

# The Iroquois Nations

## Level 1 ■

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**The Iroquois League of Nations**

In the 1500s, Iroquois Indians lived in a territory near New York's Lake Ontario. There were five tribes: Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, and Mohawk. They were at war with each other. The tribes fought violent battles for years until they found a way to be peaceful.

**Conflict and War**

According to the Five Iroquois Tribes, if one tribe fought another, they often fought over land. Each of the tribes had their own hunting and fishing grounds. After a battle, each tribe fought for revenge. The tribes also fought because they wanted to continue for many more years.

**History of Peace**

According to the Iroquois legend, a war chief named Deganawida (Dah-guh-wid-a) convinced the Iroquois tribes to become peaceful. He taught them to agree to fight together. All five tribes became members of the Iroquois Confederacy. The confederacy was formed in the 1500s. It is still in existence today.

**The League of Nations**

In 1609, the leaders of the five tribes would unite to prevent war. They had to agree to give up their right to fight. All five tribes agreed to all of the tribal chiefs' peace plan. Because they worked well, and all of the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy agreed to it, the Iroquois League of Nations was formed.

**Symbols of Peace**

The Iroquois Confederacy was still trying to work several years, so they decided to make a symbol to show the tribes that he was serious about peace. The Five of Peacocks is a symbol that shows the five feathers of the peacock. The Five of Peacocks is a symbol that shows the five feathers of the peacock. The Iroquois have many symbols of peace. One symbol is the symbol used to celebrate the creation of the Iroquois League.

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## Level 2 ■■

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Neighboring Tribes Find Peace**

In the 1500s, five Iroquois tribes of Indians live in a single region of modern-day New York. After many violent wars, they did not get along well. They fought violent battles for years until they found a way to be peaceful.

**Major Problems Between the Tribes**

All five of the Iroquois tribes had certain lands that they wanted to prevent them from fighting over. As the tribes grew, they began to fight the second. They fought because they wanted to protect their hunting and fishing grounds, and they fought for revenge. When one tribe didn't let a neighboring tribe hunt or fish in their grounds, the tribes would capture and kill members of the other tribes.

**An Agreement for Peace**

According to the Iroquois tale, an Onondaga leader named Hiawatha was dedicated to making peace between the tribes. He convinced the other tribes to take his side and to agree to live in peace. They came together in a group and signed a peace treaty. However, the Iroquois did not always keep their word. One year, a Seneca tribe member was captured by the Oneida. The Oneida tribe member was freed, and the Oneida tribe member got up. He thought of a plan to remove all the tribes from their lands. He thought that they could be happy if they were all together.

**The Peacocks Plan Works**

He told all of the tribes' chiefs that they would have equal power if they agreed to stop fighting over their lands. He had gathered the other tribes to his side. His speech showed that Hiawatha was a good leader. They agreed to his plan. Hiawatha's plan and effort paid off. The Iroquois Confederacy was born. The other Iroquois leaders joined the Great Council, a group of 49 leaders from all the tribes. They gathered to discuss problems and agree on solutions. Each child had one child to help problems to the other children. The council was formed to help solve problems. All of the tribes had an equal voice. Many years later, it is still problems. All of the tribes had an equal voice. Many years later, it is still problems.

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## Level 3 ■■■

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**America's First Democracy**

In the 1500s, five distinct groups of Indians live in Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, and Mohawk. After many violent wars, they did not get along well. They fought violent battles for years until they found a way to be peaceful.

**Villages Compete**

The Iroquois tribes had neighboring lands, so they often competed for hunting and gathering grounds. The fighting increased between the neighbors. This led to many battles between the tribes. The Iroquois went on many wars to capture and kill members of other tribes.

**A Tale of Peace**

An Iroquois chief of all on Onondaga ledged, Hiawatha. He was dedicated to making peace among the tribes. He thought of a plan to bring about peace. After sharing his plan, the other tribes agreed to put forth a lot of effort. They agreed to work together. The Iroquois League of Nations was formed.

**A Democratic Type of Government**

Hirosho's plan was a democratic type of government, one in which all of the tribes' children had equal power. He had gathered the other tribes to his side and to agree to live in peace. He formed a Great Council, a group of 49 leaders from all the tribes. They gathered to discuss problems and agree on solutions. Each child had one child to help problems to the other children. The council was formed to help solve problems. All of the tribes had an equal voice. Many years later, it is still problems. All of the tribes had an equal voice. Many years later, it is still problems.

