FUNDAMENTALS

OF

SENECA

The

Revised

Edition

By Phyllis E. Wms. Bardeau

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Introduction
By P.E.Wms. Bardeau

Missionaries and linguists coming to this country many hundreds of years ago felt compelled to learn and write our native languages for their own advantage. Their lack of an acute sensitivity to the sounds resulted in inaccuracies as their earliest writings have shown. None-the-less they managed to translate portions of the English Bible in native philosophical words which conveyed the concepts of a foreign religious thought through the efforts of willing native persons. Linguists from the earliest times to the present have tried and failed to develop in depth grammar rules regarding the intricate compounding of native words. To date, the method of the reduction of a ten word sentence into a single multi-syllable word still escapes grammarians. Linguists still aggressively research native languages for no known practical reasons, as in the past, other than to address a personal challenge to be the first to break through a scholastic area of linguistic mystery.

Native first language speakers, on the other hand, have long recognized the detrimental effects of the invasion of our culture through language. The key to culture is language. Our culture is based upon the philosophy of our Creator. Every culture on earth is based upon the philosophy of its own Creator. Among the people who came to our land were escapees of religious tyranny. They brought their language and their religious philosophy. However, their Christian philosophy dictates that they must 'proselytize at every corner of the earth'. Which meant that our belief system must be replaced with theirs, if they were to be good Christians. This required learning our languages to better transfer the thought. It is conceivable that in the beginning our people, as they learned the English language, began to understand the good message of the Bible as being similar to the good instructions of our own Creator and willingly applied the appropriate language for the Bible's translation. It would be safe to say that those involved in the translation saw their role as helpers only. Because the original instructions of our Creator had been

perpetuated orally for countless generations. Our people did not readily embrace the new doctrine. Lest the missionaries be failures, the pressure on native people began, and religious tyranny in this country was born.

Severe challenges require severe solutions. The Jesuit missionaries were the first to proselytize the native people along the eastern sea board. Several volumes of the Jesuit Relations stand as a historical testament, other writings by historians of that time, and oral accounts related by the victims those methods suffered by our people to relinquish the old and to adopt a new belief system. It would be reasonable to conclude that the adults who bore the brunt of these horrible 'incentives' would strongly encourage their children to Christianize.

 A formula which worked may be said to have been practiced in the systematic eradication effort upon native languages. In this instance, it was the children who suffered at missionary boarding schools, who in turn became adult parents and out of love discouraged their children in learning the language of their birth right. We are past the generations who were directly and indirectly affected by the planned language eradication movement. However, the consequences remain. The consequences have continued to escalate as the cultural balance becomes more socially and linguistically one sided, to the point where our Seneca language has become moribund. Children are no longer learning Seneca as a first language.

Fifty years ago, the population of first language speakers was still numerous, but there were signs that there was a decline in usage among the young as all children were required by law to attend school. It was approximately another ten years before the concern of the possibility of language loss may become a reality. Even though, among some elders, the eminent loss of language was seen as a fulfillment of prophesy. There were those first language Seneca speakers who began action to reverse the language shift. Alberta Austin began to take a close look at how the language was spoken and made notations. I began to analyze the words and its parts and made notations. The beginning results were word lists of every topic, and many notations. The Seneca language was historically being developed from traditionally oral to a fledgling written system. Even

