

TOM PORTER
AKWESASNE MOHAWK BEAR CLAN SPIRITUAL ELDER

Tom Porter's Mohawk name is Sakokwenionkwas, meaning "the one who wins." He is a recognized figure in Indian Country and is greatly loved by many. He co-founded the White Roots of Peace, a traveling multi-media communications group designed to revitalize Native traditions in North America. He has been the founder, spokesperson, and spiritual leader of the Mohawk Community of Kanatsiohareke (pronounced gah-nah-joe-hah-lay-geh) located in the Mohawk Valley near Fonda, New York since 1993. In this video (which is recommended for grades 6 to 12), he offers thoughts for the young people of today.

Definitions of terms introduced in the film:

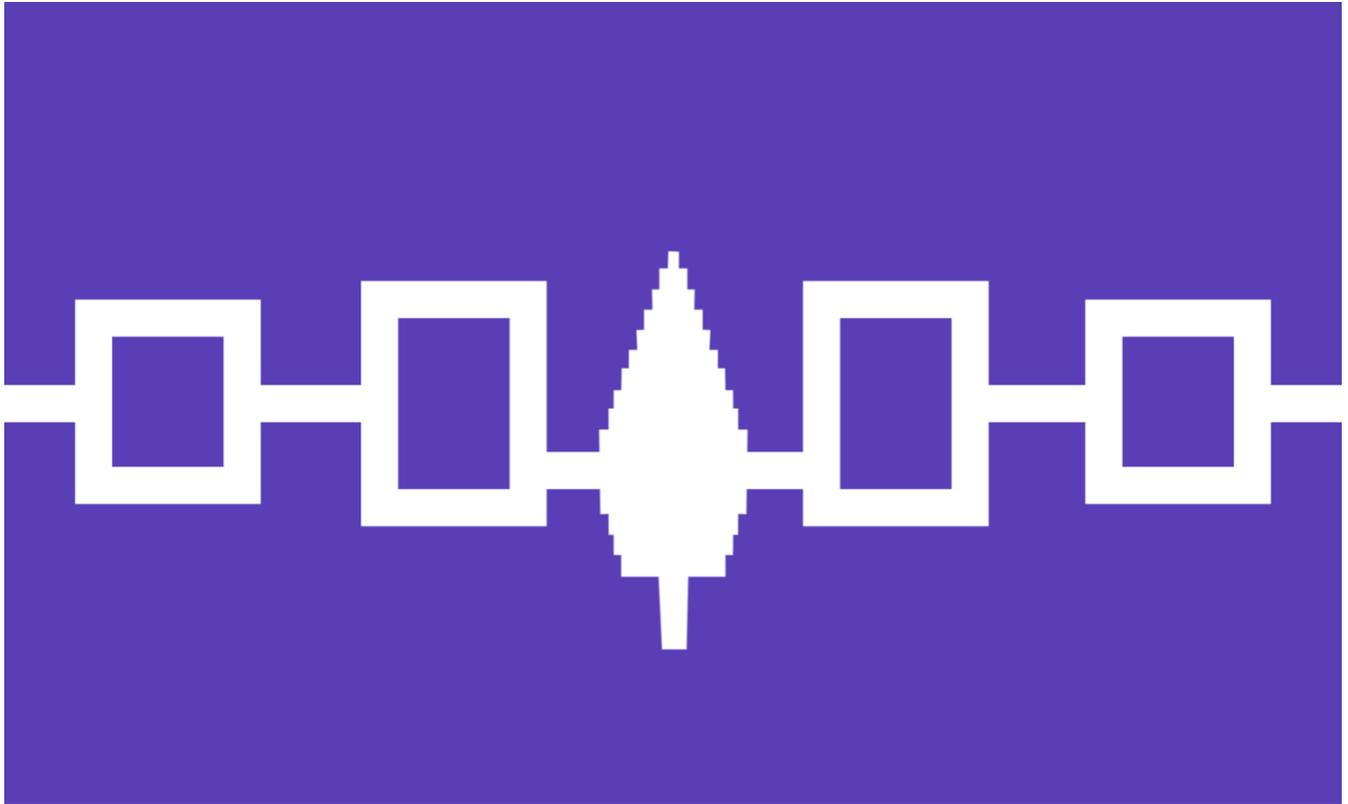
- **CLAN** is a kinship grouping. People's clans go very far back in time.
- **CONSTITUTION OF THE IROQUOIS NATION** includes a mindset to consider the health of the next seven generations when making decisions. The framers of the United States Constitution were inspired by the Iroquois Constitution. The women's suffrage movement was also inspired by it and by the leadership roles women occupy in Native communities.
- **HAUDENOSAUNEE** (pronounced hoe-de-no-SHOW-nee) are also known as Iroquois. They are the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca Peoples. Haudenosaunee means "People of the longhouse."
- **MOHAWK** are one of the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy--the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Seneca. They were later joined by the Tuscarora and are sometimes referred to as the Six Nations. There are 30,000 Mohawk People in Canada and New York.

Suggested questions for students:

- Where is the Mohawk traditional homeland? Where are the Mohawk people now?
- What if the makers of lead paint or aerosol spray cans that damaged the ozone layer--or the fossil fuel industry leaders who knew about climate change--had Tom's kind of forward thinking?
- Tom speaks of the importance of water and how important it is to our health. What percentage of your body is water?

Highly recommended, brief, easily accessible resources:

- [Haudenosaunee Confederacy](#)
- [Thanksgiving Address](#) is an expression of gratitude for all creation. It acknowledges and gives thanks for the people, earth, waters, plants, animals, birds, bushes, trees, winds, sun, moon, and stars, as well as for unseen spiritual forces. It is spoken at the opening and closing of ceremonies.
- [Dr. Masaru Emoto and Water Consciousness](#) to learn about water's sensitivity to thoughts and emotions.



IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY FLAG



Source of map: Native Languages of the Americas: Preserving and promoting American Indian languages