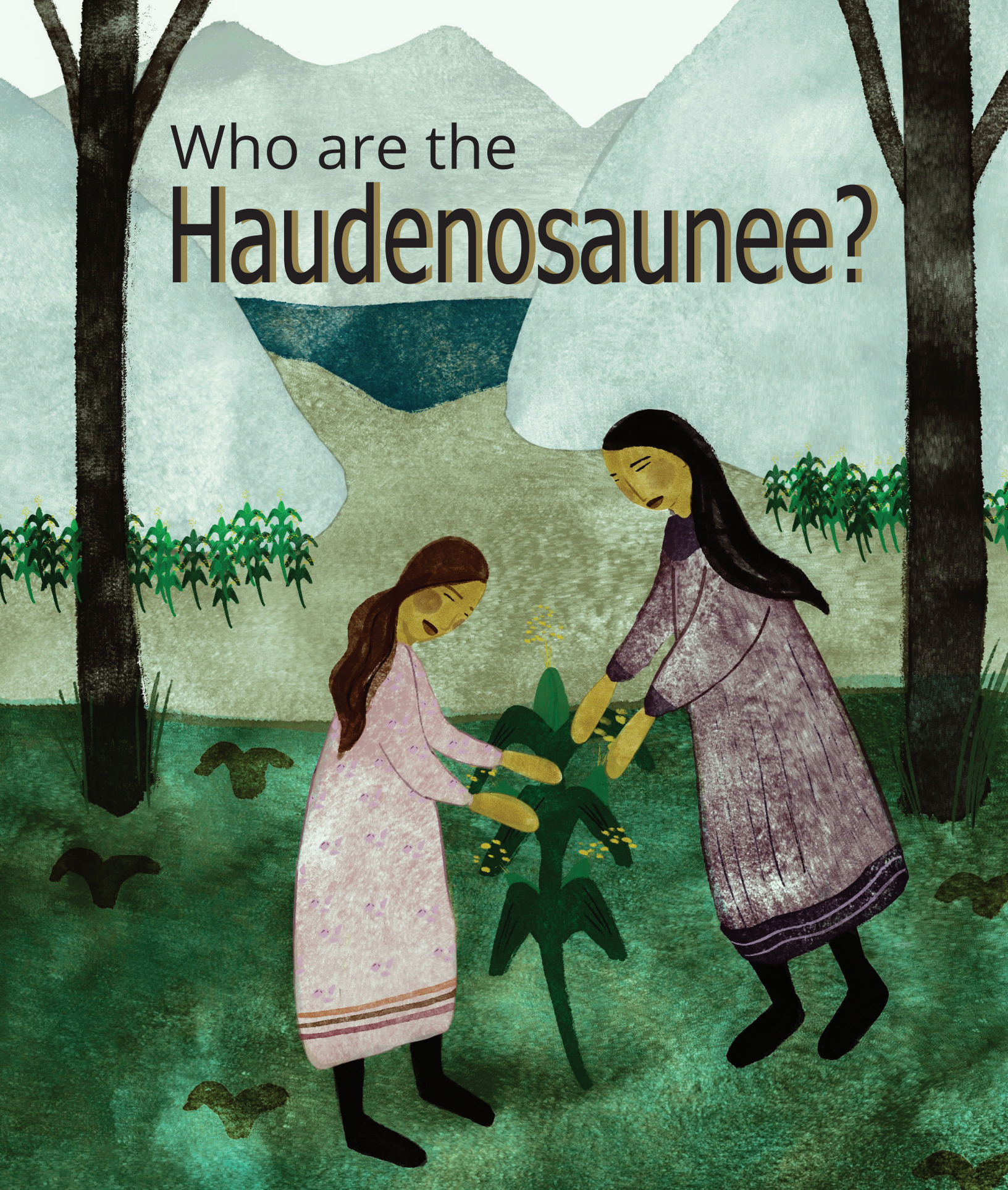
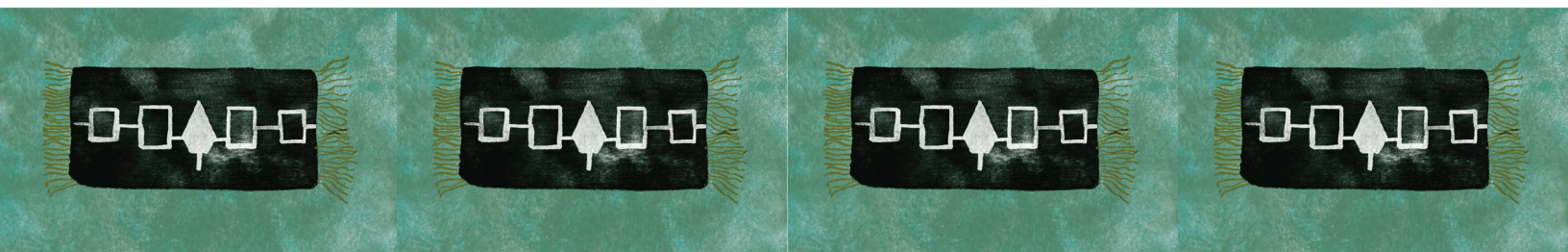


Who are the Haudenosaunee?





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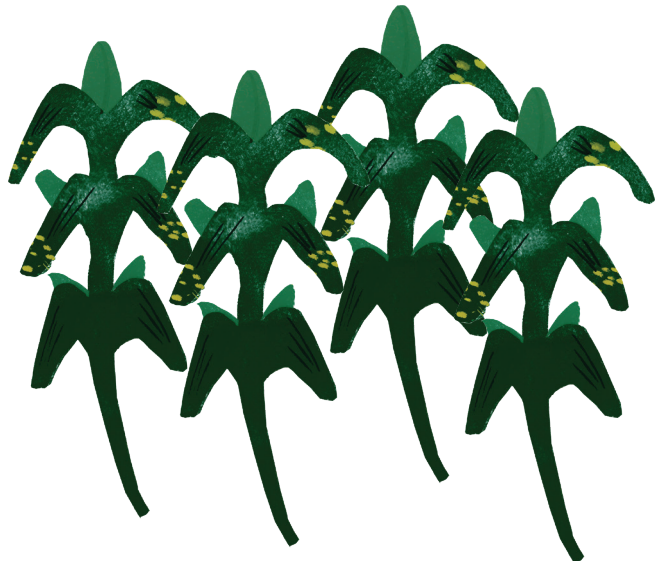
Note: This resource is embedded with hyperlinks and provides a brief introduction for educators to consider when learning about Haudenosaunee Peoples' worldviews. Be sure to check out other Indigenous education resources at etfofnmi.ca.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To support ETFO members with infusing Indigenous perspectives, worldviews, and content into their learning and instructional practices, ETFO works with its members, allies and collaborating Indigenous Peoples and/or organizations to develop authentic and relevant resources and professional learning opportunities.

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario Equity Statement

It is the goal of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario to work with others to create schools, communities, and a society free from all forms of individual and systemic discrimination. To further this goal, ETFO defines equity as fairness achieved through proactive measures, which result in equality, promotes diversity, and fosters respect and dignity for all.

ETFO's Equity Initiatives

ETFO is a union committed to social justice, equity, and inclusion. The Federation's commitment to these principles is reflected in the initiatives it has established as organizational priorities, such as: ETFO's multi-year strategy on Anti-Black Racism; Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning education; and addressing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues. ETFO establishes its understanding of these issues within an anti-oppressive framework. The Federation ensures its work incorporates the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, addresses individual and systemic inequities, and supports ETFO members as they strive for equity and social justice in their professional and personal lives.

Definition of an Anti-Oppressive Framework

An anti-oppressive framework is the method and process in which we understand how systems of oppression such as colonialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, and ableism can result in individual discriminatory actions and structural/ systemic inequalities for certain groups in society. Anti-oppressive practices and goals seek to recognize and dismantle such discriminatory actions and power imbalances. Anti-oppressive practices and this framework should seek to guide the Federation's work with an aim to identify strategies and solutions to deconstruct power and privilege in order to mitigate and address the systemic inequalities that often operate simultaneously and unconsciously at the individual, group, and institutional or union level.



[Kanonhweratónhtshera Ohen:ton Karihwaterhkwen:](#)

The Words That Come Before All Else

The People

Today we have gathered, and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People.

Now our minds are one.

The Earth Mother

We are all thankful to our Mother Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our mother, we send greetings and thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Waters

We give thanks to all the Waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms- waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers, and oceans. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of Water.

Now our minds are one.

The Fish

We turn our minds to the all the Fish life in the water. They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. So, we turn now to the Fish and send our greetings and thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Plants

Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plant life. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered, we give thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come.

Now our minds are one.

The Food Plants

With one mind, we turn to honour and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans, and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and send them a greeting of thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Medicine Herbs

Now we turn to all the Medicine Herbs of the world. From the beginning they were instructed to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the Medicines and to the keepers of the Medicines.

Now our minds are one.

The Animals

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We are honoured by them when they give up their lives so we may use their bodies as food for our people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here, and we hope that it will always be so.

Now our minds are one

The Trees

We now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty and other useful things. Many people of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree life.

Now our minds are one.

The Birds

We put our minds together as one and thank all the Birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The Eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the Birds-from the smallest to the largest-we send our joyful greetings and thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Four Winds

We are all thankful to the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help us to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages, and giving us strength. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to the Four Winds.

Now our minds are one.

The Thunderers

Now we turn to the west where our grandfathers, the Thunder Beings, live. With lightning and thundering voices, they bring with them the water that renews life. We are thankful that they keep those evil things made by Okwiseres underground. We bring our minds together as one to send greetings and thanks to our grandfathers, the Thunderers.

Now our minds are one.

The Sun

We now send greetings and thanks to our eldest Brother, the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Brother, the Sun.

Now our minds are one.

Grandmother Moon

We put our minds together to give thanks to our oldest Grandmother, the Moon, who lights the night-time sky. She is the leader of woman all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother, the Moon.

Now our minds are one.

The Stars

We give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With our minds gathered as one, we send greetings and thanks to the Stars.

Now our minds are one.

The Enlightened Teachers

We gather our minds to greet and thank the Enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how-to live-in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring teachers.

Now our minds are one.

The Creator

Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator.

Now our minds are one.

Closing Words

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way.

Now our minds are one.



The beauty of the Words That Come Before All Else, sometimes called the Opening Address or Thanksgiving Address is that it is a reminder that while creation is not dependent upon us, we are dependent upon creation. In fact, creation would flourish if humans were no longer here to interfere. The sharing of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwén (Mohawk) at the beginning of each gathering or meeting is an important reminder to leave everything outside at the door - all the distractions and worries - we are coming together today for this purpose, to do this work together. Just as you are reading this resource, leave all else to the wayside to connect with the writers, the advisors, and the Haudenosaunee.

“and now our minds are one.”

