



Activity 11: Aboriginal Peoples

Suggested Level: **Intermediate**
Subjects: **Mathematics, Geography, Social Studies**

Overview

In this activity, students examine data from the 2001 Census on the Aboriginal population. Topics include distribution of the Aboriginal population across the country, the three Aboriginal groups, age, and language. (1-2 class periods)

Note: See Teacher's Guide for general background to the census and census vocabulary.

Learning Objectives

- to provide students with a better understanding of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada
- to allow students to build interpretive skills by working with graphs and data

Materials

- **Activity: Parts 1 to 5**
 - Part 1: Aboriginal Population
 - Part 2: Percentage Distribution
 - Part 3: Aboriginal Identity Groups
 - Part 4: Age
 - Part 5: Language

Getting Started

Begin with a general discussion of the census—what it is and how it is carried out. (See the Teacher's Guide.)

If this activity is being used in conjunction with a study of Aboriginal people, very little introduction may be

necessary. If not, prepare the students with a discussion of the three Aboriginal groups (North American Indian, Métis, Inuit), and a bit about their history, governance, culture, etc. (Good general information on these subjects can be found on the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Web site at www.inac.gc.ca/)

Census Activity

The five parts of the activity can be worked through individually by each student. Alternatively, you could divide the class into groups and assign a group to each part. The groups would then report back to the rest of the class and the complete picture put together in a class discussion.

Definitions

Aboriginal population: There are different ways to define the Aboriginal population. Data presented in this activity are for those who in the 2001 Census reported that they identified with one or more Aboriginal groups—North American Indian, Métis, or Inuit. Also included are those who did not identify with an Aboriginal group but who reported that they were Registered/Treaty Indians or Band/First Nation members.

The 2001 Census also provides information on those who reported Aboriginal ethnic origin/ancestry. Data for both the identity population and the ethnic origin population can be found on the Statistics Canada Web site.

North American Indian population: Includes persons who in the 2001 Census identified as North American Indian.

Answers

Part 1 Aboriginal Population

2. In order of population: Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec
3. Western Canada
4. The provinces that have smaller populations of Aboriginal people also have smaller total populations.

Part 2 Percentage Distribution

1. a) 1.9% of the Aboriginal population lives in the N.W.T.
b) 0.1% of the Canadian population lives in the N.W.T.
2. No, most of Canada's population lives in Ontario and Quebec.
3. Early English and French settlers settled in the east. The West was settled later, and not as many Europeans moved there, so that the Aboriginal population in the west remained at a higher share of the total population in the west and north.

Part 3 Aboriginal Identity Groups

1. 1.8 times
2. The largest number of Inuit people live in Nunavut, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador. The Métis are concentrated in the western provinces of Canada. Ontario and British Columbia have the largest North American Indian populations.
3. A reserve is a parcel of land set aside by the government for use by an Indian band.
4. off reserve: 55.3% on reserve: 44.7%
5. on reserve: sometimes housing is provided; traditional culture is stronger because of less outside influence—this means higher Aboriginal language retention, influence of elders, traditional health practices
off reserve: more employment and education opportunities, access to services not available on reserve

Part 4 Age

1. The Aboriginal population is concentrated in the younger age groups. This pattern is opposite to the Canadian population as a whole where over 50% of the population is aged 35 and over.
2. issues relating to youth: education, employment, smoking and substance abuse