though she and I worked independently of each other, doing our own areas of expertise, she residing in Cattaraugus and I from Allegany, our writings reflected an identical vowel system. The early writings by missionaries and linguists were not researched nor resourced for content or spellings of words. On the heels of language development came materials development in the form of booklets in anticipation of language teaching. The Seneca Nation strengthened the effort by including Seneca Language Programs within the Educational Departments in Allegany and Cattaraugus territories, which allowed for the hiring of language teachers. The pioneering Seneca language teachers each became a curriculum developer, materials developer and grade component evaluator. Without any training in teaching and classroom control techniques, every teacher faced these major challenges admirably from 1968 to 1988. The early teachers were fluent elders. Their creativity produced learning materials, books and games. Written Seneca evolved during this period and became standardized around 1985. By 1990, after twenty years of dedication the elder teachers retired for various reasons. Entering the Seneca language teaching arena from 1990 to the present were the younger teachers, educated and enthusiastic, they consistently work hard to maintain their status as language teachers at local schools by continually upgrading their language proficiency skills. The Seneca language program has evolved greatly through its forty year development history and continues to improve and grow. Students of Seneca language are offered a variety of topics in the classroom; and in the community their choices range from general conversation to the traditional aspects of culture. In addition, the Seneca Nation has also passed resolutions in support of additional funding through Title IV and ANA grants for specific projects; namely, The Way It Was; Wild Medicinal Plants; and the 1000 Hours of Elder's Tapes. Many resource books have been written. In 1994, the Seneca language staff wrote and self-published the first The Seneca Language Reference Book; a source of pride for me, yet, having been on staff as language program director at that time. After several years of field testing and revisions on teaching the basics of Seneca, I finalized and self-published The Fundamentals of Seneca. It is the result of many years of research and development. The process of documentation requires analyzing known materials and

organizing specific points which could then be a focus of study to show a limited system of grammar rules for speaking Seneca. The Fundamentals of Seneca is designed to 'walk' the student in a comprehensive manner through the basics. This important step is imperative in becoming familiar with the vowel sounds of spoken Seneca. An instructional word *sadaödi:yos* means 'make a good ear', an expression which says its important to listen. To listen well is to speak correctly. Once the vowels become second nature for the learner, independent study is possible at such times when elders or teachers are not available. A thorough command of the vowels will enable the learner to transcribe Seneca words accurately and to read Seneca correctly.

Much progress has been made in the development of a traditionally oral language. A pragmatic approach as opposed to an idealistic approach is seen as the simplest method in teaching Seneca today. We are now at a point in time when systematic teaching is necessary to compete with the systematic teaching of English. Learning the language by "living and doing" from infancy is past. Simulating "living and doing" at short term immersion venues is a taste of what used to be and a pleasant detraction from the daily high speed technological environment of today.

Elders have looked among themselves and assessed that given the numbers of fluent elders who pass away each year, and the median age of elders remaining have concluded and predicted that the window of opportunity for learning our native languages to be approximately fifteen years. This prediction was made five years ago. Soon we will be in the single digits, and counting down. This is not an idle "the sky is falling" scenario. It is a bare-bottom reality in terms of language loss as the remaining elders speak it. It can be argued that language has evolved and changed since European contact. It can be said that language expanded by the invention of words to describe imported items. It can also be argued that language evolves and changes naturally through usage and time. It can be said that that is true; and using the English language as an example, a language which has evolved from archaic to modern has long been stabilized through aggressive and systematic teaching. Likewise, Seneca language has changed naturally through usage and time, there was the earliest language which is no longer known; the remnants of an oral

language which was known by the eldest of elders no longer among us. There was the language of Senecas of seventy five years ago when some words clearly compounded English syllables within it: *agejacki'da'* (my jacket). The past twenty years has seen a shift in natural speech patterns as Seneca as second language speakers are challenged with the monumental task of learning and teaching. Seneca language teachers today share a heavy responsibility. They are NOW the first line defenders against continued language loss.

As foreboding as 'the window of opportunity' could sound, it must be taken as positive and as a period of time to seriously and aggressively redirect the mentality and approaches toward stabilizing the state of Seneca language today. The language can no longer be taken for granted, if it is to survive the onslaughts of daily distractions. It must not be politicized linguistically and be stalled over the merits of the t, g, d, and ks. It must be recognized that only a handful of elders are actually available now to actively support the young teacher's pronunciation and intonation efforts. They are also the ones who follow and observe the dynamics of various language camps and gatherings. How fortunate for learners of language that fluent speakers are gathered in their midst, available and ready to share their knowledge with the attending younger generation. How can anyone substitute, or neglect such a banquet of knowledge? Elders are often referred to as treasures, the holders of great knowledge. It goes without saying, they deserve to be shown ultimate respect.

