

**Wampum Tells a Story**  
Jacqueline Dukes

**Lesson Objectives:**

- Students will describe similarities and differences of several examples of wampum.
- Students will identify how visual changes reflect and reinforce narrative changes.
- Student will contextualize narrative tensions using awareness of historical events.

**Essential Questions:**

- What are characteristics of wampum belts?
- Why was the Penn Wampum Belt well suited to the role it played in Iroquois society?
- What was the symbolism of the wampum belt in *Ghost River*?
- What conclusions can you draw from the changes to the wampum belt in *Ghost River*?

**Grade Level:** Grades 6-8.

**Standards:** Ohio History and Language Arts Standards

- Grade 6: Reading and Literature
  - Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
  - Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions.
  - Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward resolution.
- Grade 7: Literature Topic Key Ideas and Details Standard Statements
  - Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
  - Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
  - Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot)
- Grade 8: Literature Topic Key Ideas and Details Standard Statements
  - Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
  - Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
  - Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

**Historical Background:**

- Lynn Ceci, *The Value of Wampum Among the New York Iroquois*
- Joy Harjo, *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*
- National Museum of the American Indians, *Haudenosaunee Guide for Educators*
- University of Pennsylvania Museum, *Treaty of Renewed Friendship*
- Colin Galloway, *The World Turned Upside Down: Indian Voices from Early America*

**Materials:**

- Lee Francis, Weshoyot Alvitre, and Will Fenton, *Ghost River: The Fall and Rise of the Conestoga*. Albuquerque: Red Planet Books and Comics, 2019.
- Wampum Belt Reproductions (Penn, Two Row, Wing Fan, Washington, Hiawatha Belt).
- Pencils, prepared table and/or chart paper and computer access.

**Procedures:**

Before reading *Ghost River: The Fall and Rise of the Conestoga*, introduce students to wampum. Students need to understand that wampum served political, economic, and diplomatic functions for Northeastern Native Peoples such as the Haudenosaunee.

Lesson 1

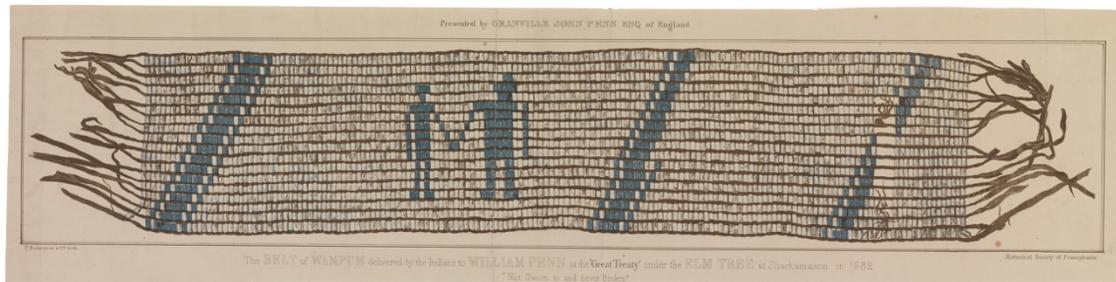
1. Play The Wampum Belt: a Nation to Nation Relationship.
2. Distribute Wampum Belt Reproductions.
3. Brainstorm keywords associated with wampum belts.
4. Divide students into groups of 4-5. Each group will be responsible for collecting the following information about a specific belt:
  - A. What is the story behind this belt?
  - B. What is the meaning of the symbols integrated into the composition? (The Penn Wampum Belt includes figures)
  - C. What materials were used to make the item? Why are these materials used and how were they acquired? (Wampum belts are made of whelk shells and quahog clams, which are strung and woven to form long belt shaped rectangles.)
  - D. What colors does the belt include? (Colors are consistently purple and white.)
  - E. Who made it and what purpose does the belt serve?
5. Have group members share their findings by filling in the information into a prepared table that is visible to the class.
6. Using information in the table, students volunteer to make observations about similarities and differences among the belts. (Should find that materials, colors, methods of construction, and symbols tend to be similar, though specific purpose, creator, use of the belt tends to vary.)
7. Assessment: Ask students to write a three-sentence reflection.
  - A. The most interesting thing I learned was...
  - B. Something I would still like to learn is...
  - C. I will find my answer by...

## Lesson 2

1. Play Joy Harjo's Eagle Song to prepare student to navigate *Ghost River*.
2. Provide brief overview of the previous wampum discussion.
3. Students will use the Jigsaw technique to analyze and share the story. Divide students into four groups. Each group will read a specific section of *Ghost River*, takes notes, and summarize key facts about the assigned section.
  - A. The Lenape origin story
  - B. The massacre at Conestoga Indiantown and recitation of names
  - C. The massacre at the Lancaster workhouse
  - D. The present-day Native people
4. Next they will regroup so each new group has at least one expert from the original four groups. Members take turns sharing their findings within the new group. The intent is for everyone to have an introduction to the entire story.
5. Reconvene as a class to create a timeline of the events in the book.
6. Discuss the rationale for beginning *Ghost River* with a Lenape origin story and ending with living Native people. Why are the author, artist, and editor embedded in the book?
7. See if students noticed any primary source materials embedded in *Ghost River*. If so, what did they learn about the political cartoons?
8. Have students look for images of wampum (e.g. the Penn Wampum Belt appears on pp. 33, 64). Write the page number of each instance on the board and have students discuss each instance in the context of the larger narrative. Make sure students engage symbolic instances:
  - A. The massacre at Conestoga Indiantown (pp. 31-32)
  - B. The rending of the belt (pp. 58) and the single detached bead (pp. 61-62)
9. Assessment: Have students complete exit ticket:
  - A. Why did the artist use wampum throughout Ghost River?
  - B. Did the inclusion of wampum enhance or detract from your understanding of the story?