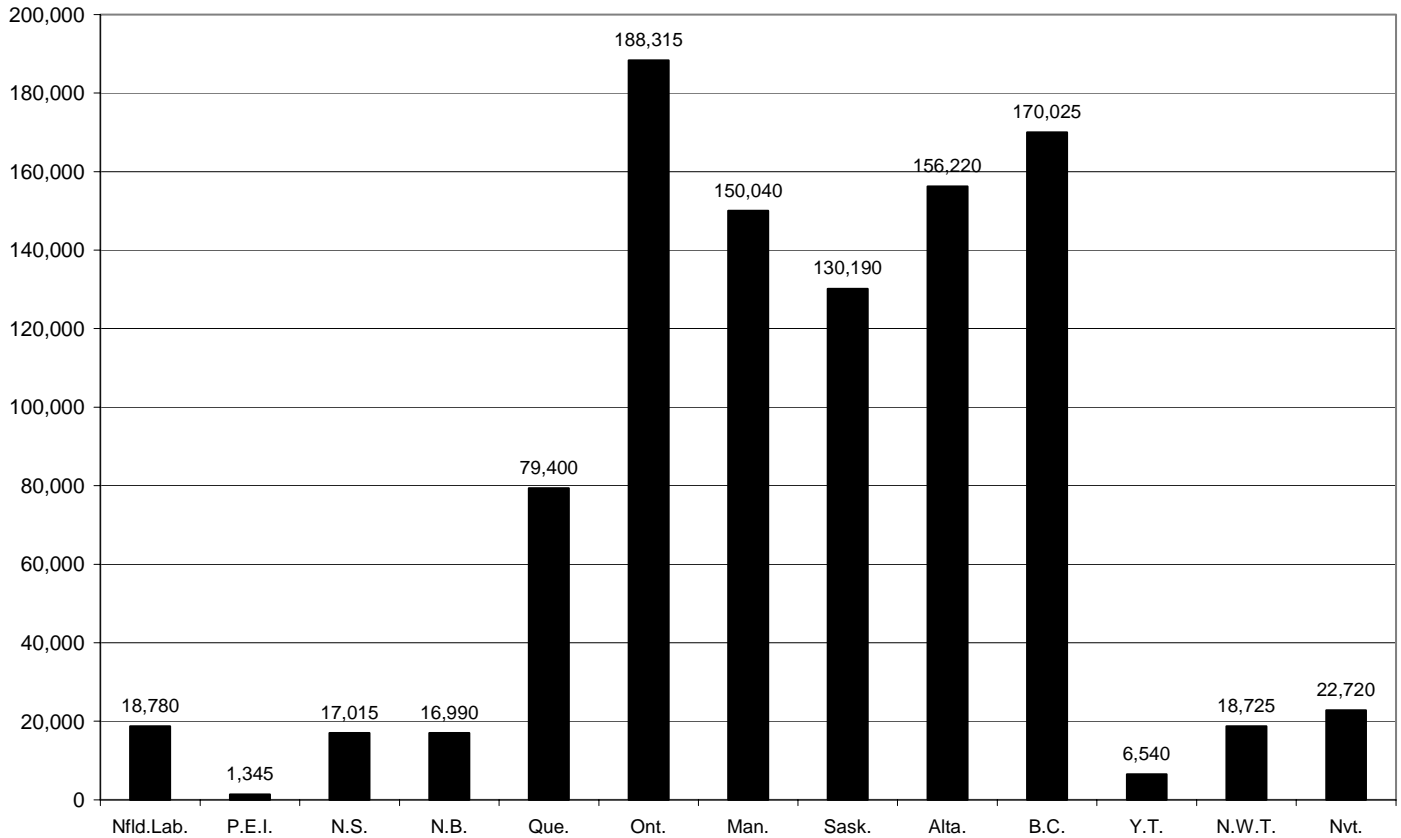
Part 5 Language

1. adults
2. Inuit. The language (Inuktitut) has been maintained because the remoteness of the communities has resulted in little influence from English and French. Inuktitut is in general use by the majority of the community in schools and the workplace.
3. They live with others who speak the language, whereas North American Indians living off reserve are a minority within an English or French culture.

Part 1: Aboriginal Population

Below is a graph showing how Aboriginal people are distributed throughout the provinces and territories of Canada. Study the graph, and answer the questions that follow.

Aboriginal Population, 2001 Census



1. Begin by circling the name under the column that represents your province or territory.
2. Write the full names of the six provinces that have the highest numbers of Aboriginal persons.

