

Name _____

Date _____

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Hiawatha and the Peacemaker

According to legend, the 12th century BCE was a time of war and tension between the Haudenosaunee Nations. During this time, a man named the Peacemaker set out to spread a message of unity throughout the region. On his journey he met Hiawatha, an Onondaga leader. Hiawatha wanted to unite the Haudenosaunee people, too, but another Onondaga leader named Tadadaho was against it. Tadadaho was considered so evil that people believed his hair was made of snakes. Still, Hiawatha joined the Peacemaker on his journey.

Upon arrival to each nation, the Peacemaker demonstrated the power of unity. He would break a single arrow in half to show how easily it could be broken alone. He would then tie five arrows together to show how difficult a united group is to break. He compared each arrow to a Haudenosaunee nation and eventually convinced the Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, Mohawk, and Oneida Nations to accept his message of peace. With a confederacy nearly established, the Peacemaker and Hiawatha had one person left to convince: Tadadaho. He resisted at first but agreed to join after they promised Onondaga would be the capital of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. It's said that Hiawatha then combed the snakes from Tadadaho's head.

Based on the passage, what inference can you make about Tadadaho?

- A. Hiawatha and the Peacemaker didn't want Tadadaho to be part of the confederacy.
- B. Tadadaho was born with actual snakes in his hair.
- C. Tadadaho was both feared and respected by the Haudenosaunee people.
- D. Tadadaho became the third most important recruiter for the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.



C. Tadadaho was both feared and respected by the Haudenosaunee people.

Details like "Tadadaho was considered so evil that people believed his hair was made of snakes" and the fact that the Peacemaker and Hiawatha still sought his approval shows that Tadadaho was both feared and respected.

2. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy was formed and governed under the Great Law of Peace. This law calls for respect of people's basic rights. The Peacemaker asked each nation to select leaders to represent them on the Great Council of 50 Sachems. These 50 leaders made decisions for the people of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy based on the principles of the Great Law of Peace. They made decisions about declaring war, signing treaties, and organizing the confederacy. In order for a law to pass or a decision to be considered final, all 50 council members had to approve of the decision.

Based on the passage, what inference can you make about the Great Council of 50 Sachems?

- ✓ A. Cooperation is an important part of the council's decision making process.
Details like "In order for a law to pass or a decision to be considered final, all 50 council members had to approve of the decision" show that sachems need to cooperate with each other fully in order to make decisions.
- B. In recent years, there have been more than 50 sachems on the council.
- C. They are the only people who truly understand the Great Law of Peace.
- D. The Great Council of 50 Sachems often make changes to the Great Law of Peace.

3. In 1744, the Great Council of 50 Sachems met with a group of English colonists. At the meeting, Canassatego, a Haudenosaunee leader, suggested the colonists form a union. He explained how their own confederacy has "made us formidable. This has given us great weight and authority with our neighboring Nations." When Benjamin Franklin received a transcript of the meeting, he published it right away. Over the next few decades, Franklin referenced the Haudenosaunee Confederacy multiple times. He was impressed by their structure of government and thought it would work well for the colonies. In his 1754 Albany Plan of Union, he outlined a similar system. Each colony would handle their own affairs, while a council of representatives from each colony would make decisions for the union as a whole. While the Albany Plan was not adopted, the concept of federalism stuck. Many historians believe this vision of centralized government greatly influenced parts of the US Constitution.

Based on the passage, what inference can you make about Benjamin Franklin?

- A. Franklin translated the Great Law of Peace himself to learn about federalism.
- B. Franklin wrote most of the US Constitution.
- ✓ C. When Franklin believed in an idea, he promoted it heavily.
Details like "He published it right away" and "Over the next few decades, Franklin referenced the Haudenosaunee Confederacy multiple times" suggest that Franklin advocated for ideas he believed in.
- D. By the time Franklin shared his Albany Plan, the Constitution had been written.