It is clear that time is of the essence. The luxury of intellectualizing about reviving oral Seneca communication methods through living and doing of long ago is not only impractical, but impossible given todays life styles. The concern over geographic language differences among Seneca territories should no longer be part of the equation at the language discussion table, as each sector in these geographic areas is well aware of minute differences, and chooses to focus on the greater picture, that of language continuance. It is so important for all concerned to stay focused on the greater picture, and our vision not to be obscured by magnifying details which serve only to hinder and discourage. A case in point is the spelling of Seneca vocabulary. This has become a two

pronged issue. The first is the minor issue, this is not to say that this issue is less important, but to recognize that typos do occur, whether by one's own typing, or language material typed by a proxy typist. In addition, because of the nature of the language work, particularly the reference books and advanced level dictionaries which should be proof read. However, the English portion can be proof read for typos by anyone, but the Seneca portion cannot. This requires a proof reader who is fluent and knows the words and how it should be spelled to reflect its exact pronunciation. At the present time there is still no one to do this. Writers of Seneca language books containing a thousand or twenty thousand Seneca words are faced with the same challenge, one does not readily identify one's own misspelling. Writers of Seneca language in its development have always been plagued by the appearance of typing errors and/or omission of letters. This is the reason spelling discrepancies are found in various books. It is not about incompetence.

The second prong of the spelling issue is a major issue. The planned eradication of native languages movement by outside influences begun many hundreds of years ago continues to haunt us; in a subtle way. We have on our own developed a traditionally oral language to a system of speaking, writing and reading our language. This was no small task. Today, we have in place the curriculums, learning standards, standard written system, audio and visual aids, and reference materials at our disposal. And still outside influences quietly move about to chip away at what we have taken forty years to develop. An orthography which is the simplest to use. Many hundreds of Seneca language students at local schools have been introduced to this system and are able to read Seneca. Unfortunately, there is a movement, however subtle, to bring about a change by replacing certain letters, said by a linguist to be more advantages, and more oriented to the international alphabet. Our defense is that Seneca utilizes the English alphabet, the alphabet our children learn upon entering a classroom and use thereafter. It is said the replacement letters would be easier to type. As it is, our computers are programmed to type the three designated vowels in both upper and lower case on the keyboard. All

language material written in Seneca since the late 1960s has used the present orthography.

The seeds of dissention has been planted. We must stay focused, our Seneca language is on life-support. Are we to allow the language of our birth right to become a statistic as one of the many original native languages now extinct?

Our "window of opportunity" is short and should not allow precious time for any type of distracting tactics. Seneca language is the priority.

Our traditional language is our identity as Ögwe'ö:weh; without it we would merely be English speaking Native Americans of Seneca descent in this country.

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List of Resources
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A Word About Geographic Differences

As one studies the Seneca language, differences in word pronunciation becomes apparent. The differences are geographic – just as the English spoken in the north is spoken differently in the south (tired/tarred). The geographic variations apply within our three Seneca territories. There are slight differences in the pronunciation of some Seneca words between Allegany, Cattaraugus and Tonawanda (so'jih/dzo'jih/jo'jih).

These differences are so minor, that words can easily be understood regardless. There are some instances of different words for one meaning (jinyowae' or gëöya'ë' for the color blue); (dewahsohgwa'se:' or oshëä'ë for the color purple). Both words will be introduced during study to let the learner know that a dialect difference for a particular word exists. One reason for the alternative words could be that that area still remembers and uses words from the 'old' language. Words from that period are so few and far between now that they're like gems to be heard, learned, and treasured.

Care has been taken to document the most widely used words for study and instruction for the beginner; but that is not to say that the other variations of certain words are incorrect and should therefore be arbitrarily dismissed.