This translation of the Mohawk version of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address was developed, published in 1993, and provided, courtesy of: Six Nations Indian Museum and the Tracking Project All rights reserved. Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Natural World English version: John Stokes and Kanawahienton (David Benedict, Turtle Clan/Mohawk) Mohawk version: Rokwaho (Dan Thompson, Wolf Clan/Mohawk) Original inspiration: Tekaronianekon (Jake Swamp, Wolf Clan/Mohawk)



Preamble

Who are the Haudenosaunee? This is a question asked by many non-Indigenous educators. This resource is intended to support teachers, education workers, and students in getting to know their neighbours, their colleagues, and their Treaty Partners. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy is one of the longest standing sovereign Nations, with treaties predating Confederation with Great Britain ([Hill, R.](#)). The Haudenosaunee are founders in [democracy](#); and a People grounded in peace, equity and “Good Minds” ([Lyons, O.](#)). Many Canadians and Americans are unaware of the historical impact the Haudenosaunee have had on many aspects of our current way of life. For example, their influence in wars, the women’s rights movement, and environmental stewardship, just to name a few.

An essential understanding of the Haudenosaunee is [sovereignty](#). It answers many long-standing educator questions with respect to [nationality](#), [flags](#), [national anthems](#), [self-identification](#), and travel. Many Haudenosaunee people do not self-identify as Canadian, First Nations, or American. They are first and foremost Haudenosaunee, Onkwehón:we, or identify by their own Nation and Clan. Citizenship acknowledges that a particular Nation has jurisdiction over a People. Treaties are made between Nations; and the Haudenosaunee have been making Nation to Nation agreements since the 1600s as a sovereign Nation, with the Dutch, Great Britain, the United States, and other European Nations. They have never relinquished these rights. It is important to continue to respect, acknowledge and honour their right to assert such sovereignty, especially within our classrooms, places of work and livelihood. In this document you will notice that the Onkwehón:we mentioned will be referred to as Six Nations, not as First Nations. May the work of this resource support all in developing a deeper connection to, and intercultural understanding of our neighbours, colleagues, and Treaty Partners, the Hodinöhsö:ni.

It is important to note throughout the document, there will be a sharing of space for the various Haudenosaunee languages, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca, when available. There may be spellings that look inconsistent, but reflect the various dialects throughout the Confederacy.

Artist's Statement

She:kon! My name is Sara General. I belong to the Turtle Clan and the Mohawk Nation, and I live in the community of Six Nations of the Grand River on Turtle Island with my husband and three children. I am a writer, an artist, a researcher, and a language learner. I also work in the area of Indigenous education, and as such, am especially honoured to contribute to this resource.

My art is inspired by my lived experiences as a Haudenosaunee woman, and my ongoing learning about my people's oral histories, legends, stories, and treaties. I reflect often on roles, rights, responsibilities, and relationships, and the results of these wonderings often find their way into my paintings.

The pieces for this resource are inspired by the ideas of relationship and responsibility. Of people working together towards peace, friendship, and respect. They are also inspired by the treaties and agreements that exist to help our human and other than human kin fulfill their duties and responsibilities to Creation, and to one another.

Like the creators of this resource, I can appreciate how important it is for our young people to understand what our responsibilities as Ogwehoweh people are, so they can draw from that knowledge to make their way in the world, explore ideas, problem solve, and feel a sense of safety, belonging, and peace in their surroundings—wherever they are. I am hopeful that this work will be of help to them as teachers begin to use this resource in their classrooms.

Nia:wen.





An Approach to Developing This Resource

Educators across Ontario are working to include Indigenous perspectives in their classrooms. They want to do so in a *good way*, to not further create harm and allow students to see themselves reflected in the classroom. This is not the experience many of us learned in the public education systems. This is a whole new way of teaching the history, the perspectives, and the curriculum, using culturally relevant, and responsive pedagogy. Educators need the supports to do the work they want to do.

By 2016, an Indigenous Education Lead was in place in every school board across Ontario. Some school boards had similar roles already in place, but this ensured a Lead in every board to support the Indigenous Education Strategy in [Ontario](#).


It is crucial that the Indigenous Education Lead is one of the first people that educators connect with when seeking support in planning for learning experiences rooted in Indigenous Education.

This resource, *Who Are the Haudenosaunee?* models the process of building relationships, developing understanding, and constructing schema, through action, reflection and putting learning into practice. Writers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, met to discuss goals, anticipated learning, questions, and concerns. Writers were then connected with a community of Haudenosaunee advisors, each with a long-standing relationship to both Indigenous Education and youth. The advisors include a long-time Indigenous Education Lead, supporting educators, and Leads across the province; an administrator, previously a Six Nations Native Advisor to a school board; and a community member, previously working in the criminal justice field with youth, experience in delivering professional development to educators in the surrounding communities and now working in well-being within the community.

After doing some much needed research and work on their own, the writers met with the advisors, spent time reviewing their ideas for content, the advisors shared their perspectives and knowledge, the writers

took time to consolidate their learning. Once their content was prepared and created, they shared their materials with their advisor, received feedback, some had further conversations and revisions were made. Critical feedback included the highlighting of Haudenosaunee voices, ensuring that resources are relevant, authentic, and supported by community were just a few of the suggestions to writers over their discourse. This process was fundamental in the learning for the writers, but also for the modeling for others in how to build relationships and being open to feedback from community in guiding the work forward. It is a partnership.

To engage in the work, educators are encouraged to partner with their Indigenous Education teams, access their board webpages for supported community resources, literary resources, and online supports. At the core of Indigenous Education, is relationships. One cannot do the work alone; it takes community, and this resource is a reminder of the work that goes into relationships and respectful partnerships between Indigenous Peoples and Canadians.



Welcome – Skä•noñh

Language deepens the understanding of the culture and history of a People. *Haudenosaunee* translates to “[people who build a house](#)”, or “People of the Longhouse”. Visualizing the [home](#), the heart of the community of the people, the symbol of the Confederacy - the longhouse aids in the creation of an image in the mind to understand the tightknit communities of the Haudenosaunee, signifying the importance of traditions and culture. These houses, true to their name, were built to be up to 200 feet long and 18 feet wide. The purpose of creating such a large space was to accommodate their extended family; there could be upwards of 20 families living in one longhouse. Although the [longhouses](#) are no longer used for housing large families, contemporary longhouses are used today for gatherings and ceremony; some replica traditional longhouses are used for [educational purposes](#) in the community.

The [Peacemaker’s Journey](#) illustrates the coming together of the five Nations in the original Confederacy - the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Seneca. The Tuscarora Nation subsequently joined the Confederacy, representing the sixth Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. This resource supports building understanding of the adoption of the Great Law - teachings of Peace, Good Mind, and Equity - the foundations of being Haudenosaunee as shared by the Peacemaker.

The original [five Nations](#) originated from what is now known as New York State and Southern Ontario. Over time, permanent communities were established in other areas away from their original territories as a result of encroachment and wars.

Today **the Mohawk**, known as the Kanien’kehake (People of the Flint) reside in Akwesasne/St. Regis (Quebec, Ontario and New York State), Ganienke (New York State), Kanesatake (Quebec), Kahnawake (Quebec), Kenhté:ke - Tyendinaga (Ontario), Wahta/Gibson (Ontario), Kanatsiohareke (New York State), and Ohswé:ken, Six Nations (Ontario). Of the Grand Council, the Mohawk are known as the Elder Brother, informally known as the Keepers of the Eastern Door in the Confederacy.

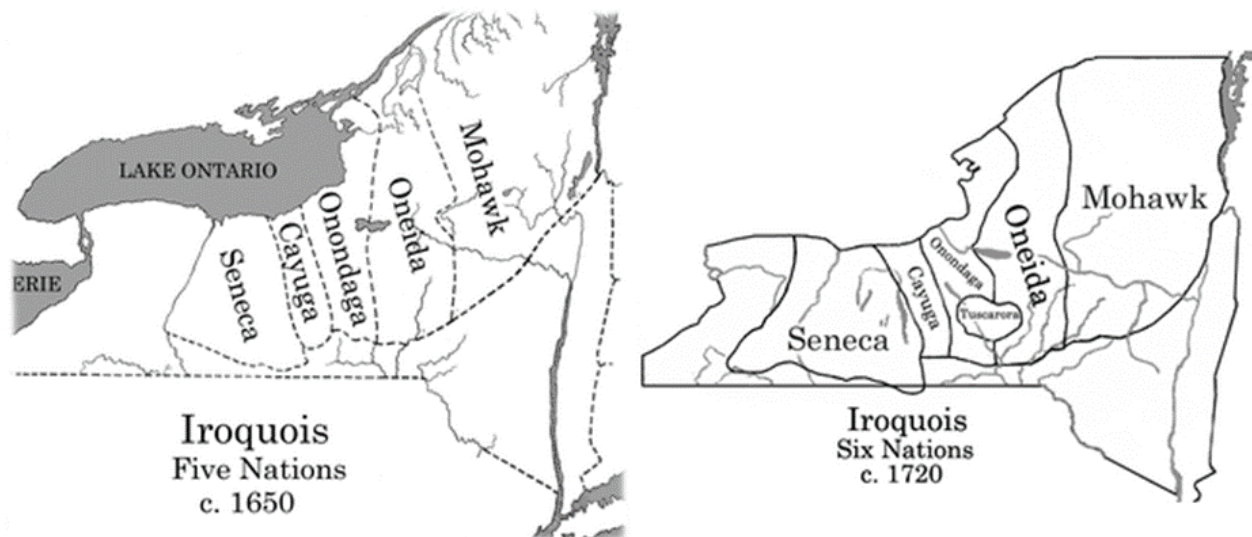
The Seneca, the People of the Hill, or Onondowahgah in their language, were traditionally located in New York State between the Genesee River and Canandaigua. Today, the Seneca still maintain communities in Western New York, mainly on the Cattaraugus, Allegany, and Tonawanda territories. There are also a number of Seneca people in urban areas and communities, on the Seneca-Cayuga territory in Oklahoma and on the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in Ontario. The Seneca are the only Nation to own a city in the United States, the city of Salamanca located on the Allegany Indian reservation¹. Within the Grand Council, the Seneca sit beside the Mohawk and Onondaga as Elder Brothers.

- 1 The term “reservation” is an American legal term. In Canada, the term “reserve” is used in the legal context

English name	Iroquoian	Meaning	17th/18th century location
Seneca	<i>Onondowahgah</i>	"People of the Great Hill"	Seneca Lake and Genesee River
Cayuga	<i>Guyohkohnyoh</i>	"People of the Great Swamp"	Cayuga Lake
Onondaga	<i>Onōnda'gega'</i>	"People of the Hills"	Onondaga Lake
Oneida	<i>Onayotekaono</i>	"People of Standing Stone"	Oneida Lake
Mohawk	<i>Kanien'kehá:ka</i>	"People of the Great Flint"	Mohawk River
Tuscarora ¹	<i>Ska-Ruh-Reh</i>	"Hemp Gatherers" ^[39]	From North Carolina ²

¹ Not one of the original Five Nations; joined 1720.

² Settled between Oneidas and Onondagas.



[Native Land](#)

The Oneida, from the word Onyota'ake, meaning "People of the Standing Stone", were originally located in what is now known as Central New York. They were relocated after being displaced after the American Revolution in 1777. Later, in the 1830s, they moved into Canada and Wisconsin. In Canada, unlike other Nations who have held onto the land provided to them by the British Crown, the Oneida purchased their land along the Thames River near London, Ontario. Today, the Oneida primarily reside in four areas: The Oneida of Wisconsin, throughout the state of Wisconsin, the Oneida of the Thames (Ontario), the Oneida of New York and the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory (Ontario).

