

THE TEXAS ORATOR



-
- ABOUT
- ARCHIVE
- ARTS
- IDEAS
- PODCAST
- MERCH
- CONTACT
- JOIN
- BOOK SUBMISSIONS

- Campus
- Culture
- Domestic Affairs ▾
- Economy
- Education
- Environment
- Foreign Affairs
- Health
- Law
- Philosophy
- Satire
- Tech

HOME › IDEAS › IDEAS — HEN, SKENNEN'KÓ:WA

Ideas — Hen, Skennen'kó:wa

BY MORGAN LEARN on OCTOBER 30, 2018 • (0)

Language preservation is one of the most viable aspects of preserving a culture. If the language dies, so could you. For me, learning the language of my Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) ancestors has connected me to them, as well as reassured me that the Mohawks — and Natives in general — will continue to prosper.

One of the first things I learned in Kanien'kehá:ka was the phrase “Skennen'kó:wa ken,” which translates to “Do you carry the Great Peace?” To further translate this into modern-day English, one could interpret it as “How are you,” however this translation does not fully encompass the spiritual and historical meaning behind the question.

This greeting refers back to the time of our [Peacemaker](#) — who cannot be named unless written about in spiritual texts or mentioned in ceremonies — when he joined the five Nations. The Peacemaker gathered the Nations under a white pine and asked if they would all follow the Law of Peace; if they did, they would have to throw their weapons under the tree thus unifying the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois Confederacy. The proper response was either “Hen, Skennen'kó:wa” (yes, I do have the Great Peace) or “Yah, yah Skennen'kó:wa” (no, I don't have the Great Peace). Regardless of the answer, throughout our history the dialogue has promoted language preservation and cultural teachings.

Many of the words in the Kanien'kehá:ka language have a cultural or historical association, however it is often lost in translation to English. Not only that, but the structure of the language and syntax are different from any other non-Native language. A Mohawk elder once told me, “our language is diametrically opposed to English, everything is backwards.” This is part of the reason why learning Kanien'kehá:ka can be tedious and frustrating at times because of the indoctrination of English and its rules. Learning Kanien'kehá:ka brings me Great Peace and I encourage Indigenous individuals to try to learn their Native language.

Share this:

- Twitter
- Facebook

◀ [Carving Contest](#)

[A Rally in Good Faith: YCT and Judge Kavanaugh](#) ▶

Categories: [Ideas](#) Tags: [ancestry](#), [five nations](#), [indigenuity](#), [language](#), [mohawk](#), [natives](#)

RELATED ARTICLES



Academic — ish.

Who We Are

The Texas Orator is a multi-partisan, peer-reviewed political publication that is part of the Associated Collegiate Press. We value thorough analysis in our articles and strive to protect the ideals of free speech and unhindered access to information on campus and nationwide. We seek to keep the student body informed of the implications of ever-changing political climates, both domestically and abroad, from a range of voices and perspectives.

We have been indexed as scholarly literature by the [UT Libraries](#) and by [UT Undergraduate Stu](#)

Follow

We are sponsored by Ramsey's Restaurant of Victoria, Texas, and the Thomas Jefferson Center for Core Texts & Ideas. We are also a member of UT's Civic Engagement Alliance.

Follow us on Twitter



Ideas — Gone in a Flash: The Fall of Myles Garrett



Ideas—It's not about them. It's about us.

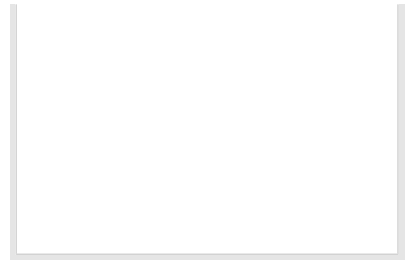


Ideas—Unrest in Chile: The Fight for Economic Equality



Ideas—Jesus is King Film Fails to Capture the Zeitgeist

Leave a Reply



Our Instagram