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## Assemble the Unit

Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student:

- Visual Literacy page: The Iroquois Nations, 1600s, page 11
- Level 1, 2, or 3 Reading Selection and Reading Comprehension page and the corresponding Words to Know list
- Graphic Organizer of your choosing, provided on pages 180–186
- Writing Form: The Iroquois Nations, page 12

## Introduce the Topic

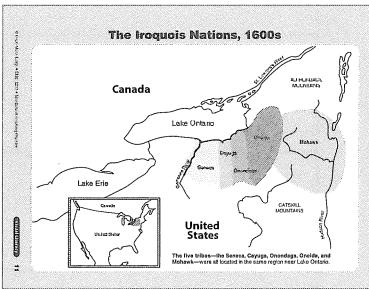
Read aloud and discuss The Iroquois Nations, 1600s map. Explain that the five Iroquois tribes lived in the same region near Lake Ontario in what is now New York State, and they fought for many years. Tell students that it is believed by some that the Iroquois League of Nations was formed between the years 1570 and 1600.

## Read and Respond

Form leveled groups and review the Words to Know lists with each group of students. Instruct each group to read their selection individually, in pairs, or as a group. Have students complete the Reading Comprehension page for their selection.

## Write About the Topic

Read aloud the leveled writing prompt for each group. Tell students to use the Graphic Organizer to plan their writing. Direct students to use their Writing Form to respond to their prompt.



