Chapter 4 – The Iroquois Confederacy

Haudenosaunee – People of the six nations – called the Iroquois now. A matrilineal society, where men and children belonged to the wife’s or mother’s clan, giving women social authority and influence.

United Nations – an organization that works for world peace. Most countries, including Canada belong to the U.N.

Confederacy – a partnership that is agreed on by nations or groups of people.

Clan – a large group of families who are related to one another. Each clan is associated with a different animal. 1e) Bear, wolf, turtle
Clan system helped to prevent any one nation from attempting to take over the Confederacy because the people in the clans were related to each other.

Longhouses – centre of Iroquois society. Their nation was divided into 9 clans, which Were led by clan mothers.

Role of Women – respected, when married, her husband came to live in her family’s Longhouse. Women raised crops like; corn beans and squash – the Main food supply of the Iroquois. These crops were known as the Three Sisters.

Clan Mothers – Leaders of the clan. Title of Clan Mother was usually passed on to female relative. Responsible for selecting chief for their clan and could remove a chief who was not doing their job properly. 1e) not attending meetings committed a serious crime, disobeyed the Great Law. Also ensured that all decisions agreed with the Great Law of Peace

Chiefs - were selected according to things like; honesty, kindheartedness, good thinkers, Loyalty, knowledge of traditions, uphold the Great Law, fair, took criticism
- Chiefs were not considered to be ‘better’ than anyone else
- There duty was to serve as teachers/spiritual guides, to remind people that the creator wanted them to live together in peace
- Responsibility to run the affairs of the clan, the nation and the Confederacy; they upheld the rule of law in their society
- War chiefs -selected by each nation to sit on the Grand Council (in war, gathered warriors to fight)
- Pine tree chiefs – selected to join the Grand Council by their chiefs; they showed special abilities or had an interest in public affairs

Iroquois Men – chiefs of the Grand Council
- organized hunting and fishing to provide for their village.
- Organized team sports ie) lacrosse – leadership was important
- Wars fought exclusively by men – no fighting among own ‘Iroquois’

Wampum – strings or belts made up of white and purple bead that were cut from from certain kinds of shells. Each belt had a different message. The belt suggested the seriousness and sincerity of the message. The wampum belt was used to keep track of the history and events and remember important
messages of the Iroquois Confederacy

**Great Law of Peace** – constitution of the Iroquois. It describes principles of good living and how the confederacy should be run. In order for them to remember, they used the wampum belts.

**Political maps** – tell about location of countries or cities
**Historical maps** – tell what an area was like in the past
**Physical maps** – provide information about features ie) mountains, rivers, land elevation

**Grand Council** – made of 50 chiefs, who represented the nations of the confederacy. Although different nations had a different number of chiefs- they all had equal power-same level of authority
One important responsibility of the Grand Council when making decisions was that they always had to consider how the decisions they made would affect the seventh generation (more than 200yrs into the future). This made chiefs act cautiously to protect the welfare of their descendants.

Decision making in the Grand Council (Each nation had a role):
- Onondaga – responsible for opening the Grand Council – announced subject to be discussed
- Speaker chosen from among the Mohawk, Onondaga or Seneca Nations to conduct the meeting (position held for one day)
- During Grand Council Meetings – a chief’s two faithkeepers and his clan mother sat behind him to advise him

**Generations** – successive descendants in a family.
- ie) grandparents, parents, children = 3 generations

**Tree of Peace** – symbol of the Iroquois – roots spread out in all 4 directions – so all other nations could find path to the Great Law. An **eagle** sits at the top to spot any approaching danger.

**Under the Great Law:**
- Although nations had different # of chiefs – there was **equality among them**
- **Authority was shared between men and women**
- **Clan system** – ensured that not one nation would ever be able to take over the Confederacy. Loyalty was maintained.
- **Everyone, men, women, children and Elders had a say in decision making process**

**Consensus** – when a decision is made by **consensus**, all the people affected by the decision have an equal voice. There is discussion and final agreement represents a process that everyone agrees to. Requires open-mindedness.

**Minority Rights** – taking the rights of minorities into consideration in decision making is an important way of keeping a society fair.

**Hiawatha**—created the first wampum and introduced wampum to his people, travelled with the Peacemaker

**Collective Identity**—an identity shared amongst a group of people, based on culture, laws and beliefs