3. Circle the correct answer. Most Aboriginal persons live in:

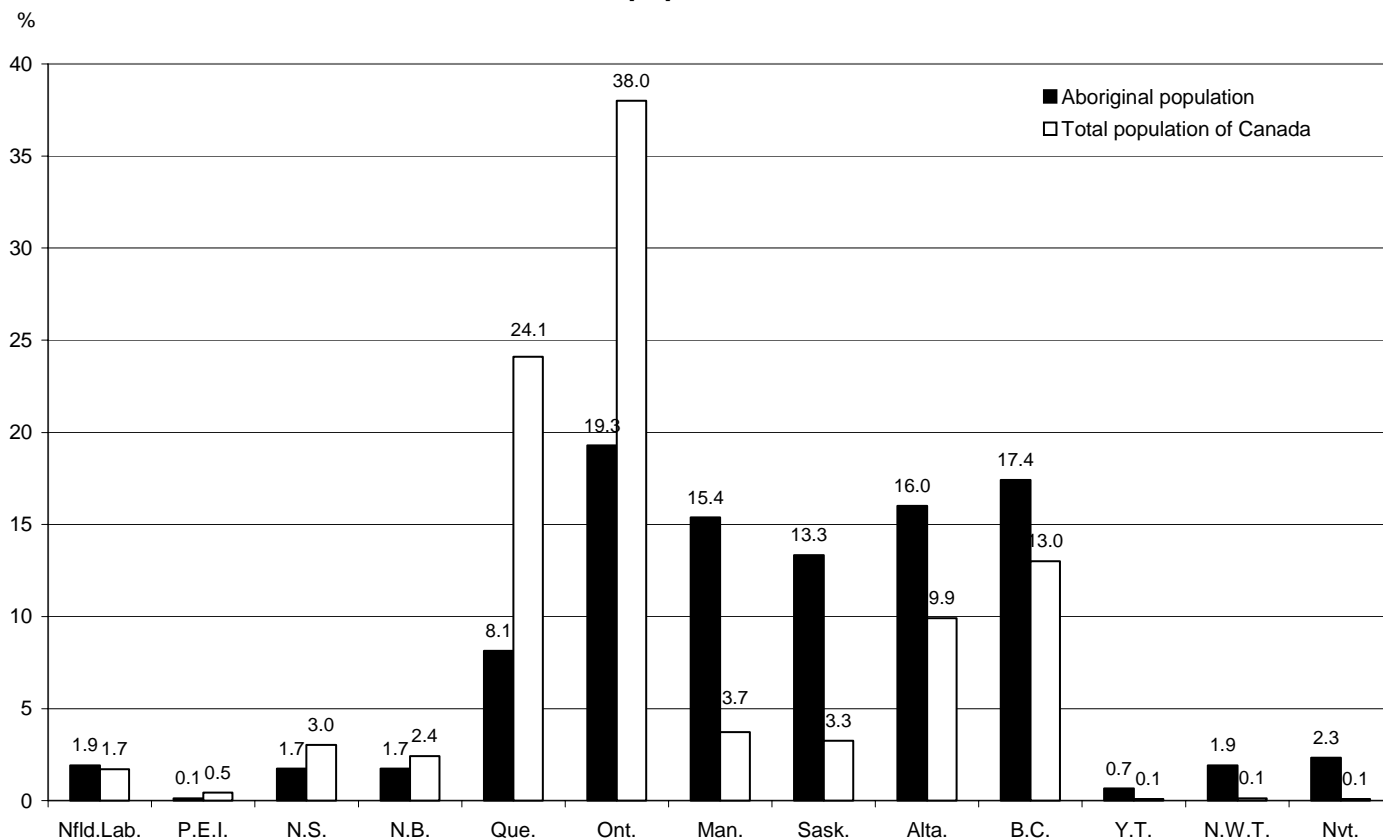
Atlantic Canada Central Canada Western Canada Northern Canada

4. Why do some provinces such as Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick have a smaller number of Aboriginal persons than some of the other provinces such as Ontario and Manitoba?

Part 2: Percentage Distribution

The graph below compares the percentage of the total Aboriginal Identity population living in each province and territory with the percentage of the total population of Canada living in each province and territory. Answer the questions that follow the graph.

