

Deepening Indigenous Youth Service Grants

2024-2025

Educator Resource Guide



Haudenosaunee in the American Revolution

The Haudenosaunee played a significant and complex role in the American Revolution, which had lasting consequences for their nations and the continent's future. As a powerful confederacy with strategic territory in the Northeast, the Haudenosaunee were deeply impacted by the conflict between Britain and the American colonies. While the Confederacy initially attempted to remain neutral, internal divisions led different nations to ally with opposing sides, most aligning with the British in hopes of protecting their lands from colonial expansion. This internal split disrupted the unity of the Six Nations. It led to devastating consequences, including violent raids, loss of life, and the destruction of villages, such as in the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign of 1779. The aftermath of the war brought significant land dispossession and betrayal of promises made in British treaties. Understanding the Haudenosaunee's role in the American Revolution is essential to grasping the broader impacts of the war on Indigenous nations and recognizing their agency, resilience, and enduring struggle for sovereignty in the face of colonial conflict.

Key Resources

- **The Kids Should See This** (2025)
The Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Birth of American Democracy
[Watch/read online](#)
- **National Endowment for the Humanities** (2009)
Native Americans and the American Revolution: Choosing Sides
[Download the lesson plan](#)
- **BrainPop Educators** (2025)
Haudenosaunee Confederacy Discussion Prompts and Pause Points
[View the resource](#)
- **Taylor, A.** (2015)
National Humanities Center
America and the Six Nations: Native Americans after the Revolution
[Read online](#)
- **Ohio History Connection** (2025)
Teaching a Diverse American Revolution
[Access Resources](#)
 - America and the Six Nations: Native Americans after the Revolution:
<https://americainclass.org/america-and-the-six-nations/>
 - Native Americans and the American Revolution: Choosing Sides:
<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/native-americans-role-american-revolution-choosing-sides>

- Settler Colonialism and the Revolution: The American Revolution:
<https://wams.nyhistory.org/settler-colonialism-and-revolution/the-american-revolution/>
- **McCutchen, S.**
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Breaking the Great League of Peace and Power: The Six Iroquois Nations During and After the American Revolution
[Download the lesson plan](#)
- **ConSource: The Constitutional Sources Project**
Revolutionary War Unit
Iroquois Council: Choosing Sides
[Download the lesson plan](#)
- **The University of Oklahoma**
Exploring U.S. History
The Haudenosaunee in the American Revolution, 1775-1794
[View the resource](#)
- **Ingram, J. (2019)**
University of Massachusetts
2019 Teaching Native American Histories Curricular Project
The Debate on the Iroquois' Influence on the U.S. Constitution
[Download the resource](#)
- **Ramsden, P.G. (2006)**
The Canadian Encyclopedia
Haudenosaunee (Iroquois)
[Read online](#)
- **Makos, I. (2021)**
American Battlefield Trust
Roles of Native Americans during the Revolution
[Read online](#)

The Great Law and the Role of the Haudenosaunee: Influences on American Democracy

The resources below explore the *Great Law of Peace* and the influential role of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in shaping American democracy. They highlight key principles such as participatory governance, checks and balances, and the importance of consensus—core ideas that inspired elements of the U.S. Constitution. By examining historical accounts, primary sources, and scholarly interpretations, these materials provide a deeper understanding of how Haudenosaunee political structures and philosophies contributed to the foundations of American democratic ideals.

Key Resources

- **Belford, J., & Russell, J.**
The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Great Law of Peace: A Precursor to the United States Constitution
[Read the article](#)
- **Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian** (2009)
Haudenosaunee Guide for Educators
[Download the guide](#)
- **Reynolds, N.** (2009)
Native Sovereignty: The Iroquois Great Law and the Creation of the U.S. Constitution
Weekly Historical Notes, 1(21)
[View the resource](#)
- **Hansen, T.** (2018, December 13)
How the Iroquois Great Law of Peace Shaped US Democracy
Mountain Lake PBS
[Watch/read online](#)
- **George Washington Teacher Institute** (2025)
U.S. Policy with Indian Nations: Lesson Plan
[Access the lesson plan](#)

Treaties Between Europeans and Haudenosaunee

The resources listed—such as the Two Row Wampum and Covenant Chain agreements, archival materials from the New York State Archives, collections from the Smithsonian Institution and the American Philosophical Society, and oral histories maintained by Haudenosaunee nations like the Onondaga Nation—are essential tools for instructing students about the treaties between Europeans and the Haudenosaunee. These resources provide historical context and Indigenous perspectives, allowing learners to engage with treaty relationships as living agreements rather than distant historical events. Scholarly works by Indigenous experts such as Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, Rick Hill, and David Shannon further support instruction by framing treaties within the broader themes of sovereignty, diplomacy, and resistance. Understanding these treaties is important because they represent early nations-to-nation diplomacy based on mutual respect and coexistence. They also highlight the enduring legal and moral responsibilities that still influence contemporary discussions about Indigenous rights and governance in North America.

Key Resources

- **Justice Education Society** (2025)
BC Social Studies Lesson Plans, Grade 9
[Access the lesson resources](#)
- **Jemison, P.G.**
Two-Row Wampum
[Access the lesson plan](#)
- **Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian** (2025)
Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Lands and the American Revolution
[Download the teacher materials](#)
- **Facing History & Ourselves** (2022)
Facing Canada: A Facing History Community Blog
[Access the blog](#)
- **Assembly of First Nations** (2021)
Treaties and Why They Are Important
[Access the module](#)

The Role of Haudenosaunee Women in Informing the Women's Suffrage Movement in the United States

The role of Haudenosaunee women in informing the women's suffrage movement in the United States is a powerful yet often overlooked chapter in American history. Before Euro-American women gained the right to vote, Haudenosaunee women held significant political authority within their matrilineal society, including choosing and deposing chiefs, managing land, and guiding community decisions. Early suffragists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joselyn Gage were deeply influenced by their observations of Haudenosaunee governance and gender roles, particularly during their visits to the Iroquois Confederacy in the 19th century. These women cited Haudenosaunee society as a living example of gender equality and democratic participation, which helped shape the foundational ideals of the suffrage movement. Recognizing the impact of Indigenous models of leadership challenges mainstream historical narratives and honors the enduring contributions of Haudenosaunee women to social justice and women's rights.

Key Resources

- **League of Women Voters** (2021)
How Native American Women Inspired the Women's Suffrage Movement
[Access the blog](#)
- **Wagner, S. R.** (2020)
National Parks Service
How Native American Women Inspired the Women's Rights Movement
[Access the article](#)
- **Buffalo Toronto Public Media** (2021)
Haudenosaunee, Women and Governance
[Access the video](#)