

Vancouver Island Treaties Answer Key

Canada and the First Nations that made treaties had different understandings about what they were signing. They spoke different languages. They had different histories, worldviews and values. They also had very different ideas of land ownership. First Nations believed they were agreeing to share the land. Canada believed First Nations were giving away or selling the land.

The following text is included in each of the Vancouver Island treaties:

The condition of our understanding of this sale is this, that our village sites and enclosed fields are to be kept for our own use, for the use of our children, and for those who may follow after us; and the land shall be properly surveyed hereafter. It is understood, however, that the land itself, with these small exceptions, becomes the entire property of the white people for ever; it is also understood that we are at liberty to hunt over the unoccupied lands, and to carry on our fisheries as formerly.

What did the First Nations give up?

- *Ownership of most of the land.*

What did the First Nations keep?

- *Village sites and fields for continued use*
- *Hunting and fishing rights*

How did different views of land ownership affect each group's understanding of the treaty?

- *The Indigenous people did not think of land as something that could be privately owned.*
- *The government felt that it had bought the land.*

**Note that these treaties have been successfully relied upon in several modern-day court proceedings regarding hunting and fishing rights, and provide the basis of ongoing legal action regarding a village site in the Victoria area.*