Percentage distribution of the total Aboriginal Identity population and Canada's total population, 2001 Census



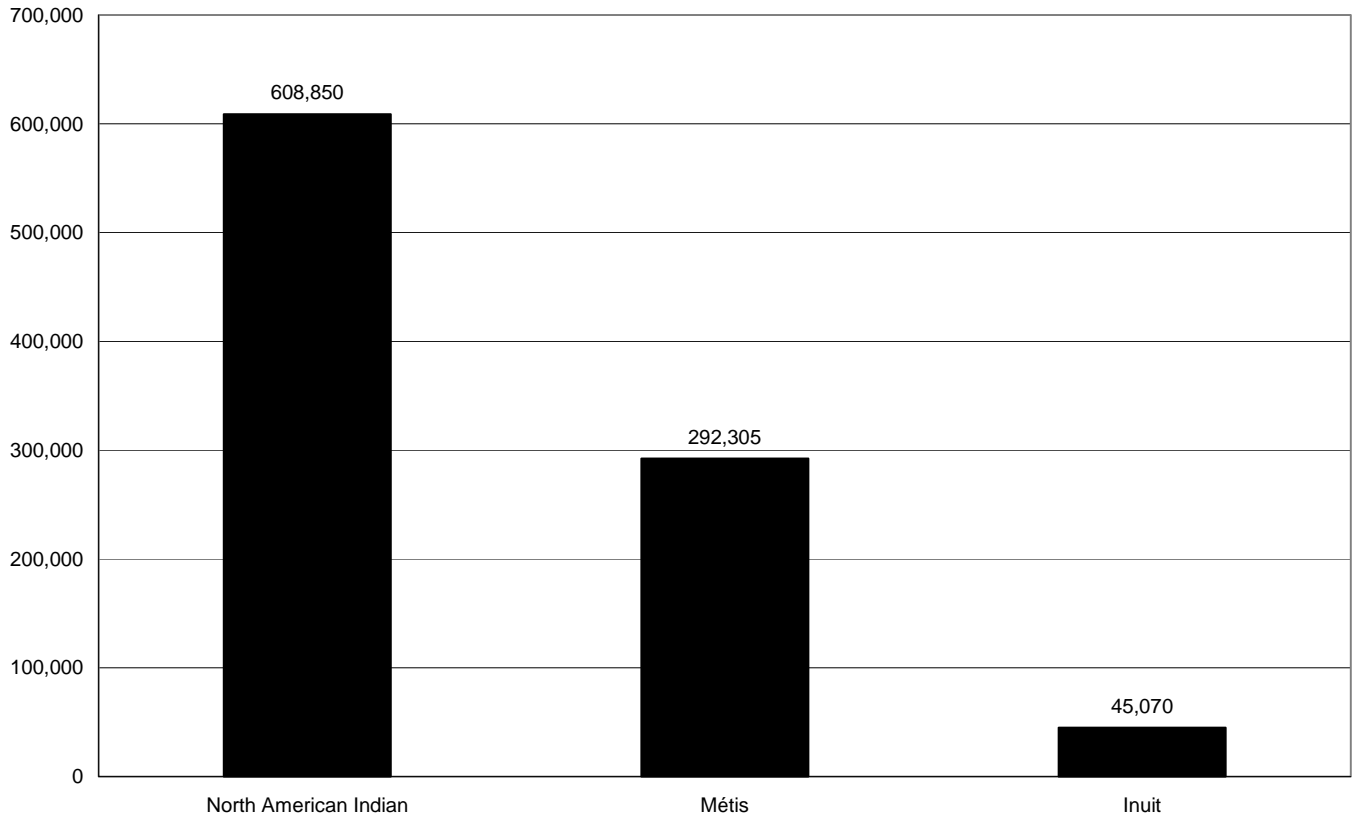
- Let's be sure we understand the concept of percentage distribution.
 - What percentage of the total Aboriginal population lives in the Northwest Territories? _____
 - What percentage of the total population of Canada lives in the Northwest Territories? _____
- The graph shows that a large percentage of the Aboriginal population lives west of Ontario. Is the same pattern true for the total population of Canada?

- Suggest reasons why the percentage of the Aboriginal population living in the western and northern regions of Canada is higher than the percentage of the total population living in these regions. Think history.

Part 3: Aboriginal Identity Groups

Aboriginal people are divided into three groups: North American Indian, Métis, and Inuit. The graph below shows the number of people in Canada who identified with one or more of these groups in the 2001 Census.

Aboriginal Identity population by group, Canada, 2001 Census



1. The North American Indian population of Canada is _____ times the Métis and Inuit population combined.
2. Now let's look at how the three groups are distributed across Canada.