Visual Literacy

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**The Iroquois Nations**

11 Critical Thinking

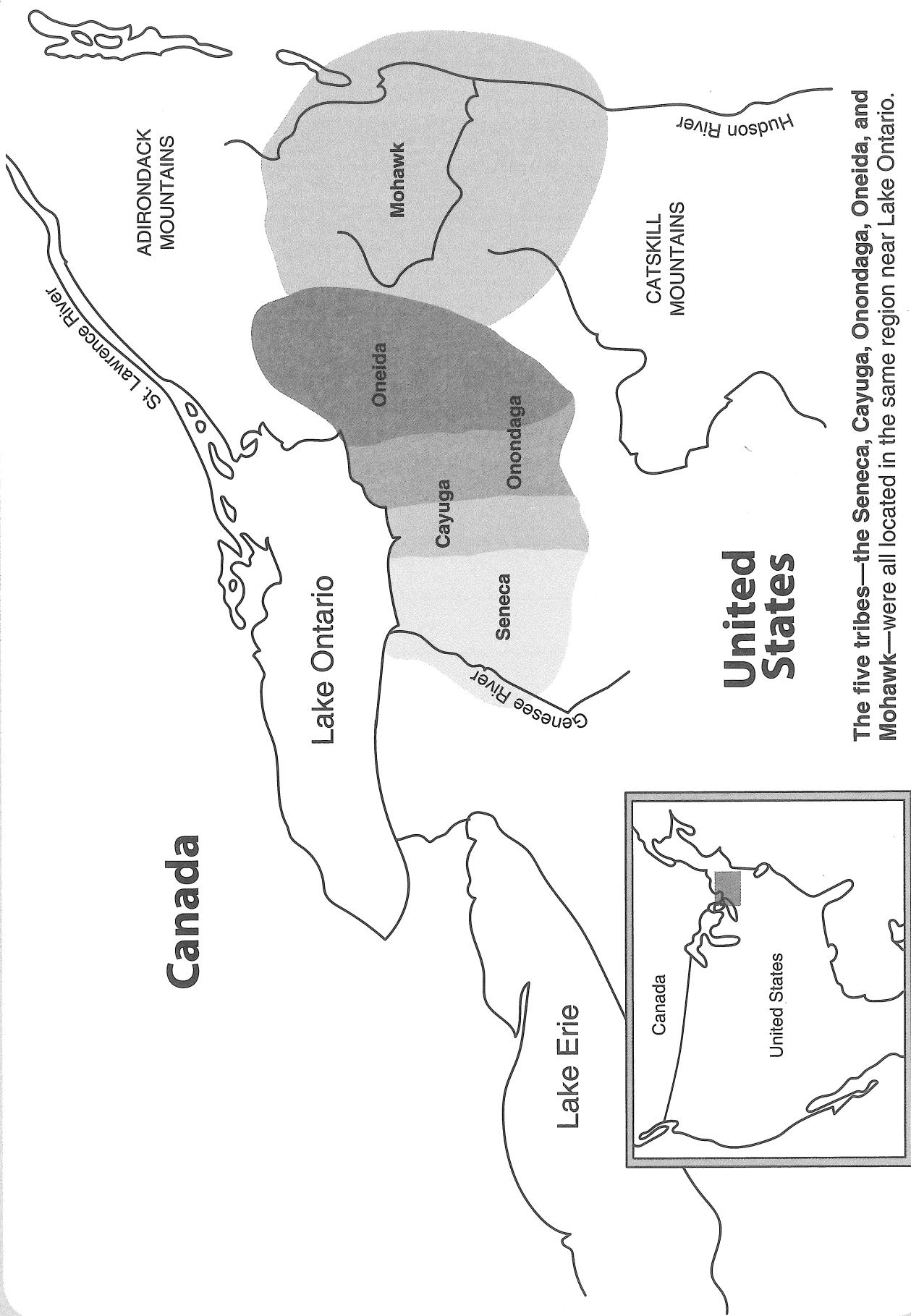
**The Iroquois Nations**

12 Critical Thinking

**The Iroquois Nations**

Writing Form

# The Iroquois Nations, 1600s



## The Iroquois Nations

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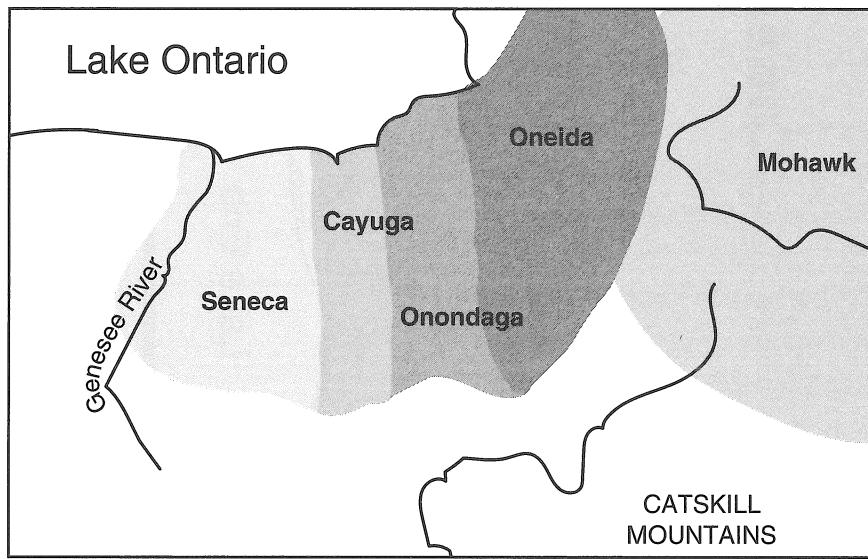
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**The Iroquois Nations, 1600s**

### **Words to Know**

#### **The Iroquois League of Nations**

Iroquois

league

Seneca

Cayuga

Onondaga

Oneida

Mohawk

revenge

establish

### **Words to Know**

#### **Neighboring Tribes Find Peace**

neighboring

Iroquois

Seneca

Cayuga

Onondaga

Oneida

Mohawk

revenge

clan

wronged

sincere

league

### **Words to Know**

#### **America's First Democracy**

democracy

distinct

Iroquois

Seneca

Cayuga

Onondaga

Oneida

Mohawk

league

council

nominated

constitution

Bill of Rights

**The Iroquois Nations ■**

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# The Iroquois League of Nations

In the 1500s, Iroquois Indians lived in modern-day New York near Lake Ontario. There were five different tribes of Iroquois. They were the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk. The tribes fought violent battles for years until they found a way to be peaceful.

## Conflict Between the Tribes

Because the five Iroquois tribes lived so close to each other, they often fought over land. Each of the tribes wanted more hunting and fishing grounds. After being attacked, some tribes fought for revenge. The violence and fighting continued for many years.

## Hiawatha: A Man of Peace

According to an Iroquois tale, a wise man named Dekanawidah (Duh-kah-nuh-wee-duh) wanted the Iroquois tribes to become united. Dekanawidah convinced the Onondaga chief, Hiawatha, to try to establish peace. The first thing Hiawatha did was give a message to the other tribe leaders. He invited them all to a group peace talk. One of the leaders did not want peace, but Hiawatha didn't give up. He thought of a plan to convince the other tribe leaders that peace was possible.

