

# Japanese Canadian Terms and Definitions

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The following is a quick guide to terms and definitions used by the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre (NNMCC) and the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto (JCCC). This list is subject to change, but is the most current acceptable language for describing certain events, people, or topics in the Japanese Canadian community. Certain terms which we identify as NOT using on this list are of course not erased from our vocabulary; rather, if we say them, it is only in a context where we explain how the government or others used them or the context of where it appears in a record. We also explain why we do not support the use of these terms, usually while providing an alternate term.

## Deportation/Deportees

To refer to those who went to Japan after the end of the war, NOT *repatriation*, which is an inaccurate term since many of those who went to Japan were Canadian citizens who had never been to Japan. Other acceptable terms are *exile*, *second forced uprooting*, and *second forced dispersal* (the latter two can refer to both going to Japan or going east of the Rockies in the same time period).

## Dispossession

To describe the seizure and sale, without consent, of goods and assets of Japanese Canadians left behind in the restricted zone. *Forced sale* is also used.

## Forced Uprooting/Dispersal

The preferred blanket term for any of the events related to government policies against Japanese Canadians in the 1940s, especially those that required them to leave the West Coast. It includes those who went to internment camps, work camps, sugar beet farms, or anywhere else. *Forced removal* or *forced uprooting* are also acceptable terms, but are generally considered to be more specific than forced dispersal. We do NOT use the terms *dispersal*, *removal*, or *uprooting* without the word “forced.” *Forced uprooting* may be used, but not necessarily to refer specifically to the events related to Canadian governmental policy in 1945/1946. Another acceptable term for this is *second uprooting*. We do NOT use the terms *evacuation* or *relocation* which we believe to be euphemisms insufficient to describe the harshness of what actually occurred. We do NOT use the terms *final relocation* or *permanent removal*.

## Hastings Park

Not to be referred to as *Manning Pool*. Other names that describe its function in relation to holding and registering Japanese Canadians from March to September of 1942 are currently not used by the museum, but this is open for further discussion, should other terms be adopted elsewhere in the community.

## Internment/Internees/Incarceration

Although we recognize that the term “*internment*” is technically inaccurate since a government is not allowed to intern its own citizens, we use the term “*internment*” due to its recognizability and common usage in the community due to the term’s use in the Redress Agreement. Internment *camps*, *internment sites*, *incarceration camps*, *incarceration sites*, or *detention camps* are both acceptable and are more or less interchangeable.

## Japanese Nationals

Acceptable term for Japanese Canadians who were not Canadian citizens by birth or naturalization.

## Naturalized Canadians

Used to describe those born in Japan who by immigrating to Canada and applying for Canadian Citizenship, upon acceptance became naturalized Canadians. Many fishermen required a naturalization certificate in order to hold a fishing license.

## Nikkei

Preferred blanket term for all people of Japanese ancestry, regardless of birthplace or citizenship. We also use *Japanese Canadian*. We do NOT use the term *Canadian-born Japanese* as it implies that these people are/were Japanese rather than Canadian. We do NOT use the term *enemy aliens*. “*Enemy alien*” was specifically used in a poster dated February 7, 1942 but not in any subsequent orders in council or other notices. However, many Nikkei were treated as such. We use the term *Japanese Canadians* as a blanket term for all people of Japanese ancestry living in Canada, both Japanese nationals and Canadian citizens by birth or naturalization.

## Restricted Zone

To refer to the geographical area along the West Coast of BC which Japanese Canadians were forced to leave. We do not use the term “*protected zone*” or “*evacuation zone*.”

## Road Camps

*Work camps* is also an acceptable term, and can be used interchangeably. People detained in prisoner of war camps are prisoners, NOT rebels, unless they have been specifically identified as such due to their individual preference or activities related to protesting government policies

## Self-Supporting Camps

(*Self supporting sites, or locations*) Used to describe the locations where families were responsible for paying their expenses out of pocket. *Interior housing centres/projects or interior settlements* are euphemisms and are NOT to be used.

## Sugar Beet Farms

Used to describe the work locations that families could go together mostly in Alberta and Manitoba. They are NOT to be referred to as *sugar beet projects* (government euphemism).

If in doubt of terminology used in the primary documents when researching Japanese Canadian history, please contact:

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