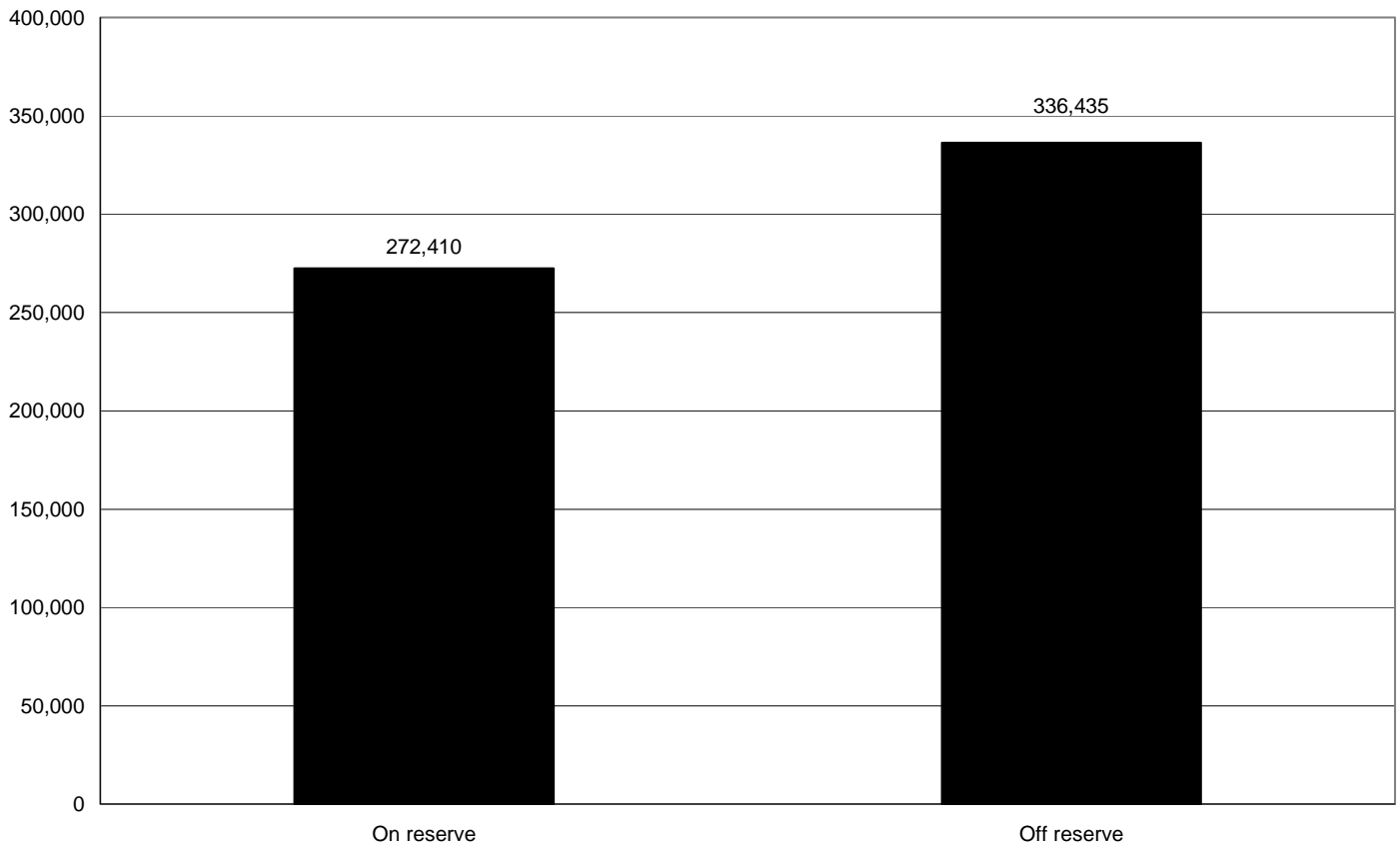
Aboriginal population by group, Canada, provinces and territories, 2001 Census

	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit
Canada	608,850	292,305	45,070
Newfoundland and Labrador	7,040	5,480	4,560
Prince Edward Island	1,035	220	20
Nova Scotia	12,920	3,135	350
New Brunswick	11,495	4,290	155
Quebec	51,125	15,855	9,530
Ontario	131,560	48,340	1,375
Manitoba	90,340	56,800	340
Saskatchewan	83,745	43,695	235
Alberta	84,995	66,060	1,090
British Columbia	118,295	44,265	800
Yukon Territory	5,600	535	140
Northwest Territories	10,615	3,580	3,910
Nunavut	95	55	22,560

The largest number of Inuit people live in _____, _____ and _____ . The Métis are concentrated in the _____ provinces of Canada. _____ and _____ have the largest North American Indian populations.