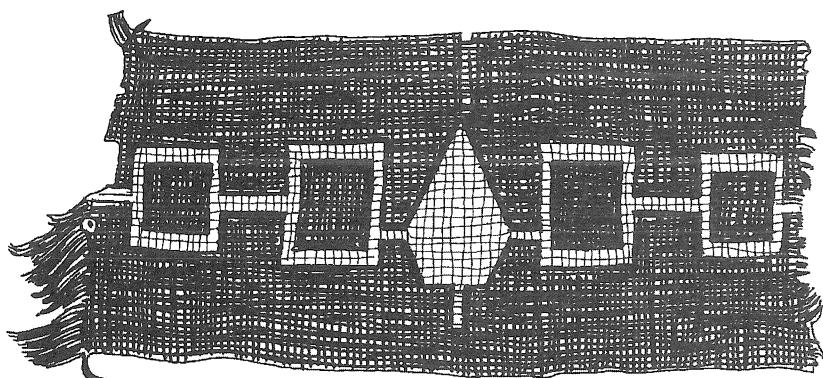
## The League of Nations

In Hiawatha's plan, all five of the tribes would unite to form one league. They would have to agree not to fight anymore. All of the tribes would have equal power, because Hiawatha promised leadership to all of the tribes' chiefs. Fortunately, Hiawatha's plan worked, and all of the tribes decided to join the Iroquois League. Years later, a sixth tribe joined the Iroquois League of Nations.

## Symbols of Peace

While Hiawatha was still trying to work toward peace, he wore necklaces that he'd made out of small white shells. He wore them as a sign of peace, and this may have helped him to convince the tribes that he was sincere about making peace. The Tree of Peace is another symbol in Iroquois culture. It is on the Hiawatha wampum belt. The belt is a record of the five tribes joining together.

The Iroquois have many symbols for peace that are used to celebrate the creation of the Iroquois League.



The Hiawatha wampum belt

# The Iroquois League of Nations

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then write the answers to numbers 3, 4, and 5.

1. In this text, “league” probably means a \_\_\_\_\_.  
 A peaceful individual  
 B unified group  
 C tribe  
 D geographical area
2. What is the relationship between the tribes’ geographical locations and the fighting?  
 A They experienced similar climates and weather.  
 B Being so far apart made them fear each other more.  
 C The tribes shared the same ancestors.  
 D Being so close made them compete for land.
3. Is there any justification for why one chief did not want peace? Explain your answer.  


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4. In your opinion, why did all the tribes eventually agree to be peaceful?  


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5. Explain how the Hiawatha wampum belt is related to peace.  


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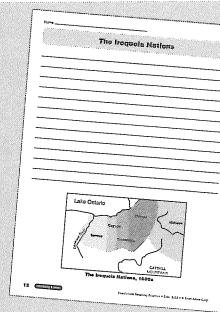


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## Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

How would you support the conclusion that without Hiawatha, the tribes would not have had peace? Use details from the text.

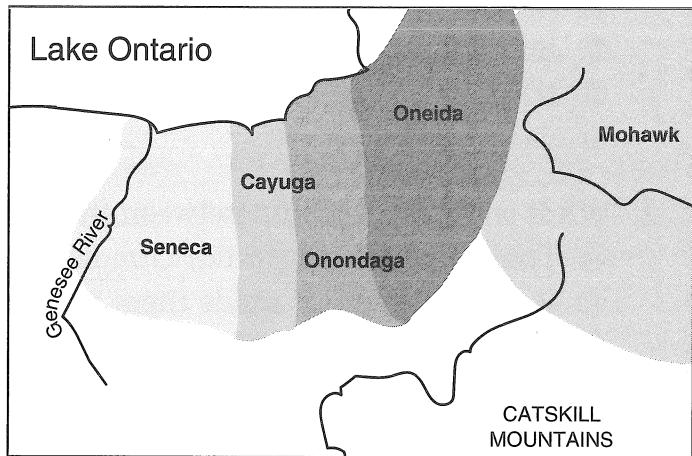


# Neighboring Tribes Find Peace

In the 1500s, five separate tribes of Iroquois Indians lived in a single region of modern-day New York. Although the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk had similarities, they did not get along well. They fought violent battles for years until they found a way to be peaceful.