Get A Good Ear

It is so important to develop a "good ear", to become familiar with the pronunciation system of the Seneca language, particularly the vowels and stresses. All Seneca words no matter how short, long or in between consists of vowels and stresses. Some Speakers of Seneca speak slow, some speak fast. It is important to listen and hear the word exactly as it's pronounced, at any speed. The vowels and stresses make the difference in every word. In terms of speaking, it is important to pronounce and say the word exactly. Seneca language is all about vowels and stresses.

In terms of speaking, it is best to speak slowly at first, pronouncing the word(s) with its vowels and stresses clearly and deliberately. By doing so you will hear yourself speaking, and become familiar with the sounds. As the sounds become familiar, your confidence in speaking Seneca will increase. When you speak English, pronunciation of these vowels in words are so familiar, you no longer "hear" yourself, such is the level of confidence. If you already say *nyawëh sgënö'*, and *ësgögë' ae'* with ease and feeling, you will be speaking as much Seneca as you want to learn.

The foundation to building a Seneca vocabulary and usage of nouns and phrases starts with developing a "good ear" for the eight (8) vowel sounds and two (2) stresses.

Pronunciation Key

Sequoia developed a special syllabary to represent the sounds in the Cherokee language. Many other native languages are written in their unique symbols. The Seneca language has "borrowed" certain symbols from the alphabet of the

English language. In total, Seneca utilizes sixteen (16) letters of the English alphabet.

A -D-E-G-H-I-J-K-N-O-S-T-U-W-Y-Z

Seneca has assigned its own sounds for some of the English letters.

Five (5) Vowels

Symbol	English example	Seneca example
A, a	art	ha'nih
E, e	they	neh
I, i	ski	ha'nih
O, o	open	nyoh
U, u	tune	ni:wu'

Three (3) Vowels with Diacritics

Ä, ä	hat	ä:'
Ë, ë	men	sëh
Ö, ö	on	ö:gweh

Two (2) Stresses

A colon (:) placed after a vowel LENGTHENS that vowel sound:

wi:yoh - good	ji:yäh – dog
i:wih - I want	de:sek – you pick up

The glottal stop (') after a vowel is like a strong accent, a QUICK CUT-OFF like the words *oh oh* or *bottle*.

go'geh - hurry	sa'sa' - mockingbird
no'yëh - mother	ji'nö:h - louse
ho'ge' - I'm going there	o'o:wa:' - owl

A Vowel Chart is provided on the next page for speaking practice, as well as for listening. This is an efficient way to memorize the vowels. After some practice, review the Seneca examples given so far, you will be able to read and say most if not all of the Seneca words. Few words contain the vowel 'u', and the consonant 'z' is included as a preference over 'j' by some speakers.

Eleven (11) Consonants

D, d	do	di'di:'
*G; g	give	go'geh
H, h	him	ha'nih
*J, j	job	ji:yäh
K, k	key	koh

N, n	nıce	nyoh
S, s	say	sga:d
T, t	tea	te:dë′
W, w	win	wi:yoh
Y, y	you	ye:i′
Z, z	zoo	dzadak

*The symbol G is always pronounced as in good, get, girl, ga′ga:′ (crow).
*The symbol J is always pronounced as in jam, joke, jump, johdöh (nine).
The assigned sounds for the G and the J symbols never change. Seneca words using both symbols:

gajë′ (dish); gaje′ (flying); gajih (come); gaji′gaya′ (chair)

The VOWEL CHART

Read the Vowels left to right and down the Consonant list as a guide. Combine each consonant with every vowel left to right. This is good practice in pronouncing syllables and becoming familiar with the sounds of Seneca. Use this chart in combination with each of the two (2) stresses:

da, da:, da′;   de, de:. de′;   di, di:, di′;   do, do:, do′; etc...