Part 3: Aboriginal Identity Groups (continued)

North American Indians living on and off reserves, 2001 Census



3. How would you define an Indian reserve?

4. Of the 608,850 respondents who identified themselves as North American Indian, what percentage live off reserve? _____ %. What percentage live on reserve? _____ %.

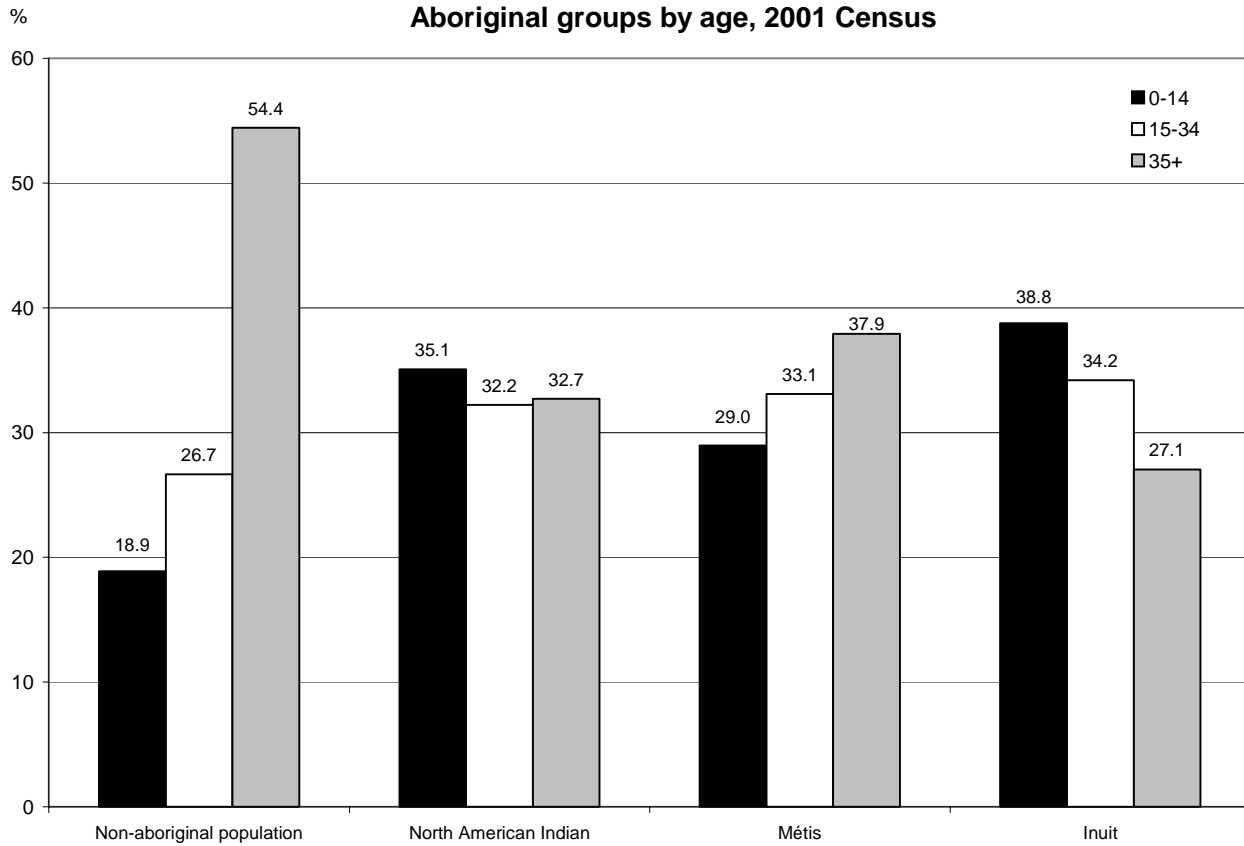
5. List what you think are some advantages of living on reserve and off reserve.