## Major Problems Between the Iroquois Tribes

All five of the Iroquois tribes had similarities, but this did not prevent them from fighting with each other. As the tribe populations grew, the fighting increased. They fought because each tribe wanted more hunting and fishing grounds, and they fought for revenge. When one person in a clan was wronged, the whole clan felt wronged. Iroquois attackers would capture and kill people from other tribes. It was a sad time in Iroquois history.



The tribes of the Iroquois League were all located in the same region near Lake Ontario.

## An Effort to Make Peace

According to an Iroquois tale, an Onondaga leader named Hiawatha was dedicated to creating peace among the tribes. He contacted the other tribes to talk about peace. They came together as a group, and Hiawatha spoke out against the fighting. Most of the tribe leaders accepted the peace message. However, one man did not want peace. One by one Hiawatha's daughters died, and Hiawatha thought this was because the tribes were not at peace. But Hiawatha didn't give up. He thought of a plan to convince all the tribes that they could be happy living in peace.

## The Peace Plan That Worked

Hiawatha told all of the tribes' chiefs that they would have equal power if they agreed to stop fighting. As Hiawatha worked on making peace, he wore necklaces made of white shells. He had gathered the shells and made the necklaces himself. They were a symbol of peace and showed that Hiawatha was being sincere. In time, Hiawatha's plan and effort paid off. He convinced the other Iroquois leaders to make peace, and they formed the Iroquois League of Nations. They also formed a Great Council, a group of 49 leaders from all the tribes. The leaders would gather regularly and discuss solutions to problems. All of the leaders had an equal vote. Many years later, a sixth tribe joined the Iroquois League.

## Neighboring Tribes Find Peace

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then write the answers to numbers 3, 4, and 5.

1. The map shows that the five tribes \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (A) all had equal amounts of land  
 (B) were separated by Lake Ontario  
 (C) lived close to each other  
 (D) were basically one single tribe
  2. Which of these was the main cause of fighting between the Iroquois tribes?  
 (A) Each tribe wanted more hunting and fishing grounds.  
 (B) Each tribe wanted a larger population.  
 (C) Each tribe wanted more ground to build their homes.  
 (D) Each tribe's population decreased.
  3. Do you think the population growth justified the fighting among tribes? Explain.
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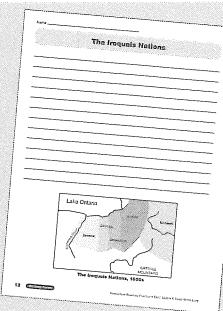
4. Would you have agreed to Hiawatha's plan if you were a wronged tribe leader? Explain.
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5. Why was it better that the Great Council had leaders from all the tribes instead of one?
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### Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Explain how Hiawatha's words and actions achieved peace for the Iroquois tribes. Use details from the text in your response.



# America's First Democracy

In the 1500s, five distinct tribes of Iroquois (the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk) lived in a single region of modern-day New York. Years of violence and conflict led the tribes to try to establish peace and form the Iroquois League of Nations.

## Violence and Conflict

The Iroquois tribes had neighboring lands, so they often competed for hunting and fishing grounds. This led to fighting, because all of the tribes wanted more land. As tribe populations grew, the fighting increased. Iroquois attackers would capture and kill members of other tribes. The violence went on for many years.

## A Tale of Peace

An Iroquois tale tells of an Onondaga leader, Hiawatha, who was dedicated to creating peace amongst the tribes. He thought of a brilliant plan to bring about peace. After sharing his plan with the other tribes and putting forth a lot of effort, Hiawatha was successful. The Iroquois League of Nations was formed.

## A Democratic Peace Plan

Hiawatha's plan promised a democratic type of government, one in which all of the tribes' chiefs had equal power. All of the tribe leaders still governed their own land and people. In addition, they formed a Great Council, a group of 49 chiefs who met to discuss problems and agree on solutions. Iroquois people could bring problems to the Great Council for discussion. Each chief had one vote in the council. Similar to how U.S. government officials are nominated by citizens today, the council's chiefs were chosen by the elder women of the tribes. The Iroquois League even created its own constitution.

## The Influence of Iroquois Democracy on the United States

History shows that the writers of the United States Constitution used some of the same ideas as the Iroquois League's government. State leaders did not always agree and struggled to form a government of the people and for the people. One section of the Iroquois Constitution is called "Rights of the People." It has some similarities to the Bill of Rights. The Iroquois League's constitution is often called America's first democracy.