The Cayuga Nation, traditionally from the Finger Lakes region in New York are also known as the "People of the Great Swamps" or the "People of the Pipe", in reference to the clay pipes they would fashion. Like the Oneida, the Cayuga lost most of their land following the American Revolution. Today there are three Cayuga Nations including Lower Cayuga and Upper Cayuga, both residing in Ontario at the Six Nations of the Grand River territory, and the Seneca-Cayuga of Oklahoma. There is also a population of Cayuga people that still live throughout New York State. Like the Oneida, the Cayuga are a younger brother to the Mohawk and Onondaga within the Grand Council.

The Onondaga (Onöñda'gega'), the "People of the Hills", were the last to join the original five Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Chief Todadaho was the last to be visited by Aionwatha (Hiawatha) and the last to accept the Great Peace. The Onondaga were appointed the position of Keepers of the Central Fire and Keepers of the

Wampum, to ensure unity within the Confederacy. Traditionally, the Onondaga were living in New York, close to the Finger Lakes. As allies to the British, after the American Revolution, many followed Joseph Brant to what is now known as Ohswe:ken or Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, where they reside today. The Onondaga also continue to thrive on their territory just south of Syracuse, New York. The Onondaga join the Mohawk, and the Seneca as the Elder Brothers in the Grand Council.

As time went on, more Nations joined the Confederacy, beginning with **the Tuscarora** in the early 1700s. When the [Tuscarora](#) joined the Confederacy, they, like the other Nations that followed them, would not have a voice in the Grand Council and would bring their concerns to Grand Council through the Cayuga Nation, if necessary. The Tuscarora, the "Shirt Wearing People", originated from the Carolinas, and moved north to be included in the Confederacy, making them Six Nations. As Indigenous Nations and communities continue to reclaim their words, community names, and other important titles, an important discussion must happen around misnomers that have been used in the past. A common misconception of the name "Haudenosaunee" is that the term is interchangeable with "Iroquoian" or "Iroquois". The use of the word "Iroquois" which is considered offensive to some, is derived from the French word "[black snakes](#)". Although in previous times the Haudenosaunee were known as the Iroquois Confederacy, that term has since diminished. Haudenosaunee Peoples prefer to be referred to as Haudenosaunee, Indigenous, Onkwehón: we, First People, or by their specific Nation.



Haudenosaunee Values

*"Come spread your mind on the table with me.
Take what I have, and I will borrow from you what I need".*

It was mentioned earlier that the Haudenosaunee are a Confederacy based on peace, equity, and a Good Mind, founded in the Great Law. Lance Keye shares his understandings of what that means, and breaks down the founding principles that can be drawn from the [Haudenosaunee](#) way of life. *"They are the way we do things, a common understanding as natural as breathing"*



A Good Mind – Kanikonhriyo

The Haudenosaunee believe that to develop a good mind, you must first create the environment to be positive. This principle encompasses how you view the world. Acknowledging both successes and challenges is important, working through those challenges with a good mind is important, and then in turn, how you support the community with your experience.

Practising the Good Mind will cause our spirit to grow. This is known as [Orenda](#). Good Minds have strong Orenda, which leads to peace.

Peace

Peace is not the absence of conflict. Peace is about how we enter into a conflict in a meaningful and positive way. Peace is using kind words to engage in a difference of opinion. A difference of opinion is a spreading of the minds. We may differ in our views or opinions, but how we work together to come to a common conclusion is valued the most. Conflict is not having power over someone, but the ability to use our minds to negotiate. Coming together and having a conflict is not the same as having a fight. A fight is about one person "winning" and one "losing". Our purpose is not to "win" or change someone's mind against their will.

Peace Skä·noñh, the state of peacefulness and wellness

"We actively become more aware of our thoughts, especially those that have a kind and loving intent; we naturally allow ourselves to become spiritually in tune with the Creator's wishes. This allows us to use our talents to fulfill our purpose on Earth."

Freida J. Jacques, Onondaga

A sense of peace comes from training yourself to be balanced in all four directions or ways of being. Physically, this means: is your body in a good place, and are you addressing and caring for the ailments you have? To be physically well means your body is in a "good place", you are only "unwell" if you are not caring for the physical ailments you have. Emotion is an energy. To be emotionally well you must direct your emotions in a good way. To be mentally well, one must recognize the things that are weighing them down, that they are not able to let go of, or set aside for the betterment of their mental well-being. We must ground ourselves physically, mentally, and emotionally because we cannot be spiritually well and at peace unless these things are all working together.

Power

Power is not power over someone else, but the power to have self control and self discipline over your own actions and your words. Power comes from the ability to enable others to discuss a conflict and come to a "[coming of one mind](#)". The idea of having power is never to take someone else's power, or to gain power; rather, it's enabling others to discuss their thoughts and learn from them. Negotiating a common ground is the

ultimate goal of achieving power. The person who has more power has the responsibility to hold their power in check so that the other person has the opportunity to contribute and feel like a valued member of the community.

*"Among the Haudenosaunee, power comes from unity for there is strength in numbers".
(Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021)*

Strength – Kahsatstenhsera

The principle of strength is not necessarily physical strength. It is more about understanding the things that feed us and keep us spiritually well. Strength emphasizes empowerment and humility. We must understand when we are strong enough to know what we can do but accept and appreciate that we are all interdependent. As much as we are strong individuals, there is strength in recognizing that we are dependent on each other.

Righteousness

*"Each individual must have a strong sense of justice, must treat people as equals, and must enjoy equal protection under the Great Law."
(Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021)*

Righteousness is the understanding of yourself. Having faith in oneself and the understanding that you don't know everything. Having faith is not about always having a destination; if you have faith in yourself and your abilities, you can overcome any challenge. It is not about telling others how to live their life, but having faith in your own tools and abilities.

Kind words

Kind words support how we understand our relationships with others.

How do we define a relationship? A relationship is not necessarily romantic in nature. In Haudenosaunee culture, a relationship is anyone you have an interaction with. Relationships change based on the context but not the basic philosophy. We have many different types of relationships, with different people that we interact with, for example family members, friends, or colleagues. The Haudenosaunee believe they have a relationship with anyone they “see” or have an interaction with and that all the rules that govern how we relate with each other apply to all relationships.

Compassion

We must have compassion for our community. We work for the betterment of our community and work for the benefit of all members of the community, not only for ourselves.

Words of Encouragement

How do we encourage and support others? The Haudenosaunee believe you must consider your intentions when encouraging someone. If you are not able to encourage someone with their best interests at heart, then you must step aside so you are not an obstacle.

Great Caring

*“There is no word for love, because love is an ambiguous term. We love so many things, but we love them all differently.”
(Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021)*

“I care for you”: but how? How is it that I care for you? To the Haudenosaunee, caring for someone or something can be on many different levels and in many ways. It can be a physical or spiritual feeling. Caring for someone can include the things they do for you to show they care and how they display their feelings. Love can be spiritual, and also an energy for the people we are connected to both past and present. It encompasses the seven generations before us and the seven generations after us.

*“The principle of “Great Caring” transcends generations and is an intergenerational connection”.
(Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021)*

Gratefulness/Thankfulness – Ohenten Kariwatekwen

*“Good words before all else.”
(Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021)*

All that we need is given to us in the great web of life, and all that is left is for us to acknowledge the miracle of our life, and to give thanks for the gifts that we have been given from the Creator. Gratitude connects us to the deep relationships we have with all living things, both past and present, and situates us in a place to be thankful for everything we have. Everything has a place, purpose, and use; we must recognise and give thanks “from under the ground up, roots, water, plants, and medicines”. (Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021)

The Haudenosaunee give thanks to Spirit Beings that control the nature around us. The Sun is our oldest brother, always setting the example by coming up in the east and going to sleep in the west. The Moon, is our grandmother. It helps women with their bodies and to the Haudenosaunee, women are essential to identity and culture, it also gives light in the night sky.

Of all living things, humans are the weakest because we rely on so many other things. We are imperfect beings so must always humble ourselves, be grateful and give thanks for all our gifts.

Thanksgiving and gratitude should be said many times each day. "It is a thoughtful process to be truly thankful." (Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021)

The Coming Together of One Mind

*"A huge part of our philosophy relies on communication and by extension to that, our relationship with others."
(Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021)*

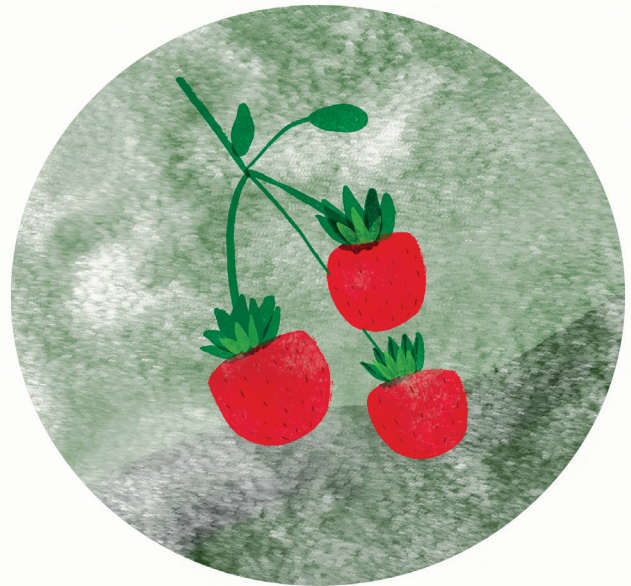
Traditionally, the Haudenosaunee slow down and recognize that anything worth saying is worth taking the time to be clear: is what I am saying, being conveyed in the way I mean for you to hear it?

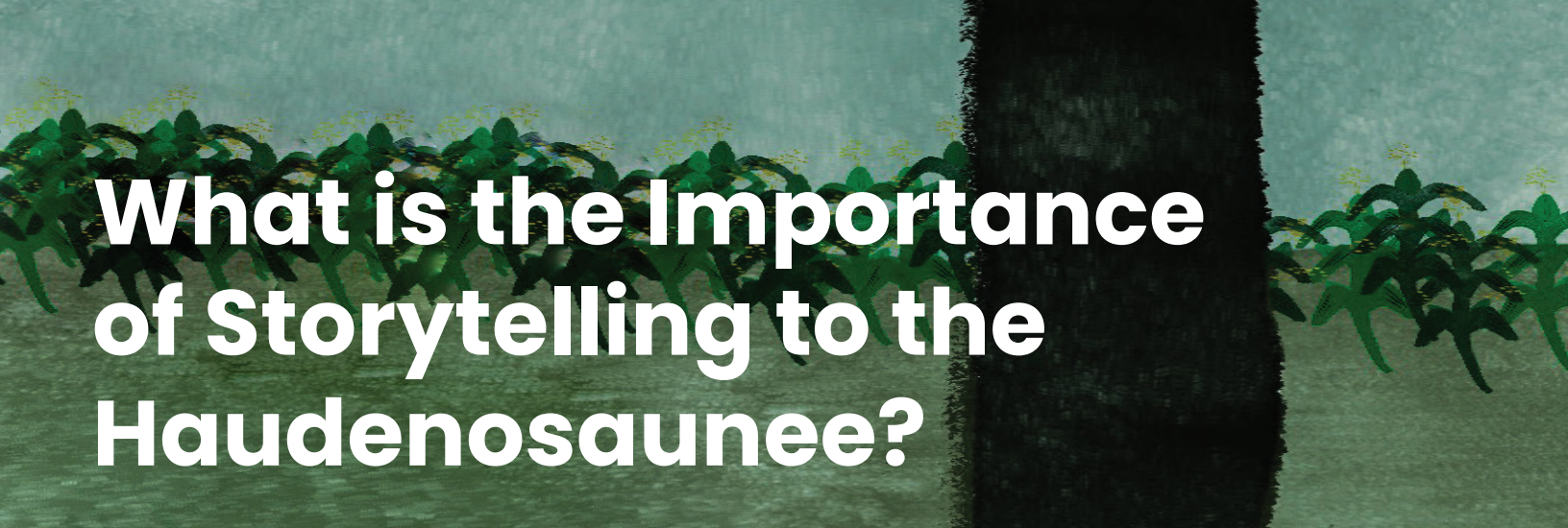
Recognizing that my approach may be different from yours, if we broaden each others scope and arrive at the "one mind," then we have come together for the same purpose.