## Wampum Belt Reproductions

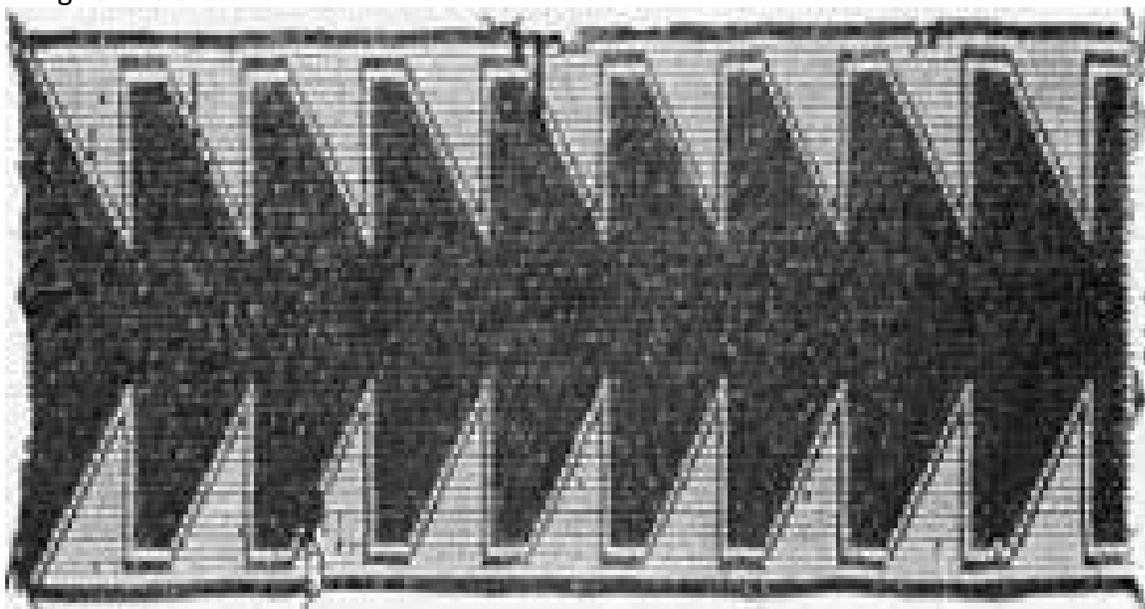
### Penn Wampum Belt (1682 Shackamaxon treaty)



### Two Row Wampum Belt



### Wing Fan Belt

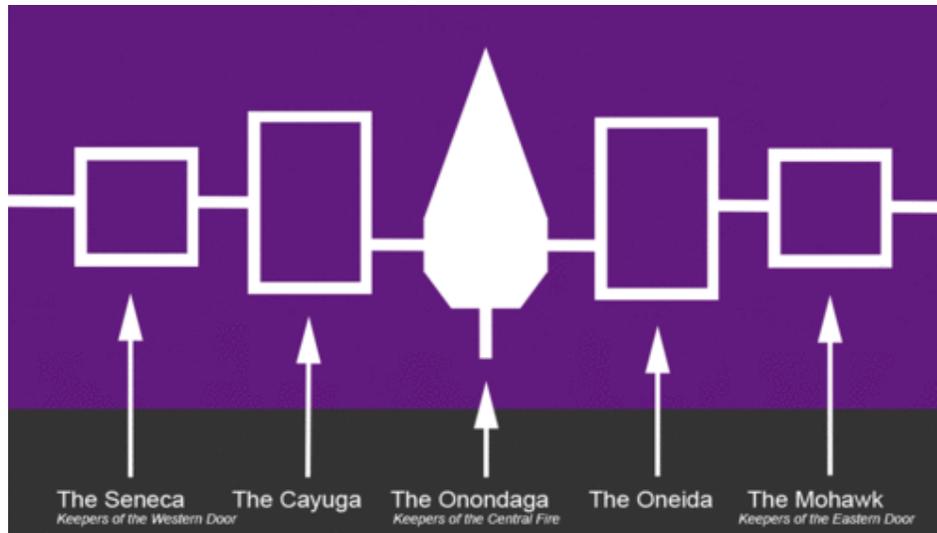


Washington Wampum Belt



Hiawatha Wampum Belt





The Hiawatha Wampum Belt is a visual record of the creation of the League of the Haudenosaunee (also known as the Six Nations or Iroquois). At the center of the Hiawatha Belt is the Confederacy's symbol, the "Great White Pine," also known as the "Tree of Peace."

Source: <https://ganondagan.org/Learning/Wampum>

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqlrFnOEBfg>