

Key Decisions in U.S. History

A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Volume 1

1450–1860

Reproducible Teacher Book

Patrick Henry Smith and John Croes

WALCH  **PUBLISHING**®

Dedication

Para Hilda y Arantza—mis mejores decisiones. —*P.H.S.*

To all the students who stayed awake deciding history
and the teachers who strive to bring it alive. —*J.C.*

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1450

Iroquois

Should we form a confederation?

It is 1450. You are an Onondaga. Your tribe, part of the Onondaga nation, is holding a meeting. A chief of a Mohawk tribe, Hiawatha, has come to your village and asked for this meeting. The Onondaga and Mohawk nations speak a common language, and your cultures are similar. But you have been fighting each other for many years.

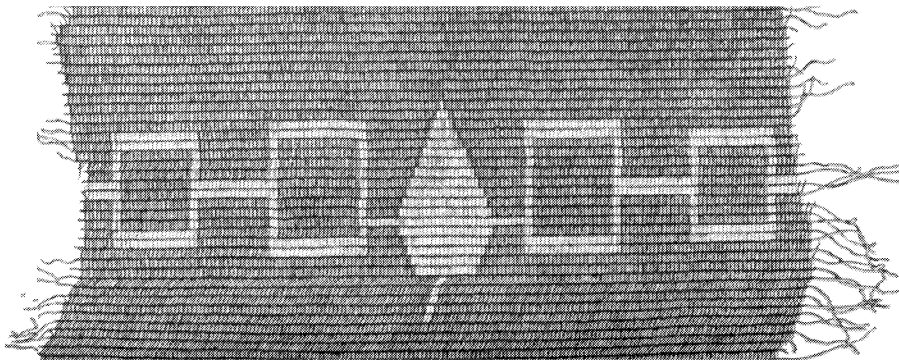
Hiawatha has spoken. He said that the great prophet Dekandawida has seen a vision. In the vision, Dekandawida saw that the five nations of the Iroquois—the Oneida, the Mohawk, the Cayuga, the Seneca, and the Onondaga—will stop fighting each other. The five nations will form a union to work together against our common enemies. The union will help solve problems and disagreements among the Iroquois people. Hiawatha said that the fighting makes the Iroquois weak. He asked us to come to a great meeting of all the Iroquois to talk about a union. He has already spoken to many other tribes, and they will come to the meeting.

A member of the Onondaga has answered Hiawatha. He said that there is fighting among the tribes because of injustices. When the Cayuga kill and steal from the Onondaga, the Onondaga must get revenge. Many Onondaga agree with him.

An Onondaga woman disagreed. She said that the revenge just leads to more fighting, killing, and stealing. It never stops. Many Onondaga agree with her.

Another Onondaga asked how this kind of union would work. Would there be a leader? Who would be the leader? Would bigger and more powerful nations have more power in the union? What rules would the union have? What if a tribe does not agree with the rest of the union? Could the union tell a tribe what to do? What if a Cayuga kills my son? Will the union punish him? Everyone thinks these are important questions.

Hiawatha answered that he does not know all the answers. But if the five tribes meet together, we can discuss the rules.



Iroquois wampum belt





Iroquois: Should we form a confederation? *(continued)*

Comprehension

1. Why does Hiawatha want the Iroquois to form a union?
2. How many nations would be in the union?
3. How did Hiawatha get the idea to form a union?
4. Why are some Iroquois against joining a union?
5. Who will make the rules of the union?
6. If the statement is in favor of the union, write *pro*. If the statement is against the union, write *con*:
 - (a) "They killed my uncle. We want revenge."
 - (b) "When we fight each other, we become weak."
 - (c) "Talking is a better way to solve our problems than fighting."
 - (d) "We don't trust the Oneida Tribe."
7. What decision do you have to make?