on reserve: _____

off reserve: _____

Part 4: Age

**Percentage distribution of non-aboriginal population and
Aboriginal groups by age, 2001 Census**



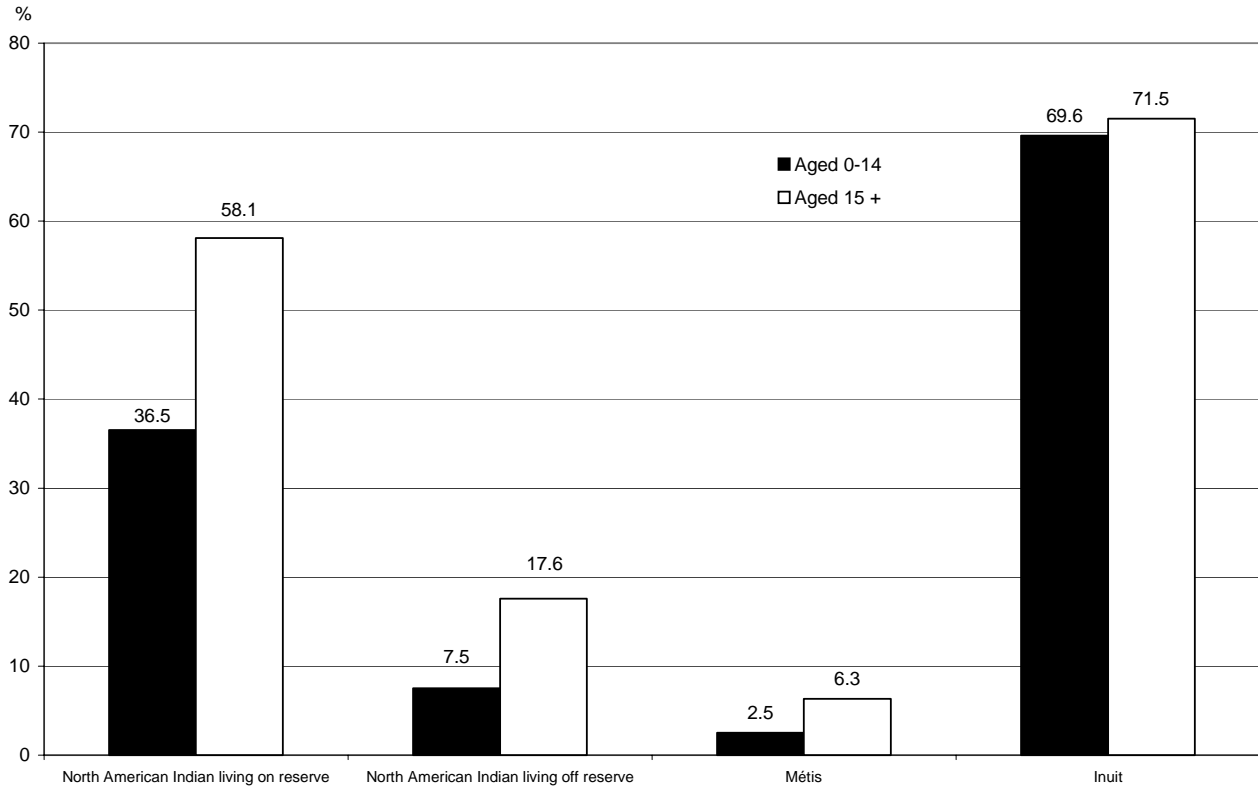
1. What does the graph tell you about the age of Aboriginal people as compared to the age of the total population of Canada?

2. What issues do you think are likely to be important for Aboriginal people as a result of this fact?

Part 5: Language

There are 50 Aboriginal languages spoken in Canada. The graph below says a lot about the retention of Aboriginal languages. These data measure the knowledge of an Aboriginal language.

Knowledge of Aboriginal Language, 2001 Census



1. It is clear that in each Aboriginal group, the knowledge of an Aboriginal language is related to age. Which age group has a greater knowledge of an Aboriginal language?

Circle one: children (ages 0 - 14) adults (ages 15 +)

2. Which Aboriginal group has been most successful in maintaining their language? _____
Why? _____

3. Suggest reasons why North American Indians living on a reserve are more likely to be able to speak an Aboriginal language.