Who are they?
The Inuit are the aboriginal people who live in the Arctic. They originally came from Bering Strait to East Greenland. Inuit also live in northern Alaska and Greenland, and have close relatives in Russia. They are united by a common cultural heritage and a common language. Until recently, outsiders called the Inuit "Eskimo." Now they prefer their own term, "Inuit," meaning simply "people." There are about 40,000 Inuit in Canada.

Hunting:
The Inuit were, and in many cases still are, extremely successful at hunting. They are the first Arctic people to become expert at hunting the larger sea mammals, such as the bowhead whale. The animals hunted were large, so could feed many people—even a small whale could weigh seven tones. This means that their way of life was richer and more secure than that of many other hunting people.

Regions and Land:
These four regions are (the eastern region), Nunavik Quebec, Nunavut (East region), and Inuvialuit region (the North West Territories). While Inuit in each of these regions share a common culture and many traditions, each region is distinct. For example, traditions can sometimes be different and their languages may be different.
Inuit Recognized in Canada

Contact with Explorers:

When European explorers came to this land they brought changes. There were dozens of trips to the Arctic from Europe. Many explorers were looking for a Northwest Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific so that they could get trade goods to Asia faster. At first, Europeans did not see the Arctic as a place of value. However, as the Europeans came into contact with the Inuit, trade began between the two nations.

The Hudson's Bay Company, the police, and the Church:

By 1905, the whaling industry was dying as Arctic whale stocks almost completely collapsed. New inventions caused the whalers to turn to other livelihoods, including the fur trade. The Hudson's Bay Company was the company the Inuit traded with. The fur trade allowed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches to enter and settle in the Arctic. The Christian missionaries did not allow the Inuit to practice many traditional beliefs. This caused many Inuit traditions to be lost. The Inuit lost power over their own lives in the early twentieth century. Many slipped into deep poverty due to this change.

Creation of Nunavut:

The battle for Inuit self-government dates to at least the 1960s, when "Eskimo Co-ops" were established in most Arctic settlements. The Co-ops helped the Inuit keep control of their art sales. They also provided competition to the Hudson's Bay Company.

An important step toward self-government was taken in 1971, with the founding of the Inuit Brotherhood, now called Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. In May 1993, the new territory of Nunavut was created on April 1, 1999.
Inuit Beliefs and Spiritual Places

**Religion:**
The Inuit believed in animism: all living and non-living things had a spirit. That included people, animals, inanimate objects, and forces of nature. When a spirit died, it continued living in a different world called the spirit world. The only people who had enough power to control the spirits were the powerful religious leaders called the Shamans or 'Angakoks'. Shamans used charms and dances as a means to communicate with the spirit world.

**The Spirits:**
Bad weather, illnesses, and a bad hunt were all blamed on angry spirits. There were certain guidelines that the Inuit were supposed to follow to make the spirits happy. They had rituals for hunting and eating food to deal with the spirits that lived in the animals. They had to pay a deep respect to the spirit of the animals that they hunted. They believed that the spirit reappeared in another animal so that it could sacrifice its life again. If they did not pay their respects to the spirit, the spirit would reappear as a demon. Humans also had souls that could be lost or stolen. The belief was that humans were made of three parts: a body, a name, and a soul. When a person died, it was only the body that died, the spirit and name could continue living in a new body. The names of dead relatives were given to babies, ensuring that the soul and name could continue living.

**Spiritual Places: Arvia’juaq and Qikiqtaarjuk:**
Arvia’juaq and Qikiqtaarjuk. Arvia’juaq is a traditional summer camp of the Paallirmiut Inuit. It is an island close to the Hudson Bay. The area has rich marine wildlife resources, the island contains many ritual and spiritual sites. Arvia’juaq is "an island shaped like a big bowhead whale". Hundreds of archaeological features are located at the historic site, some dating back to the Thule period. Typical features include tent rings, kayak stands, mean caches, hunting blinds, children’s play areas, and graves. Other more unique features found at the national historic site include the competing cousin stones, a shaman's healing cairn and offering places.
Inuit: Importance of Land and Self Determination

In 1975, the Inuit received the rights to Inuit land ownership and other rights in Arctic Quebec. Both the Northern Quebec and Inuvialuit agreements are land claims only. They do not protect Inuit government or territorial control.

Should they have the right to their land? Yes- now that the federal government sees value in the land the Inuit need to protect their rights. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the Inuit of Canada have made important political gains. They now collectively own a lot of the Arctic outright, and have a lot of political power within their territories.