One Mind

*"We don't have to think the same thing, but we must come together for the same purpose."
(Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021)*

Regardless of your personal thoughts, you must set aside your thoughts for the betterment of the community. You must work with one mind and one focus with everyone else in the community. You must put everything aside to do the work that needs to be done. Sometimes you must build up your strength and humble yourself and do what must be done. To come to a common understanding, we must be present with focus and for the benefit of the greater good.





What is the Importance of Storytelling to the Haudenosaunee?

"My dear ones, our work is about to begin".

Jo-Ann Archibald

Historically and today, Haudenosaunee have shared important history, knowledge, and beliefs through the telling of stories. Storytelling is one of the ways that Onkwehon:we people preserve their identity, transmit knowledge, and pass on history, cultural beliefs, practices, and ceremonies to the next generation. "Stories are used to provide a sociocultural and historical account of the community knowledge from elders to youth, ensuring its survival with new generations". (Fixico, D., 2003)

Where other cultures may use images to represent or share their culture or teachings, "the Haudenosaunee paint pictures with their words". (Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021) Storytellers share their knowledge of the people, places, and traditions. Sharing what they have learned is their responsibility and must be shared in a way that is available for everyone to understand. Some stories are traditional in that they share teachings and values that have been passed down for generations, while others connect families to their community and its identity.

Why should we teach children through the telling of stories?

The purpose of storytelling is to share the knowledge, traditions and life experiences of the people and places in the story. It is an integral part of the way of life and preservation of the culture and history. The meaningful education of children, through stories, has the purpose of preserving the culture, as well as teaching expected behaviour, treatment of others, and the environment. Storytelling not only offers others a model of how stories should be structured and told; it also allows for children to be introduced to other cultures and their important values, beliefs, and customs. The strong oral tradition of Indigenous peoples provides the opportunity to ground literacy development in oral stories that reflect the children's family, community relationships, and culture (Zepeda, 1995).

Storytelling provides a holistic way for children to learn. Children must not only listen, but also visualize the characters of the story, the characters' actions, and their emotions. They make inferences and important connections to themselves and the world around them. Some stories hold valuable life lessons, and some can be a process of learning; being left for the listener to apply the lesson to their own life and experience. "Lessons within stories connect to larger lessons, and act as reminders to other lessons. Lessons do not exist separately; they are part of a network of interconnected teachings and guidelines". (Lance Key, oral communication, 2021)

It is important to listen with “[three ears](#): two on the sides of our head and the one that is in our heart.” This emphasizes the importance of holism to the Haudenosaunee and the interrelatedness to our physical, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual beings.

Oral stories are an important strategy used to teach children about the structure of stories. When later they are given opportunities to write their own stories, this enables them to recognize how verbal expressions can become structured texts. By understanding the structure of a story, how stories are created, and how they are told, children become more competent with literacy and language-based tasks. Incorporating opportunities for children to practise storytelling along with the writing of their own stories supports literacy development.

How can accessing traditional knowledge help students and educators to build bridges?

When we teach about another person’s culture or identity, we must approach these teachings by being clear that we understand and accept that: “I will teach you what I was taught, as I was taught it, but it is not my teaching.” (Lance Keye, oral communication, 2021).

When you share a story with students, acknowledge where the story comes from, whose story it is, and the cultural context of the story. Be clear that the story does not belong to the storyteller, it belongs to the community or person the story comes from. Gather information about the story such as:

- Whose story, is it? What is the meaning, moral or purpose of the story?
- What is the historical and geographical context of the story?

Make time to tell stories every day and allow students the opportunity to share their own oral stories. Reflect on the meaning of the story and give students an opportunity to make connections and think about how it applies to them. Meet students where they are with the stories, be conscious of your own bias and lens as you engage with the text or story. Including authentic voices means creating space for authentic connections and learning. Use Indigenous story books to share with your students, and whenever possible, invite a knowledgeable person from the community to share their stories.

Suggested Activities for Storytelling

- Connect with the Board Indigenous Education Lead to invite a Haudenosaunee storyteller or speaker to come into the classroom.
- Introduce Haudenosaunee stories into the classroom through oral storytelling (e.g., [Corn Husk Dolls](#), [Lacrosse](#), [Creation Stories](#), etc.).
- Create a Three Sisters Garden or [bushel basket](#) post classroom visit.
- Incorporate the [Thanksgiving Address](#) into a Science inquiry.
- Connect story to sensory exploration, [the Three Sisters](#), [healthy living](#), Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.
- Use storytelling to bring treaties and significant historical figures to life.
- Use storytelling to introduce [mathematical/scientific](#) thinking in the classroom.

- Students discuss seasonal stories with family, Elders, or community members. Gather information about foods, plants, and jobs that are done during certain times of the year. Share these stories and the information you gathered in your reading groups.
- Share and illustrate a [seasonal story](#) from your family or community.
- Host a storytelling café in the classroom, or a family evening.
- Include storytelling as a format for communication in assessment and evaluation.
- Animate, draw, act out, create digital representations of significant characters from different stories.
- Explore the Mohawk creation story with Tom Porter fourdirectionsteachings.com.
- Create a [storyboard](#) illustrating a Haudenosaunee story.





Haudenosaunee People in the Media

Children love to see themselves represented in the media. It gives them validation and encouragement. Everyone wants to see themselves reflected in their communities and recognize that their culture is valued and contributes to a child's connection to their own culture and feeds their aspirations. Haudenosaunee communities are contributing to the Arts, literature, professional sport and, academia, Some notable Haudenosaunee people include [Waneek Horn-Miller](#), [Brandon Montour](#), [Graham Greene](#), [Kaniehtiio 'Tiio' Horn](#), [Alex Rice](#), [August Schellenberg](#) and [Logan Staats](#).

Mohawk athlete Waneek Horn-Miller was co-captain of the first Canadian water polo team in the Olympics, winning a gold medal at the 1999 Pan American games. Horn-Miller has been recognized as one of Canada's most influential women in sports. Brandon Montour, drafted to the NHL in 2014, currently plays for the Florida Panthers (2021) and is a favourite amongst young hockey players. [Lyle Thompson](#), one of the greatest lacrosse players of all time, continues to give back to community with his brothers, by sharing the [medicine game](#) in schools, camps, and clinics.

Haudenosaunee people have been represented by notable actors in some of today's most well-known TV shows and films. Graham Greene (Oneida) received an Academy Award nomination for his role in the popular 1990 film Dances with Wolves. Tiio Horn (Mohawk) is best known for her role as Tanis in the hit sitcom Letterkenny. Alex Rice (Mohawk) played the supporting role of Sue Clearwater in the Twilight saga, and August Schellenberg (Mohawk) played one of the main characters, Randolph Johnson, in Free Willy.

In 2018, Logan Staats, a Mohawk born singer, was one of the winners during the first season of The Launch on CTV. He went on to win Best Radio Single at the Indigenous Music Awards and continues to sing and perform today.

Contemporary Haudenosaunee identity and culture are expressed in many ways. One thing that is common amongst the representation in these examples is the portrayal of strong, successful Onkwehón:we people. Inclusion of a variety of voices in the classroom works to break down the stereotypes that have been widely held since colonization began and is important for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to see and connect with.



Haudenosaunee Leadership

In Haudenosaunee families, everyone is born into roles of responsibilities. These responsibilities are based on The Great Law, family, clans, and future roles that one may grow into. Children observe and participate in hands-on learning, watching, and listening. Mentoring and apprenticing begins early by the older ones in the community. The women, the helpers, Faith Keepers, the parents, family, and educators' mentor both formally and informally. Collective roles and responsibilities contribute to feelings of inclusion and co-operation, further contributing to the strength of a Nation.

Haudenosaunee Women

Haudenosaunee society is founded in equity; no one person stands above another; you can see that in the circle wampum; this includes Haudenosaunee women. Gender balance is inherent within the way the Onkwéhon:we govern. [The Chiefs and Clan Mothers](#) work in tandem. While the Chiefs are the voice of the community and protector of the peace, the Clan Mother, [Iakoiá:ner](#), (*she is good*) is both the leader of the clan and the Nation; they work together, making decisions and looking after the community. Clan Mothers are responsible for the cycle of ceremonies, the naming of babies, land protection, guidance on conflict or war, and informing and guiding the actions of the Chiefs.

With respect to land, it is important to note that responsibility for the land belongs to the women. Contrary to early Canadian law, all decisions regarding the land fell upon the Clan Mothers, including the allocation of resources.

Clan Mothers titles are [passed through families](#), from the eldest sister to other sisters. If they are unable to appoint a sister, a Clan Mother's daughters are then considered. There are 49 Clan Mothers (Chief Todadah, from Onondaga does not have a Clan Mother). Similar to the Chiefs, [Clan Mothers](#) are expected to adhere to the Great Law and traditional Haudenosaunee ways and be a positive role model in the community.

Haudenosaunee communities are matrilineal, meaning that children inherit their mother's clan. The *Indian Act*, colonization, and the inter-generational impacts of residential schools have greatly impacted the social structure and traditional roles of Haudenosaunee women in communities today. Despite the government's attempts to disrupt the power of Haudenosaunee women over the last 150+ years, the influence and ripple-effect of their early legacy still lives on in the communities and the broader women's movement as well.

As leaders in their community, Haudenosaunee women, inspired [suffragists](#), including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott to fight for all women's rights to vote and to take part in the democracy of their country. The first meeting of the women's rights movement being held in Seneca Falls in 1848, reflects the influence Onkwéhon:we women had on the history of the modern-day feminist movement.

Haudenosaunee Men

Condoled Chiefs, [Roiá:ner](#), meaning "he is good", grow into their roles over time. Characteristics demonstrated at early ages such as kindness, respect and commitment to their community are gifts to be encouraged and refined. The term, "[Hoyane](#)" translates to *Good Man*. Being of Good Mind, humility, public speaking, generosity, and putting the needs of the community first are qualities and skills that the Clan Mothers are watching for from growing young men, in particular families of a Chief's lineage. A condoled Chief's responsibilities are a lifetime of servitude to the needs of his community. However, at any point, if the Clan Mothers do not feel like the Chief is representing the community in a *Good Way* or upholding his responsibilities, he can be "dehorned," - removed from his role. It is the Clan Mothers who [nominate](#) the men for consideration. Men are chosen as leaders to speak on behalf of the people, communicating their needs and concerns. Messages presented by a Chief are never their own; input and consideration from the community has been taken into consideration, including the seven generations to come. It is the responsibility of the Chiefs to protect the people, and to do that requires adherence to the laws and customs of the Haudenosaunee. The ability to give and eat last shows a commitment and builds trust with the people the Chiefs serve. Once that trust is broken, that person can no longer lead.