Decision

- *Should we send people to the meeting to talk about forming a confederation? What should we tell them to say? Choose one of the following options:*
 - (a) Do not send anyone to the meeting of the five nations. It could be a trick. One of the tribes might try to capture some of us.
 - (b) Send some people to the meeting. A union will make us stronger. We will be able to stop the fighting that weakens us now. Agree to join the union.
 - (c) Send some people to the meeting. They can agree to the union only if its power is limited. The union cannot interfere in tribal problems. The union cannot force a tribe to do something it doesn't want to do.
 - (d) Send some people to the meeting. Do not agree to the union. The union is a good idea, but it could never work.
 - (e) Other: _____
- *Why did you decide that way? Plan how you will explain your decision to your classmates. Write out your reasoning completely.*



1492

Colón

How can you make sure that Spain gets the riches from this new place?

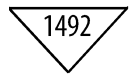
It is 1492. You are Cristóbal Colón. You have just landed on an island after sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean. You are almost exactly where you thought you would be—in the Indies, not far from Cipango and the Spice Islands. What a wonderful success! You told your sponsors, the King and Queen of Spain, that you could find a short sea route to

Asia by crossing the Atlantic, and now you have proved it. So far you have seen only islands. You have not seen the mainland yet, but it must be nearby.

Some very friendly people from the islands greeted your ships this morning. It is difficult to communicate with them because their language is so different.



Cristóbal Colón



Colón: How can you make sure that Spain gets the riches from this new place? *(continued)*

Comprehension

1. Who are you in this story?
2. Where do you think you are?
3. Why do you think you are there?
4. Do the people on the island speak Spanish?
5. What do you think these people call themselves?

Decision

What will you call these people when you write to the Queen?

- (a) Cipangoese.
- (b) natives.
- (c) Indiesans.
- (d) Islanders.
- (e) Asians.
- (f) Other: _____

- *Why did you decide that way? Plan how you will explain your decision to your classmates. Write out your reasoning completely.*

Now what should you do about the land you have discovered? These people do not seem to have a government like yours in Europe. They do not seem to own the land or to use it the way Europeans do. You do not see any cities—only villages with buildings made of grasses, leaves, and branches. There are no churches here, so they must not have the benefits of your religion. This is a very undeveloped place compared with Europe, and these people are very simple. You have books, ships, wheels and iron tools, and weapons. These people do not have these things.

But this must be near Cipango and China, which are very advanced. You have a letter to the Great Khan of China from the King and Queen of Spain. The great explorer Marco Polo visited near here 200 years ago and saw great wealth.

It is important to let the world know that the King and Queen of Spain sponsored the voyage that found this place. Spain must get whatever riches you find here.



Colón: How can you make sure that Spain gets the riches from this new place? *(continued)*

Comprehension

6. For each of the following statements, write *F* for fact or *O* for opinion. Remember that facts are things that can be checked and agreed to by everyone. Opinions are a person's own ideas.
- (a) These people do not seem to have a government like ours.
 - (b) The buildings are made of grasses, leaves, and branches.
 - (c) There are no churches.
 - (d) They must not have religion.
 - (e) There are no wheels or iron tools here.
 - (f) These people are simple and undeveloped.
 - (g) Europe is more advanced.
 - (h) These people are friendly.
 - (i) Marco Polo visited China 200 years ago.
 - (j) Spain has the right to have all the riches that we find.

Decision

- *How can you make sure that Spain controls this place? Choose one or more of the following options:*
 - (a) Attack these people and control the islands with our soldiers.
 - (b) Buy the islands from these people.
 - (c) Claim the islands and the people by saying that the King and Queen of Spain now control them.
 - (d) Ask the people to take you to the Khan, and try to make a trade agreement with him.
 - (e) Give Spanish names to all the places you discover. Put these names on your maps to take back to Europe.
 - (f) Ask them to become Christians, loyal to Spain.
 - (g) Other: _____
- *Why did you decide that way? Plan how you will explain your decision to your classmates. Write out your reasoning completely.*



1519

Moctezuma

How should we treat these strange white creatures?

