



## LESSON PLAN

### HAUDENOSAUNEE CONFEDERACY SECONDARY

#### AIM

Why are so few Americans aware of the influence of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy on the formation of the US Constitution?

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS/OBJECTIVES

What are various reasons why the Haudenosaunee Confederacy hasn't been taught more in US history classes? How have Nationalism and the Eurocentrism that come from this impacted this? Does benefiting from something economically often lead people to rationalize?

#### KEY VOCABULARY

Savage—Fierce, violent, uncivilized

Eurocentrism—view of histories and cultures from the perspective of Western Europeans and their descendents, emphasizing their superiority.

Historical Erasure—omitting certain people or groups from historical studies, often implicitly due to collective indifference.

Nationalism—belief that one's nation's interests are most important and loyalty to it above any other entity is essential.

Justification—act of explaining the logical, rational reason why you made a decision or took an action

Rationalization—taking a decision or an action of dubious ethics and making it seem less bad so you feel better about it

#### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AT END

#### ACTIVITY

Note: This can be done as an entire class discussion, in groups with a share out after, or in pairs or individually with a discussion afterwards.

Start by watching the Native Ed video on the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

1. Go over quote from Benjamin Franklin (can note that he was actually friendlier towards Native Americans than most colonists!) **“It would be a very strange Thing, if six Nations of ignorant Savages should be capable of forming a Scheme for such an**



**Union, and be able to execute it in such a Manner, as that it has subsisted Ages, and appears indissoluble; and yet that a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a Dozen English Colonies, to whom it is more necessary, and must be more advantageous.”**

2. Why would he refer to people who developed and practiced a governmental system he wanted to copy as “ignorant savages” when this suggests they were uncivilized?
3. Go over the concepts of Eurocentrism and Nationalism.
  - a. How could these lead people to be dismissive of indigenous people?
  - b. What sorts of things would lead the European immigrants to consider themselves superior to the indigenous people?
    - i. [Possible answers: More military power, religion, written language and books, more advanced technology]
  - c. Was there an economic benefit to the European immigrants perceiving themselves as superior to the uncivilized savages?
    - i. Combined with the idea that this was “God’s will,” it allowed them to rationalize the taking of their land.
      1. Was this reasonable?
      2. Go over the difference between Justifying and Rationalizing
      3. Is it easier for people to rationalize actions that benefit them personally?

#### EXIT TICKET

Ask students to write about a time when they rationalized something, explaining how doing so benefited them personally. [Alternatively, if time permits, this could be done during class, either written, in pairs, groups or full class. Or it could be a homework assignment]

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

### 1. History/Social Studies

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2**



- **Key Ideas and Details: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary.**
- **Application: Students will analyze Benjamin Franklin's quote in the context of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's influence on the U.S. Constitution, identifying the central ideas about indigenous governance and the perceived contradictions in Franklin's statement.**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3**
  - **Key Ideas and Details: Analyze a series of events or ideas and determine their significance to the development of the central ideas of the text.**
  - **Application: Students will examine the historical context and the events surrounding the formation of the U.S. Constitution, discussing why the influence of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy has been minimized or erased in U.S. history.**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9**
  - **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Synthesize information from a range of sources to draw conclusions about a historical issue or event.**



- **Application:** Students will synthesize information from the Native Ed video, the Benjamin Franklin quote, and class discussions to draw conclusions about how nationalism and Eurocentrism have shaped the historical narrative of U.S. history.

## **2. Civics/Government**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7**

- **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- **Application:** Students will integrate the visual information from the Native Ed video with other texts and historical materials to understand the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's impact on U.S. governance and constitutional design.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6**

- **Craft and Structure:** Evaluate authors' differing perspectives on the same historical event or issue.
- **Application:** Students will evaluate the perspectives presented by Franklin in his quote, contrasting it with the indigenous understanding of governance and



**community as practiced by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.**

### **3. Cultural Understanding**

- **Standard 5: Culture**
  - **How culture is expressed through governance systems and historical narratives.**
  - **Application: This lesson provides students with an understanding of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's governance system and explores how Eurocentric narratives have historically minimized or erased the contributions of indigenous cultures to the development of American democracy.**

### **Common Core Literacy Standards for Speaking and Listening**

#### **1. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1**

- **Speaking and Listening: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.**
- **Application: In class discussions, students will engage with peers to explore ideas about the influence of the**



**Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the impact of nationalism, and the rationalization of colonialism, sharing their insights and responding to others' viewpoints.**

## **2. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4**

- **Speaking and Listening: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically.**
- **Application: Students will present their thoughts on the historical erasure of indigenous influence on the U.S. Constitution, backing up their arguments with evidence from historical documents, quotes, and video content.**

### **Writing Standards**

## **1. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1**

- **Text Types and Purposes: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.**
- **Application: In the exit ticket, students will write an argument reflecting on a time they rationalized something, supporting their ideas with personal reasoning about how the action benefited them.**

## **2. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9**



- **Research to Build and Present Knowledge:** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- **Application:** Students will use the Native Ed video and primary source materials (like Franklin's quote) to support their reflections on why the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's influence is often omitted from U.S. history and how this impacts our understanding of the formation of the U.S. government.

#### **Additional Standards**

- **Standard 3: Civics**
  - **Understanding** how government structures, values, and actions are shaped by both historical influences and contemporary perspectives.
  - **Application:** This lesson touches on the deep historical and cultural foundations that shaped the U.S. Constitution, including how Eurocentric values have obscured the contributions of indigenous governance systems.