The forced implementation of the elected councils began under the [Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869](#). It was the intention of the Canadian government to replace all traditional forms of government that had been operating since time immemorial. By implementing this elected council system, the leaders were no longer responsible to the people, instead they answered to the Crown. Terms were set in place for a set number of years (two), shorter terms made it more difficult for long-term projects and development. This was not by accident. Today, terms may vary community to community as to when elections take place.



Read Deskaheh's last speech, 1925 [here](#).

Change came again in 1920 under the [Indian Act](#), with the banning of Traditional Councils. On October 7, 1924, the [forced removal](#) of the Confederacy Council ensued, specifically on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. The RCMP moved in, occupied the building, refusing access to the Council. The Haudenosaunee continued to resist the adoption of the forced elected council and it took some time to put one in place. The interference of the Canadian government with traditional leadership continues to dismiss the roles and responsibilities of traditional roles in the community today.

[Deskaheh](#), (Levi General) a Cayuga Chief, delegated as speaker for the Six Nations Confederacy, campaigned to protect the sovereignty of the Haudenosaunee people. First, he challenged the Canadian government with respect to forced drafts to the First World War and to maintain the autonomy of the Haudenosaunee people. However, following the war, the government began a more concerted effort for assimilation. Deskaheh then traveled to Britain, the Nation with whom the Six Nations had made their treaties, to seek support; but he was sent back and told this was a domestic problem for Canada and not for them to intervene. Deskaheh, persevered, travelled across the ocean to Geneva, and lobbied the League of Nations. While unsuccessful in his mission, his efforts were seen as a threat to the Canadian government, which led to the raiding of Six Nations of the Grand River and the occupation by the RCMP for a short time, as well as his exile from Canada. (Akwesasne Notes, 2005). Deskaheh would live the rest of his days on the south side of the Niagara River, revered by Haudenosaunee for his legacy of leadership.

[Joseph Brant](#), Thayendanegea, was another well-known leader, with a complex history, dependent upon the perspective taken. Many view Brant as a war-hero, a war-Chief, an ally to the British, a Mohawk loyalist, and a skilled politician. However, there is not consensus with this version of history. There is the perspective that Joseph Brant [created division](#) amongst the Nations in the Confederacy, breaking the Great Peace that had been in place for centuries. With the American Revolution underway, Brant, as an ally to Britain, urged the Haudenosaunee Chiefs to align with the British to protect their territories. The Confederacy became divided, causing the Nations to once again be warring against one another; worse, without compensation for their efforts.

In 1784, [Sir Frederick-Haldimand](#) granted a [parcel of land](#), purchased from the Mississaugas of the Credit. This parcel was [the Between the Lakes Treaty No.3](#) (1792). This parcel was [six miles deep](#) from its mouth to the source, on both sides of the Grand River. From here, Joseph Brant was said to have sold and squandered parcels of the land over time, causing implications and impacts that are still present today. What began as 950,000 acres of Six Nations Land, [less than 5% remains](#), only 46,500 acres.

There may be different opinions about history. It is important to include many voices in the discussion and diverse resources, to encourage critical thinking and respectful dialogue.

Governance: The Grand Council

The [Confederacy Council](#), one of the oldest participating democracies in the world, continues to operate today, despite Canada's attempts to dismantle this longstanding form of government. The Grand Council, [consists of 50 chiefs](#), made up of [elder and younger brothers](#) from across the different clans:

Mohawk (Elder Brother) nine chiefs including Bear, Wolf and Turtle clans;

Oneida (Younger Brother), nine chiefs including Bear, Wolf and Turtle clans;

Onondaga (Fire Keepers), 14 Chiefs including Turtle, Snipe, Bear, Hawk, Deer, Wolf, Eel and Beaver clans;

Cayuga (Younger Brother) 10 Chiefs including Snipe, Heron, Deer, Turtle, and Bear; and

Seneca (Elder Brother) eight including Bear, Snipe, Turtle, Wolf and Hawk.

Within each community there is a Confederacy Council as well, made up of those leaders who reside in that particular community (i.e., Tyendinaga, Wahta and Kahnawà:ke, etc.). These Confederacy Councils have particular roles and responsibilities governing how issues are brought forward, discussed, and debated. In Grand Council, The Onondaga are responsible for opening and closing of sessions. The Mohawk and Seneca address any concerns first, and then ["throw the issue across the fire"](#) to the Oneida and the Cayuga (younger brothers) for discussion. Upon completion, the issue is then returned across the fire to the elder brothers for agreement. When

a potential decision is given to the Onondaga, they may choose to raise concerns before a final decision is made. The Grand Council operates on consensus, not voting, meaning that discussions are continued until decisions can be made without objection. If consensus is found, this is then shared with the leaders for announcement.

*Note: [The Tuscarora do not have a voice at Grand Council unless a situation arises where their input is required.](#)

It is known that the American Constitution was influenced by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, including the ideals of peace and unity. In fact, you can see the impact of the "bundled sticks teaching" in the [American Seal](#); the eagle is clutching thirteen arrows in its talon, similar to the five arrows representing the original five Nations in the teaching from Hiawatha (as referenced earlier in this text). Benjamin Franklin referenced the Haudenosaunee influence in his presentation to his peers in 1754, including a presentation from Mohawk Chief Hendrick who was asked to explain the Confederacy's model. Later, Franklin invited members of The Grand Council to the Continental Congress meeting in 1776. It is clear that the American [two-house system](#) was modeled to resemble the operations of the Grand Council between Elder and Younger brothers. This is not the only lasting impact on American history; Haudenosaunee women changed the course for women's rights in both Canada and the United States.



Wampum

Onekor:ha or O'nikon:ra (Maracle, 2021)

Wampum is an important part of Hodinohso:ni (Haudenosaunee) history and culture. One oral account explaining the origin of wampum tells the story of when Hayehwátha (Hiawatha) was depressed due to the death of his daughters, he came upon a lake that was so full of ducks and geese he could barely see the water. As he sat by the lake watching the birds, they suddenly took flight, their wings lifting the water with them. And there, exposed on the lake bottom he discovered the gift of wampum - white shell beads already formed - which he strung to create a wampum string (Maracle, 2021).

[Wampum](#) is traditionally made from shell beads, from purple or black quahog clam shells and white whelk shells. These [shells](#) were cut, rounded, sanded and stone drilled into [cylindrical beads](#) that were strung or woven into strings and belts. Wampum creation was a time consuming, spiritual, intentional process that was the responsibility of one clan member.

The colour of the shells has symbolic meaning. "The white whelk shell is a symbol of power and peace, and all the good things. The purple or black quahog clam shell is just the opposite." ([Hill, R.](#)) It represents darkness, sadness, and grief. Wampum is considered to be a [sacred substance](#) that is believed to have a healing presence and "attests to the truth, importance, and significance of a message.

Wampum was crafted into strings and woven into belts that served a variety of purposes.

Wampum Strings

Wampum as an Invitation

Wampum strings were used to communicate [invitations](#) to other Nations to ceremony or council. The beaded wampum string was attached to a wooden stick that often had the Chief's name carved into it and was carried by a runner to other Nations. The meeting day was indicated by notches in the stick that were cut off daily so that when the notches were gone, the people invited knew it was meeting time.

Wampum Strings to Support Condolence, Mourning, and Healing

One oral account of giving words of condolence to lift the mind of the mourner began when Hayehwátha ([Hiawatha](#)), who was grieving the death of his daughters, was sitting by the water stringing wampum shells. He spoke words of condolence to himself, which served to elevate his grief. "This I would do if I found anyone burdened with grief even as I am. I would take these shell strings in my hand and console them. The strings would become words and lift away the darkness with which they are covered. Holding these in my hands my word would be true," ([Kelsey, 2014](#)), giving powerful meaning to the wampum string. This process of holding the wampum string and sharing words of condolence serves as a model for the Haudenosaunee to console the mourner and restore the Good Mind.

Consolation is offered during a Condolence Ceremony, particularly when a Chief passes, through the reading of Condolence Strings. "The Clear minded side lifts up the mind(s) of the mourner(s) by removing the grief caused by death so that they can put their house back in order and restore the good mind." (Hill R., 2014).

There are between twelve to fifteen Condolence Strings, depending upon the Nation, to support the grieving and healing process. The words associated with the first three strings described below, commonly shared at traditional funerals, were provided by a Mohawk clan member (Troy Maracle, oral communication, 2021).

The first Condolence String acknowledges the eyes, when dealing with the loss of a loved one, the eyes become filled with tears and do not allow people to see clearly. Words shared while holding this wampum are meant to wipe away tears and encourage those hearing the words to see clearly again.

The Second Condolence String acknowledges that dust has settled into the "ears" clouding the person from hearing. The words shared are meant to clear the dust so that comforting words that are shared can be heard.

The third Condolence String addresses the throat, since a person can be overcome with grief and unable to speak or eat. Words shared with this string are meant to clear the throat so the person can speak, reconnect with others, and nourish their body with food to bring them strength.

Wampum Strings as Title Holders

Each Clan Mother and Confederacy [Hoyane](#) (Chief) have a specific wampum string or strings, that identify their title and authority or place within the Haudenosaunee community. Upon the death of a Chief, or removal from office, the wampum string is passed on to the new leader.

Wampum String as a Truth Holder

During ceremonies when a wampum string is held by a speaker, it is expected and believed that the person is speaking the truth. Listeners acknowledge the speaker respectfully. This tradition illustrates the significance and importance of the spoken word to the Haudenosaunee.



Wampum Belts



Photo Credit: OnondagaNation.org

The Haudenosaunee created wampum belts to record and recall events, agreements or political interactions, as well as [treaty documentation](#). [Wampum Belts](#) are a physical and visual representation or [visual code](#) of values and shared understanding(s) reached within Indigenous groups, and between Indigenous Peoples and settler governments (Maracle, 2021). To the Haudenosaunee, wampum contains the history, laws, stories, and wisdom of their ancestors.

Patterns and designs in a wampum belt metaphorically symbolize what was agreed to within treaty negotiations and represented future relationships. These symbols, images and patterns were intentionally selected to record and represent information agreed to in these interactions. Haudenosaunee ancestors were very skilled in how to make these abstract symbols that have great meaning, great power” ([Hill, 2014](#)).

Wampum Keepers or clan members who are skilled at memorizing and reading wampum belts, are entrusted with their keep. At the founding of The Great Peace, the [Onondaga](#) were given the responsibility of Wampum Keeper of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

Oral Tradition

Since the design, symbols and pattern on the wampum belts are used to metaphorically record a story, event, or agreement, they are used as a mnemonic or aid for oral tradition, storytelling, and wampum reading. Storytellers or wampum readers “specifically recall the original instructions encoded in the cultural belts, allude to prophecies recorded, rearticulate their guiding wisdom, provide political commentary on treaty belts that record agreements with settler governments, and continue to honour Hodinohso:ni commitment to these Nation-to-Nation contracts by reciting their record” ([Kelsey, 2014](#)).

Ceremony

Woman’s Nomination Belt

Gahshastęhsra Gdįha: ne Odiyanéh:sh

Ka shasténsersa Kontiháwe ne lotiianéh:shon (Hill, R.)

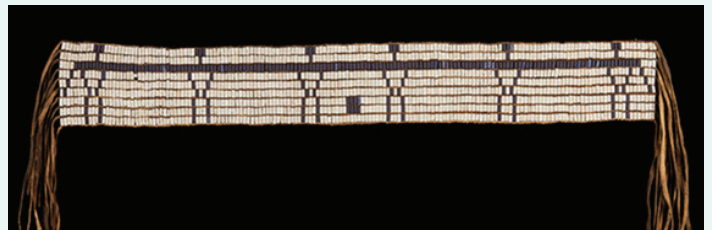


Photo credit: Iakonikohnrio Tonia Loran-Galban

The Woman’s Nomination Belt is a visual representation of the authority that gives the [Clan Mother](#) the right to choose, nominate and confirm the “raising up” of the male Chiefs of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. It illustrates the formation of leadership within the Confederacy.

**Ever-Growing Peace Belt -
Dust Fan of Council President Belt**
Sgaohesgó:wa Jogdehagehtgó:wa (Cayuga)



Photo Credit: OnondagaNation.org

The image on the Ever-Growing Peace or Dust Fan Belt is a white pine tree and is symbolic of the [Tree of Great Peace](#) that is used to explain the Great Law of Peace. The images represent the joining of the five Nations and extend off the belt indicating that peace is ongoing and everlasting. White Pine needles, which grow in groups of five, remind the Haudenosaunee of the original five Nations that joined in unity to form the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Once the Nations agreed to peace, [the Peacemaker](#) encouraged them to bury their emotions of hatred, fear, and anger towards each other and place their physical weapons under the roots of a white pine tree. He then replanted the pine tree instructing them to follow the roots of the tree which represent strength and peace. This was the formation of the [Great League of Peace](#). "Under this [pine tree](#), the Peacemaker placed a general fire to burn forever at Onondaga, the Council Place of the Five Nations."

The Ever-Growing Peace Belt, or Dust Fan Belt, is important in Haudenosaunee governance. It is present during Council and serves to remind the Chiefs to sweep away the dust from their eyes and any negativity from their minds, so that they will have a Good Mind to make just and fair decisions for their people and future generations ([Hill, R.](#)).

Circle Wampum "It Circles the People"
De you gyo gwah hahs don (Onondaga)

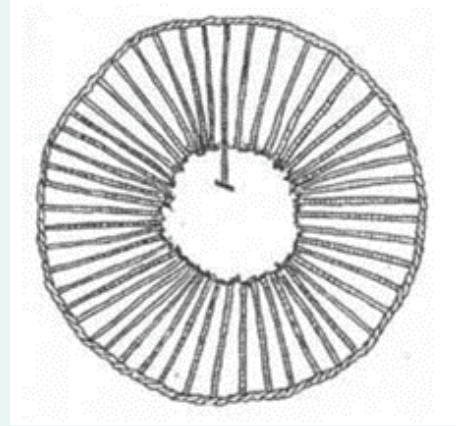


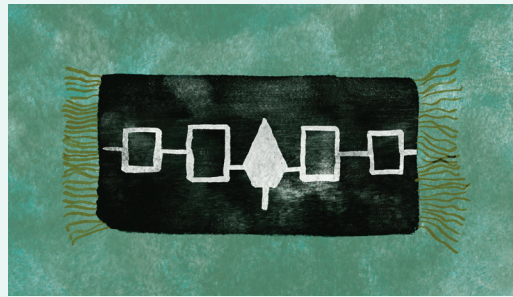
Photo Credit: OnondagaNation.org

The original Circle Wampum was created when the Haudenosaunee Confederacy was established. The outer two strands of the circle symbolize the Great Law, the Great Peace ([Hill S., 2017](#)) and the interrelationship between [spirituality and governance](#). The 50 equal-inner strands represent the unity of the 50 Haudenosaunee Chiefs - 14 Onondaga Chiefs, eight Seneca Chiefs, nine Mohawk Chiefs, 10 Cayuga Chiefs and nine Oneida Chiefs standing with their Clan Mothers. It also designates the seating plan during the Grand Council. The inside of the circle contains the Haudenosaunee people who are responsible for following the ways established by the Creator, and represents their customs, beliefs, and ways of life. The longer strand hanging in the middle represents the spirit of the people so that they will be considered by the Chiefs, whose responsibility it is to protect and continue the Haudenosaunee customs and traditions.

Treaty Documentation

Indigenous Peoples have a long history of making oral agreements or promises that continue to be viewed as building or strengthening relationships. The Haudenosaunee entered into some agreements to ensure peace and friendship, while other treaties were made to protect territorial land, resources, and traditional ways of life. These treaties defined the duties and rights of parties involved, intended to benefit all parties and, from the Haudenosaunee perspective, were entered with mutual respect. Oral tradition has been central to the Indigenous interpretation of [treaties](#) and their understanding of what was negotiated is often based on the intent and spirit of what was discussed, rather than the legal language in the written documents.

Confederacy Belt Hiawatha, [Ayenwahtha](#)



Art Credit: Sara General

The white rectangular symbols on the Hiawatha Belt represent the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, and Seneca, while the tree in the centre represents the Onondaga - the original five Nations that joined to become the Confederacy. Extending across the belt, and joining the shapes, is a row of white beads representing the path of peace.

The Hiawatha Belt is a visual representation of the formation of the [League of Nations](#) which became known as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. It is a record of when the original five warring [Nations](#) came together with Hiawatha and the Peacemaker, and buried their weapons under the white pine tree, promising peaceful relationships moving forward. It was through these negotiations with the Peacemaker that the Great Law of Peace was established ([Hill S., 2017](#)).

The Hiawatha Belt, or Confederacy Belt, is present at Grand Council meetings today, reminding leaders of the principles of Peace, Strength, and a Good Mind, and that any decisions made need to not only be for today but for seven future generations.

To the Haudenosaunee this belt is a symbol of pride, strength, and hope, (Troy Maracle, oral communication, 2021) and a reminder that they are to conduct themselves according to the Great Law.

Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Sewatokwa'tshera't (Mohawk)



Photo Credit: muskratmagazine.com

When the Kayanerenkó:wa (Great Law of Peace) was created, the Peacemaker met with all of the Chiefs. He placed one bowl with a beaver tail in it and said for them all to share it. Having noticed that all needed to eat, each Chief made sure to only take a little to ensure there was enough for everyone. The Peacemaker then said:

"It will turn out well for us to do this: we will say, 'We promise to have only one dish among us; in it will be a beaver tail and no knife will be there.'" When the Chiefs were finished, the Peacemaker then said; "Now we have completed the matter, we will have one dish, which means that we will all have equal shares of the game roaming about in the hunting grounds and fields, and then everything will become peaceful among all of the people; and there will be no knife near our dish, which means that if there is a knife there, someone might presently get cut, causing bloodshed, and this is troublesome, should it happen thus, and for this reason there should be no knife near our dish. When we have set down our dish of wild game, we shall all enjoy equal portions where the people have hunted (the hunting grounds amongst the several tribal territories of native lands), and all human beings shall now bear good will for one another in their travels." (Williams, 2018).

The "dish" in this agreement refers to Mother Earth and is a "[covenant with nature](#)". The "spoon" represents peaceful interactions between people when they gather, and the kind words that should be shared to nourish others and maintain peaceful relations based on respect (Troy Maracle, oral communication, 2021).

The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt also records the territorial acknowledgement reached between the Haudenosaunee, their allies the Anishinaabe, and their allies in the late 1600s. This wampum belt is one of the most significant belts because it represents the first peace treaty made in North America between all Indigenous Nations before European contact.

Three guiding principles reached in this agreement:

- never take more than you need, always use all that you take;
- never leave the dish empty - always leaving some for others, those generations still to come; and
- Keep the dish clean, everyone has [equal responsibility](#) to care for the land and the animals.

These principles of living sustainably and the co-operative sharing of resources was later extended by the Haudenosaunee to the settlers. Since the [Dish With One Spoon Wampum](#) is an ongoing living agreement, it is expected that settlers entering the shared territory will live according to this understanding.

Two Row Wampum Belt Gä•sweñta' (Onondaga)



Photo Credit: OnondagaNation.org

The [Two Row Wampum Belt](#) was exchanged between the Haudenosaunee, in what is now New York state, and the Dutch government in the early 1600s, honouring a treaty agreement had been established. To the Haudenosaunee, [this agreement](#), (which established how each group would live with, and treat each other) is the basis for all subsequent treaties negotiated with government representatives.

The belt itself, reflects the river of life. The two purple rows represent the two different worldviews, perspectives, and ways of living and being. One purple row for the Haudenosaunee in their canoe, the other for the ship of the Dutch. Each would carry their own laws, traditions, and way of life; the three white rows represent peace, friendship, and respect, all necessary to ensure no interference between the vessels. Both agree to stay in their own vessel, neither interfering nor trying to steer the other. Initially the Dutch offered a paternalistic way forward; however, the Haudenosaunee responded instead to be brothers on this river of life, side by side; but never interfering with each other's path. ***"Together, we will travel in friendship and Peace Forever; as long as the grass is green, as long as the water runs downhill, as long as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West, and as long as out Mother Earth will last."***

The Two Row Wampum Belt was presented to Superintendent William Johnson at the conclusion of the 1764 Treaty of Niagara negotiations to reflect Indigenous Peoples' understanding of this treaty and [the Royal Proclamation](#). ([Borrows, 1997](#)).

Covenant Chain or Silver Covenant Chain

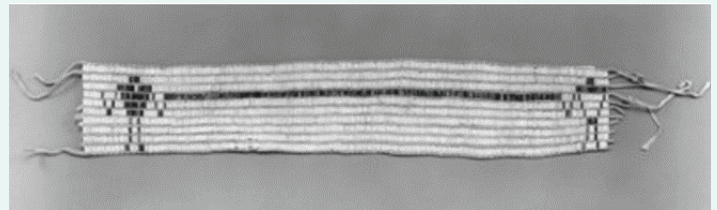


Photo Credit: Rick Hill

The [Covenant Chain](#) recorded Nation-to-Nation alliances and later Nation-to-settler agreements and represents the complexity of understanding relationships over time. The chain was made up of three silver links, silver was chosen over iron to prevent rusting and deterioration. Silver was able to be polished. This relationship was to be on-going and revisited, "polishing of the chain" would become necessary as it tarnished, as all relationships do over time. Each link represented Peace, Respect and Friendship, just like in the Two Row Wampum. For all covenant chains moving forward, these founding elements, the chains, would be present, and foundational, linking the two Nations together. In this [Covenant Chain of Peace](#), the Crown in 1757 is shown with linked arms with the Haudenosaunee Chiefs, by way of a path. The path was to ensure honesty, helpfulness, and peace. It was said that if either was in need, all that was needed was a tug on the chain and the other would respond to their ally in need.

The [Covenant Chain](#) as it was called by the Dutch, was a series of ongoing negotiations and alliances in North America between the Europeans and the Haudenosaunee during the 17th Century. These agreements focused upon matters such as trade, land for settlers, and peaceful solutions to warring, and were based upon the following principles: peace, respect and ongoing friendship ([Hill, R.](#)).