It is 1519. You are Moctezuma, Emperor of the Aztecs. Your city, Tenochtitlán, is the largest and richest in Mexico. Your armies are so powerful that other cities send you gold, silver, and food as taxes. The Aztecs are the most powerful people in the world and you are the most powerful king.

This is a special time for the Aztecs. When our god, Quetzalcoatl, left Tenochtitlán many years ago, he promised to return someday. According to our history, this is the year Quetzalcoatl will return to us.

Our spies have just brought news of something strange. Some white creatures with beards and metal clothes have entered our

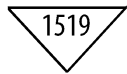
country. They traveled in large boats and now they are on the coast. They have the faces of men, but they have four legs, two heads, and a tail. The spies say the strangers have long sticks that throw fire. The strangers know about Tenochtitlán. They want to come and see it.

Who are these strange creatures? Why are they in our country? Quetzalcoatl had a beard and white skin! The priests say that he has finally returned to Mexico. Maybe these strangers are gods! Why do they want to see Tenochtitlán? Will they want peace or war? How should we treat these strange white creatures?



Aztec calendar



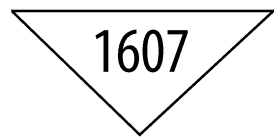


Moctezuma: How should we treat these strange white creatures? *(continued)*

1. Who are you in this decision?
2. Why do other cities send you gold, silver, and food?
3. Who is Quetzalcoatl?
4. In paragraph 2, what does the word us refer to?
5. In paragraph 3, what does the word They refer to?
6. In paragraph 3, what does the word it refer to?
7. Draw a picture of one of these strange men.
8. What are the “long sticks that throw fire”?
9. In paragraph 4, what does the word he refer to?
10. Why do the priests say that the strangers are gods?

Decision

- *What should we do? Choose one or more of the following options:*
 - (a) Do nothing. Wait for the strangers to come to Tenochtitlán.
 - (b) Send messengers to the coast. Invite the strangers to visit Tenochtitlán.
 - (c) Send soldiers to attack the strangers.
 - (d) Send gifts to the strangers and ask them to leave us in peace.
 - (e) Leave Tenochtitlán before the strangers come to our city.
 - (f) Other: _____
- *Why did you decide that way? Plan how you will explain your decision to your classmates. Write out your reasoning completely.*



Jamestown Colonists

What should we do first?



It is April 26, 1607. You are a member of a group of Englishmen who will be settlers in Virginia. Your group is sailing toward America on three ships. There is a lot of excitement on your ship. After three months of sailing across the stormy Atlantic Ocean, a sailor has just seen land. This must be Virginia.

There are about 120 men on the three ships. The London Company is sponsoring this new colony. King James has given a charter to the London Company. The charter gives you permission to use Virginia, an English claim. Your group's job is to establish a settlement in Virginia. You are supposed to explore this new land to find a route to Asia. You are also to send raw materials, crops, gold, and anything valuable back to the London Company merchants to pay for their investment.

There are many kinds of men in this group, and they have come for different reasons. A few are farmers, carpenters, and other skilled workers. Some are soldiers. Most of the men are gentlemen. They have no special skills, and they are here for adventure and riches.

Before you left England, the King chose the leaders. He put their names in a box and told the captain to open it when you arrive in America. Everyone wants to know who the leaders will be.

The ships are near the coast of the New World now. You can see a line of trees along the coast. You are about to arrive in Virginia. When you have reached land, what should you do first?

1607	King James gave a charter to London Company to sponsor a colony in Virginia.
1588	English defeated Spanish Armada.
1587	Second colony at Roanoke started and later disappeared.
1585	Sir Walter Raleigh's first colony at Roanoke started and failed.
1579	Sir Francis Drake claimed west coast of North America for England.
1534	Jacques Cartier claimed St. Lawrence River for France.
1519	Hernando Cortés claimed Mexico for Spain.
1513	Ponce de León claimed Florida for Spain.
1497	John Cabot claimed Newfoundland for England.
1492	Cristóbal Colón claimed Caribbean islands for Spain.

