

## First Peoples and the Land

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The passage below is a part of a speech given to the United Nations in April 1998 by Chief Oren Lyons of the Onandaga Nation, a nation of the Iroquois Confederacy. In this passage, Chief Lyons is expressing what the land means to Aboriginal peoples, why it is important, and how it should be treated.

Read this with a partner and be sure you understand his main points. Then, write a journal response, reflecting on how the First Peoples may have felt when they saw Europeans claiming their land.

*... This was a great way of life across this Great Turtle Island and freedom with respect was everywhere.*

*Our leaders were instructed to be men of vision and to make every decision on behalf of the seventh generation to come; to have compassion and love for those generations yet unborn. We were instructed to give thanks for All That Sustains Us. Thus, we created great ceremonies of thanks giving for the life-giving forces of the Natural World, as long as we carried out our ceremonies, life would continue. We were told that 'The Seed is the Law.' Indeed, it is The Law of Life. It is The Law of Regeneration.*



As cited in Aboriginal Elders Teachings, Virtual Circle Aboriginal Community:  
<<http://www.vcircle.com/elders/showquestion.php?faq=2&fldAuto=35>>