Over the years, several Covenant Chains were created when situations arose that needed to be renegotiated or relationships needed to be renewed. The [Covenant Chain](#) was considered to be “polished” when these changes or additions were made. One such polishing occurred in response to the [Royal Proclamation of 1763](#), which acknowledged the sovereignty of the Indigenous Peoples and resulted in the negotiation of the [Treaty of Niagara](#) in 1764.

Representatives from twenty-four Nations (including the Haudenosaunee) were present to ratify the Royal Proclamation, which resulted in the transfer of a four-mile strip of land by the Niagara River from the Seneca to the Crown and established that settlers were forbidden to access Indigenous territories without consent, affirming the protections previously outlined in the Royal Proclamation. This treaty was recorded in the [Treaty of Niagara or Covenant Chain Wampum Belt](#).

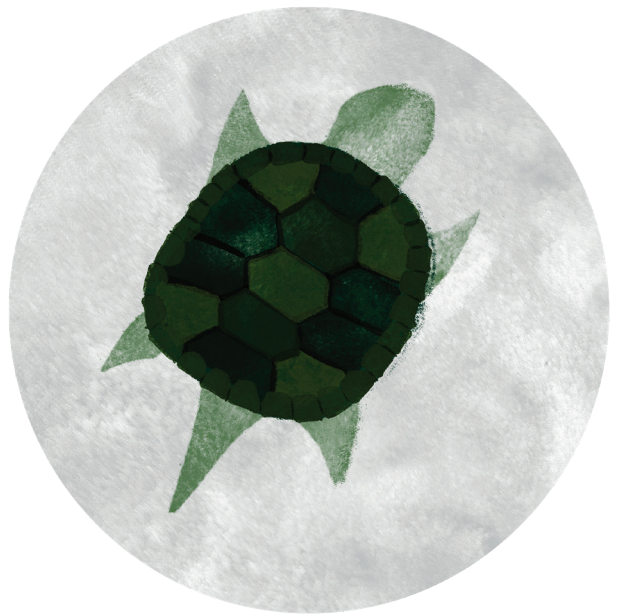
The most recent renewal of the Covenant Chain occurred between the Crown and the Haudenosaunee on June 4, 2010, when Queen Elizabeth II presented eight silver bells to representatives of the Six Nations. The bells were “engraved with the words ‘The Silver Chain of Friendship 1710-2010’ ([Kuitenbrouwer, 2010](#)).

Peace and Friendship Belt



Photo Credit: [Alan Corbiere](#), belt made by Ken Maracle

The Peace and Friendship Belt represents a Nation-to-Nation agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe that was reached after years of conflict in the [Beaver Wars](#). The squares on the belt represent both Nations and the three row-white path joining them symbolizes an open [Path of Peace](#) on Mother Earth where Nations will walk about with Good Minds and never see warfare.



1764 Covenant Chain Wampum - George Washington Belt

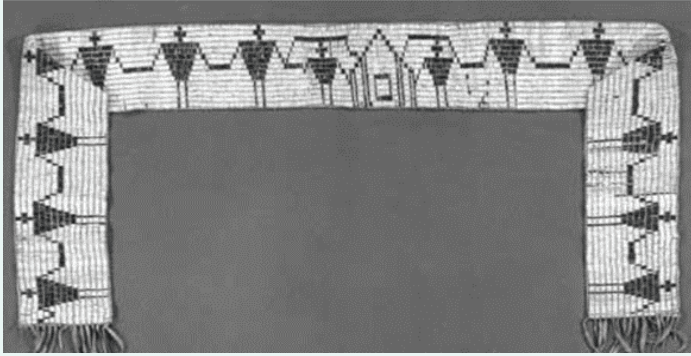
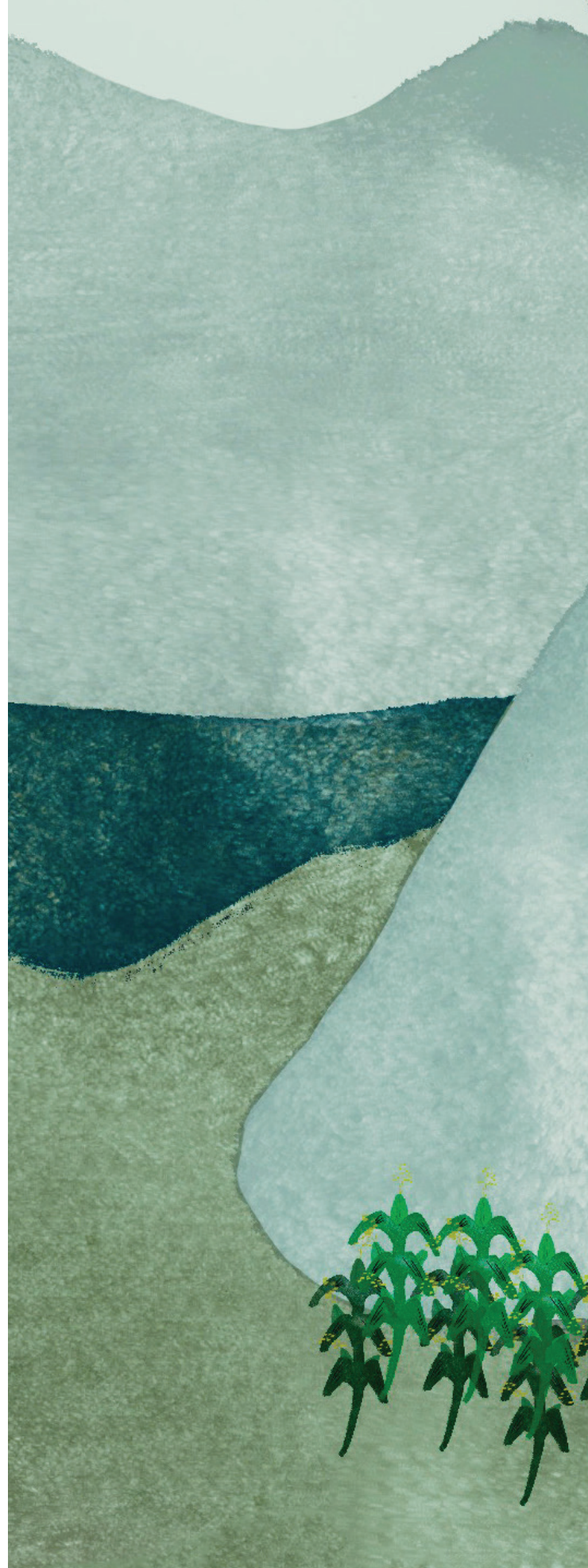


Photo Credit: OnondagaNation.org

The [George Washington Belt](#) is six feet long and features visuals of human figures and a longhouse, the traditional home of the Onkwehon:we. There are fifteen human figures - thirteen of which represent the newly formed states, and two figures representing the Mohawk (Keepers of the Eastern Door) and the Seneca (Keepers of the Western Door). Figures are linked by a chain of friendship which represents the alliance agreed to between the two Nations. The longhouse represented willingness to allow others to travel through the territory, as long as peace was maintained. The George Washington Belt or Covenant Chain is a visual record of the formalization of the [Canandaigua Treaty](#), 1794 between the United States and the Haudenosaunee. This belt was commissioned by George Washington at a time when settler expansion was claiming Haudenosaunee territorial homeland. This belt symbolizes the negotiations made in the treaty: friendship, peace, and a promise that the Haudenosaunee may live within their newly defined territory with non-interference. The [Canandaigua Treaty](#) states: *"Article I - Peace and friendship are hereby firmly established, and shall be perpetual, between the United States and the Six Nations."* Today, "as part of its continued observance of the Canandaigua Treaty, the United States each year provides \$4,500 for the annual distribution of cloth to the Six Nations peoples" ([Canandaigua Treaty](#)).



Wampum as a Record

Champlain Belt



Photo Credit: Wampumbear.com

This belt is a commemorative belt recording the arrival of French explorer [Samuel de Champlain](#), who allied with the Algonquin and travelled into Haudenosaunee Territory in 1609. It recounts the horrific incident at Lake Champlain when three Chiefs were killed by French gunfire - an attack that took out the leaders of every Mohawk clan. This was the Mohawk's first experience with [firearms](#). This incident initiated an alliance between the Haudenosaunee and the British and precipitated the French and Indian Wars (Troy Maracle, oral communication, 2021).

Tuscarora Alliance Belt - Six Nations Belt

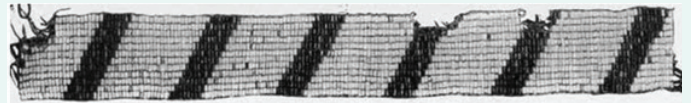


Photo Credit: OnondagaNation.org

The Tuscarora Wampum Belt commemorates the joining of the [Tuscarora](#) to the Haudenosaunee Confederacy around 1714, according to ([Thomas, J.](#)), or in 1722 in the Author's Note by [Robertson, R., 2015](#) when they migrated from North Carolina to the Five Nations Confederacy in New York. The six diagonal stripes represent the [League of Six Nations](#) and symbolize "rafters being added to the longhouse" (Troy Maracle, oral communication, 2021).



Other Treaties & Agreements

The Crawford Purchase, 1783

Having been pushed from the Mohawk Valley, as a result of the American Revolution and for allying with the British, the Mohawk leadership were lobbying and negotiating a compensation with Sir Frederick Haldimand. One area that was known to the Mohawk were the lands to the north of the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario as this was occupied by the Mohawk and other Haudenosaunee in earlier times. Realizing that the land that the Haudenosaunee wished to settle on was being occupied by the Mississauga, Haldimand instructed Sir William Crawford to negotiate a land purchase. This became known as the Crawford Purchase of 1783, and it encompassed land that ran along the north shore of the St. Lawrence and the eastern end of Lake Ontario. The extent of the land purchase and the size of the original tract of the territory and [outcome](#) was controversial; however, the transfer of land was made official by Lord Simcoe in [Treaty 3 1/2](#). In 1784, Kanyen'kehà:ka (Mohawk) [Chief John Deserontyon](#) and his followers resettled to Kenhté:ke (Bay of Quinte) referred to by some as Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. Today, like many other First Nations territories, this area has been considerably reduced in size. (Troy Maracle, oral communication, 2021).

The Haldimand Grant Treaty 1784

In recognition of their support and alliance with British forces during the American Revolution (1775-84), [Sir Frederick Haldimand](#), Governor in Chief of the province of Quebec and territories, granted a tract of land - 950,000 acres to the Haudenosaunee for their resettlement, since they had lost most of their ancestral land in upper New York. Haldimand granted the Six Nations to:

"take possession of and settle upon the Banks of the River commonly called 'Ouse' or Grand River, running into Lake Erie, allotting to them for that purpose six miles deep from each side of the river beginning at Lake Erie and extending in that proportion to the head of the said river, which them and their posterity are to enjoy forever."

[*Haldimand Treaty.*](#)

The Simcoe Patent, 1793

Throughout the following years there were disputes between The Crown and [Thayendanegea](#), (Joseph Brant) the Mohawk leader, over the interpretation of the Haldimand Treaty Land Grant. As a result, in 1793 [Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe](#) issued a patent which granted to the Six Nations forever:

"all of that territory of land forming part of the district lately purchased by the Imperial Crown from the Mississauga Nation, beginning at the mouth of the [Grand River](#) where it empties itself into Lake Erie, and running along the Banks of the Grand River for a space of six miles on each side of the river, or a space co-extensive therewith", and continuing along the Grand River to a place known by the name of the Forks, and from there along the main stream of the Grand River for the space of six miles on each side of the mainstream, or for a space equally extensive therewith.