However, there are still many difficulties. Economically the Arctic is still underdeveloped. There are not a lot of jobs. Few people have the formal education or skills necessary for today’s highly technical global economy.

Many look to a growing tourist industry for wealth, but it is only a partial solution. Mining and other forms of resource extraction are growing sectors of the economy, especially now that land claims are settled. In Nunavut, diamond, gold, and heavy metal mines provide employment opportunities. However, these things cause a lot of pollution and environmental destruction.

Fortunately, the Inuit have a young and vibrant population and a long tradition of overcoming impossible obstacles. Their goals are to preserve the core of their culture and to achieve a decent standard of living for themselves and their children. Their history of strength and survival suggests that they will succeed.
**Main points in your own words:**

**Music:**
- The main instrument of Inuit ceremonies and dances was the shallow, one-sided drum.
- Most drums were made from caribou skin, or walrus stomach or bladder stretched over a wooden hoop.
- Drum dances usually occurred inside large snowhouses (igloos) with up to 60 people.
- In song and dance they told stories of the spirits.
- Some dances were religious in nature, while others welcomed travelers or celebrated a successful hunt.
- Throat singing, performed by two women in competition, used different sounds made in their throats and chests. One woman would set a short rhythmic pattern; then the other woman would set her own pattern.

**Special Ceremonies:**
- A ceremony called a 'Bladder Dance' was often held after a large hunt.
- The Inuit believed that the soul of the animal was found inside the bladder, so if the bladder was honoured and returned to the sea, then the animal's spirit would find a new body.

**What do they teach us?**

*Sharing in order to survive:*

- Inuit have always turned to one another to help achieve a goal.
- When there wasn't a lot of food, the men would get together and hunt as a team.
- There is a strong connection to the land, to wildlife and to each other. This has allowed the Inuit to survive for centuries.
- It is evident today that Inuit are still connected to their roots.
- When the opportunity arises, Inuit leave their communities and live out on the land for a time. It is because of this lifestyle and this recognition of the importance of our land and wildlife that Inuit have come together over many years to create the territory of Nunavut.
Inuit Drum

The Inuit drum is a traditional instrument seen across the north. Drumming was primarily done by men in most communities, but this was not always the case. Drumming was performed at various celebrations, whether it was celebrating the first successful hunt of a young boy or the birth of a child. In the early 1900s, drumming was banned by religious figures and government and was seen to be unholy or represented a danger to the philosophies to the Church. In modern day Inuit can proudly be seen and heard celebrating an event or their culture once again.

Inuit drums were traditionally made from caribou skin stretched over driftwood, which was softened and made into a ring. The drum has a handle, which protrudes downward to hold and rotate the drum. The handle was often covered in fur, such as seal skin. **The Inuit drum is played differently than most drums in that it is not the skin which is struck but rather the rim of the drum.**

Drumming is often accompanied by dancing such as the **polar bear style**, in which the drum held low and the drummer dances around mimicking a polar bear while playing. Drumming is also the thing that sets the pace for songs often enough. The drum can be heard accompanying certain kinds of songs appropriately called “ayaya”.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVRYpbZ3GSg&x-yt-ts=1422579428&x-yt-cl=85114404#t=94
Throat singing can be heard around the world in various forms, but Inuit have developed a very unique style, methods and sounds all their own.

Throat singing was traditionally performed between two women. The songs are sung as a friendly competition; played as a game. One person sets the rhythm, the pace the sound and the other follow. The first person to outlast or not laugh is the winner, as each song tends to end in laughter.

Many throat songs were created to mimic the sounds of daily life or surrounding natural elements and wildlife. As an example a song called “The Cleaning” mimics the sounds you would hear as the rails of the Qamutik was being cleaned; while another mimics the sound of a saw. These games helped to entertain children and women while the men were out hunting. Throat singing was banned by the Christian clergy for decades but in modern day has been accepted. Since then throat singing has seen resurgence in modern Inuit culture and is being restored to its former place of importance in Inuit culture.

Today throat singing is being passed on to the younger generation to be sure that this amazing piece of Inuit culture remains an honored tradition. It was traditionally passed on to daughter but now young boys are also taking their turn trying out the great game.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbg6BltCr-g&x-yt-ts=1422579428&x-yt-cl=85114404#t=142

Modern Inuit Singing: Tanya Tagaq – Album: Animism

Put your hand up when you hear the throat singing.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e87jGWvbLsg
Inuit in the 21st Century

Tanya Tagaq

Background:

Tanya Tagaq is an award winning singer and song writer, who is also an Inuk. She is a throat singer from Cambridge Bay (Ikaluktuutiak), Nunavut, Canada, on the south coast of Victoria Island.[1] After attending school in Cambridge Bay, at age 15, she went to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories to attend high school where she first began to practice throat singing. She later studied visual arts at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and while there developed her own solo form of Inuit throat singing, which is normally done by two women. The following interview is in regards to her new album, Animism.

Interview with New York Times:

How come they never show an indigenous person using the Internet?” Tanya Tagaq remarked on a recent Sunday visit to the Museum of the American Indian, at Bowling Green. “We’re not only in the past. We’re here right now.”

Tagaq, who is thirty-nine and has jet-black hair and a girlish face, had removed her sealskin boots and was sitting barefoot on the floor of the Diker Pavilion, a large oval space on the museum’s ground level. A couple of mothers were browsing the exhibition cases while, nearer Tagaq, their young children mimicked the traditional Indian dances that were being projected on the curving wall of the room.

“They should put me in one of those cases,” Tagaq said. “I’d be like—” and she flipped the bird with both hands, grinning mischievously.

Tagaq is an Inuit throat singer, and she was in the city for a performance at Joe’s Pub: a jaw-dropping forty-five minutes of guttural heaves, juddering howls, and murderous shrieks—Inuit folk meets Karen Finley. The show was as remarkable for its fearless lack of inhibition as for Tagaq’s technical skill and her mastery of tradition. In her work, which includes collaborations with Björk and the Kronos Quartet, Tagaq uses breath and, more recently, vocalized shrieks and moans. She is known throughout Canada (her home is in Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories), and she won the 2014 Polaris Prize for album of the year, beating out Drake and Arcade Fire. The album, “Animism,” has just been released Stateside—her first U.S. record.
Tagaq’s mother was born and raised in an igloo on Baffin Island, in Nunavut Territory, but Tagaq, whose father is British and Polish, grew up in a house, in Cambridge Bay. She didn’t hear throat singing until her mother gave her a cassette of two Inuit women doing it in the traditional manner, as a duet. “I heard the land in the voices,” she explained. She began to imitate the sounds, performing both parts. “It became my form of self-acceptance,” she went on. “I never had any designs on being a professional singer. It was just something I did—for years, in the shower, and in my room alone.”

In 2003, while attending a midnight-sun arts festival in Nunavut, Tagaq was drinking around a campfire with the festival’s director. “And I said, ‘Check this shit out,’ and I started throat singing. And the next day the main act couldn’t come, and the festival director said, ‘Would you be comfortable just going up and jamming?’ And I was like—yeah.” At Joe’s Pub, she looked more comfortable than many in the audience. “To be honest, it’s hard to make me feel uncomfortable,” she admitted.

Friends of Björk’s happened to be attending the festival, and a couple of weeks later Tagaq got a call from the artist’s manager, who wanted to fly her to New York to work with Björk. On arriving in the city for the first time, “I was so touched at the accomplishments of humanity,” Tagaq said. “And to this day I get touched. I see someone behind the counter where I’m buying my water, and I’m like, ‘You’re f**** awsome!’ ”

Björk took Tagaq on tour with her. “It was wonderful,” Tagaq said. “But I didn’t know the world yet. I got pregnant from a man I met onstage and moved to the Basque country, and when my baby was four months old Björk flew me to the Canary Islands to record ‘Medúlla,’ ” Björk’s sixth album.

In recent years, Tagaq has become more political, speaking out on a range of Inuit social ills engendered by colonialism and racism. At some shows, she projects the names of twelve hundred indigenous women missing or murdered since 1980 as she sings. “My daughters are four times more likely to be murdered than any other racial demographic in Canada,” she said at the museum. “So how do I change this, how do I help? That’s what I’m projecting my voice for.”

Tagaq has no formal music training, and she said that the Kronos Quartet’s leader, David Harrington, “made me promise never to learn my notes. ‘Millions of people know all that stuff,’ he told me. ‘You’re completely free. Don’t let it shackle you.’ ” She added, “Our whole society is based on control. I want to live like I’m free.”

Being free includes wearing seal, an important Inuit resource. “The people are being denied our natural resource because Paul McCartney thinks seals are cute? F**** right off!” Then: “Sorry!” she said to a little boy who was staring at her. The kid’s mom shooed him away. Indians in cases are safer.

Listen to Tanya Tagaq song, Caribou, from her new album Animism. Listen to how she uses Throatsinging in her music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qR1ekGJBEqs