer to as Mi’kmaq today originally called themselves *L’nu*, which means “the people”. It is generally believed that the term *nikmaq* or “my kin friends” was what *L’nu* used as a salutation when greeting other people.\(^1\) *Nikmaq* went through a series of changes until it eventually became Micmac, Mick Mack, and other variations. With the approval of the Smith-Francis Orthography by the *Santé Mawio mi* or Grand Council in 1982 the word Mi’kmaq came into common parlance.\(^2\)

According to noted historian and ethnologist Ruth Holmes Whitehead, *Mi’kmaq* is the plural form of the word when used as a noun as well as being the tribal name. *Mi’kmaw* is the singular form when used as a noun, the word for the language, and used when alluding to an individual Mi’kmaw. *Mi’kmaw* is also the only adjectival form used with either singular or plural nouns.\(^3\)

**Pronunciation**

*Mi’kmaq* is pronounced in three syllables: Mee-gum-mach.  
*Mi’kmaw* is pronounced in three syllables as well: Mee-gum-mao (as in ow!). It is not pronounced Mig-mah.\(^4\)

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\(^4\) *Ibid*.