The lands allocated to Six Nations under the Simcoe Patent was only a portion - 675,000 acres of the land that was granted under the Haldimand Treaty of 1784. The Six Nations are involved in a [land claim](#) with respect to the Haldimand Tract today.

Jay Treaty of 1794

[The Jay Treaty](#), a border and trade treaty signed by the British and United States, was not made with Indigenous Peoples but it does have implications for the Haudenosaunee - both in the past and in the present. This treaty was negotiated between the British and the Americans in response to the fur trade route established between Montreal and the Mississippi River. It established trade rules, the border line between British North America and the United States, and stipulated that Indigenous Peoples were excluded from duty fees on goods taken across the border and could freely travel to work or live across this border. To date, Status Indians from the northern side of the border can move freely back forth, to live and work in the United States; however, Native Americans, do not have the same access. [Canada does not recognize the Jay Treaty](#) in the same way. A position that is periodically challenged, especially by those Indigenous Nations, the Haudenosaunee whose lands are divided by the border.





Continuance & Contributions – Skä•noñh

This resource is meant to be an introduction to the Haudenosaunee people, a People with a rich history - in tradition, culture, worldview, and way of life. A shared history, whose perspective is often missing in many students' learning journey. This resource is just a single step in building [intercultural understanding](#) for students, teachers and education workers. Conversations are a great place to begin, just as the writers of this document began with building a relationship and having a conversation. Reconciliation can only begin when relationships are built and both truths and stories have been told. The Indigenous Education Team can support you in building relationships, vetting resources, and planning for programs in the classroom in a good way.

Nia:wen to the advisors, Troy Maracle, Lance Keye, and Deneen Montour for all their time, patience, critical feedback and for sharing their knowledge and journey with us. Nya:weh to the writers, for supporting the work of Indigenous Education, building relationships, and working in collaboration with the advisors, and nia:wen ko:wa to all of you for taking this next step in your learning journey.

Suggested Classroom Activities

- Invite a Haudenosaunee Knowledge Keeper, respected community member, or a Board Indigenous Education team member to share about wampum belts, ensuring to follow cultural protocols. (It is recommended to contact the Indigenous Education Lead for the local school board to make arrangements).
- Host a [Treaties Recognition Week](#) event, or a Virtual Living Library Series.
- [Gallery Walk](#), displaying images of wampum belts. Engage students in discussion with the following question prompts: "What questions arise when you look at these wampum belts?" "What do you notice?"
- Engage students in [Think-Pair-Share Strategy](#) with the question prompts: "What did you learn about wampum belts?" "What makes the wampum belt an important piece of evidence when learning about treaties?" "How does this wampum belt represent interactions among Indigenous Peoples?"
- In a [Talking Circle](#), "What conclusions can you draw on about the significance of wampum belts to the Haudenosaunee?"

- Launch an inquiry: “What questions do you still have about the Haudenosaunee, their interactions with others, wampum belts, and treaty making?”
- Read aloud the picture book [*Hiawatha and the Peacemaker*](#) by Robbie Robertson.
- Connect past to present-day issues in Canada. [Caledonia 2006](#), [Caledonia 2021](#) and/or [Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign](#).
- Display maps of [Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada Map](#), [Haudenosaunee Territorial Land](#), [Map of Five Nations](#), [Map of Six Nations and Map of Haudenosaunee Reserves Past and Present](#) to build background knowledge of Haudenosaunee territory and to be used as provocations for discussion.
- Scaffold student learning by modeling a structured inquiry using the aforementioned maps, and the questions associated with one of the Concepts of Historical Thinking listed below.
- Engage students in discussion around present-day issues that connect to historical content. Focus upon critical thinking skills, [bias](#), reliability of sources, and make connections to how the past impacts the present.
- Facilitate a Guided Inquiry - Students conduct inquiry into their identified treaty using one of the [Concepts of Historical Thinking](#) listed below. Students could be given a choice of a historical thinking concept, or the class could focus upon one of these.

Historical Significance

What impact did these treaties have on the different groups, the Haudenosaunee, the settlers, and the Crown - in New France and British North America? How were the treaties interpreted differently for the Haudenosaunee, settlers and The Crown in New France and British North America?

Cause and Consequence

What were the key short-term and long-term consequences of the treaty for the different groups, the Haudenosaunee, settlers, and the Crown?

Continuity and Change

What do the historical maps tell you about what has changed and what has stayed the same for the Haudenosaunee? What were the direct and indirect consequences of treaty making? When comparing various maps of Haudenosaunee territory of the same time period, what is the same and what is different?

Historical Perspective

Why might these different groups have viewed the treaty making process differently?



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Zepeda, O. (1995). [The Continuum of Literacy in American Indian Communities](#)

Supplemental Resources

[What is Wampum?](#) (2014). Bradley Powless and Jonaca Thornton discuss the history of wampum, and some frequently asked questions about wampum and its uses.

[The Peacemaker and the Tadodaho](#) (2015) Oren Lyons shares the messages of the Peacemaker and the story of Tadodaho.

[The Creation Story](#) (2016). This video shares the story of creation from the Onondaga perspective. This video is part of a series released by the Onondaga Historical Association.

[Skä•noñh-First Contact](#) (2016) The Onondaga Historical Association share the Haudenosaunee perspective and experience on First Contact and Residential-Boarding Schools (American).

[Why We Have Come Forward Now](#) (2015), The Onondaga Historical Association discuss the importance of taking care of the land, and the impact on others.

[Raven's Quest](#) is a website that highlights Indigenous children and their stories from across Canada, including their everyday life, interests, and life in their community.

[The Sharing Circle](#) (2015) Suzie Miller highlights the Two Row Wampum being used in conjunction with the Talking Circle to build community in the classroom.

[Iroquois: Originators of Lacrosse](#) (2015). Lyle Thompson and community discuss the importance of lacrosse to the Haudenosaunee, sovereignty, and lacrosse on the world scale.

[Where the Willows Meet the Waters](#) (Lake Onondaga) (2015). The history and naming of places, impact of humans on the relatives in the water.

[Elder Jan Longboat Shares Teachings about food](#) (2013). Jan Longboat speaks about the Haudenosaunee relationship and teachings about food, language, medicines, and seeds.

Haudenosaunee Authors for the Classroom

[The School That Ate Children; Treaty Baby; We Give Our Thanks](#): (various titles) [Sara General](#)

[Akwatsirehkó:wa – My Big Family](#): Brendan Bomberly, Brennor Jacobs (Lacrosse)

Haudenosaunee Culture through Art & Design: Book 1, [Teachers Edition](#): Teyotsihstokwathe Dakota Brant

[Rock & Roll Highway: The Robbie Robertson Story](#): Sebastian Robertson

[Hiawatha and the Peacemaker](#): Robbie Robertson

[Colouring & Activity Book](#): Group of Six

Professional Development

[The Clay We Are Made Of](#) Susan M. Hill

[And Grandma Said... Iroquois Teachings as Passed Down Through the Oral Tradition](#) Tom Sakokwenionkwas Porter

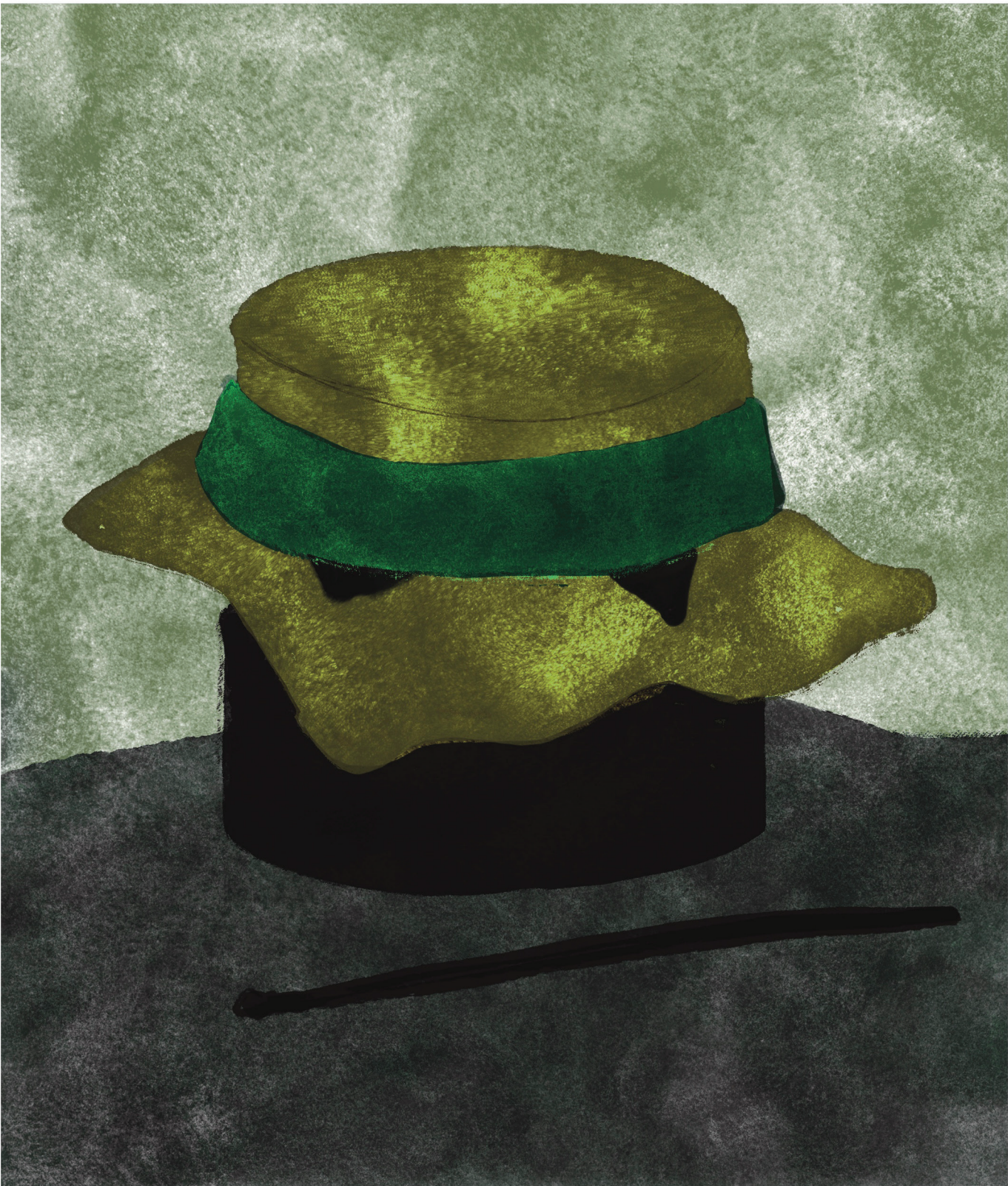
[The Great Law of Peace- Kayanerenko:wa](#) Paul Williams

[Pathways for Remembering and Recognizing Indigenous Thought in Education](#) Sandra D. Styres

[Basic Call to Consciousness](#): Akwesasne Notes

[Lunch and Learn Dish with One Spoon Wampum with Rick Hill Sr.](#) (2020)







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