Every Seneca word contains one or more of these syllables.

a	e	i	o	u	ä	ë	ö
da	de	di	do	du	dä	dë	dö
ga	ge	gi	go	gu	gä	gë	gö
ha	he	hi	ho	hu	hä	hë	hö
ja	je	ji	jo	ju	jä	jë	jö
ka	ke	ki	ko	ku	kä	kë	kö
na	ne	ni	no	nu	nä	në	nö
sa	se	si	so	su	sä	së	sö
ta	te	ti	to	tu	tä	të	tö
wa	we	wi	wo	wu	wä	wë	wö
ya	ye	yi	yo	yu	yä	yë	yö
za	ze	ze	zo	zu	zä	zë	zö

So far, you have been introduced to the symbols used in Seneca language, the standard 5 vowels, the 3 vowels with the diacritics, the 2 stresses, and the 11 consonants. You are able to see these vowel combinations as syllables in actual words in the examples. You can say the words as well as to read the words.

In the beginning syllables in some words are sometimes difficult to separate, even if the Vowel Chart has been carefully studied. Remember that the colon (:) and the glottal stop (') follow the vowels. Slash (/) the words after the stress mark(s): ga/ji'/ga/ya' ; go'/geh ; o'/o:/wa:' . if a word has no stress mark(s), slash (/) between the vowel and the next consonant: nya/wĕh ; dza/dak.

Double Consonant Combinations

These are double consonants. It is important to study, practice and master these combinations because Seneca language words contain these combos A LOT. They are not impossible to pronounce, but it does take practice. Refer to the English examples. Each combo is shown with the vowel (a).

Dja	as in	adjunct	as in	dja:dak
Dwa	as in	Dwight	as in	dwadekö:nih
Dza	as in	adze	as in	dza:dak
Gwa	as in	Gwendolyn	as in	jigwas
Gya	as in	gynecology	as in	agye:h
Hna	as in	high note	as in	hĕhni'jö'
Kda	as in	knock down	as in	jokda:gö'
Kha	as in	jack hammer	as in	kho
Kna	as in	black night	as in	Yaikneh
Ksa	as in	thick sauce	as in	seksa:köh
Kwa	as in	black wing	as in	akwisdayĕ'
Kya	as in	back yard	as in	ha'kyeh
Nya	as in	canyon	as in	nyawĕh
Sga	as in	dogs gone	as in	dasgöh
Sha	as in	* cross here	as in	dasha:h
Sta	as in	steam	as in	gadeyësta'
Swa	as in	sweet	as in	Swe:gĕ'
Sya	as in	shawl	as in	syadö:h
Tga	as in	that gall	as in	otgë:h
Tha	as in	thaught	as in	he:tha'
Tsa	as in	* chase	as in	wĕnitsi:yo
Twa	as in	twice	as in	heyotgatwĕh

Note: the (sh) consonant combination is always pronounced as 'cross here', the letter s and the letter h are pronounced separately, NOT like the sh in she.

o' sheä' – purple   sha'ga:d – same   oshe:da' - number
oshë'da' – fly   oshaisda' – snake   oshesda' – syrup

The (ts) as: in chase, cheat, chin, choice, choose, chat, chenille
     tsa'ge:gĕ', tsë:ne:h, tsiyo'dë:h, tsonöhsa:', tsënödöh

Double Consonant Chart

Read the chart from left to right. Some combinations are difficult, referring back to the Double Consonants list will help. When verbalizing these combinations becomes easier, as further practice in speaking, apply the stresses (:) and (') to each combination. These combinations will appear in Seneca words often as Pronunciation Practice lists will show.

a	e	i	o	u	ä	ë	ö
dja	dje	dji	djo	dju	djä	djë	djö
dwa	dwe	dwi	dwo	dwu	dwä	dwë	dwö
dza	dze	dzi	dzo	dzu	dzä	dzë	dzö
gwa	gwe	gwi	gwo	dwu	dwä	dwë	dwö
gya	gye	gyi	gyo	gyu	gyä	gyë	gyö
hna	hne	hni	hno	hnu	hnä	hnë	hnö
kda	kde	kdi	kdo	kdu	kdä	kdë	kdö
kha	khe	khi	kho	khu	khä	khë	khö
kna	kne	kni	kno	knu	knä	knë	knö
ksa	kse	ksi	kso	ksi	ksä	ksë	ksö
kwa	kwe	kwi	kwo	kwu	kwä	kwë	kwö
kya	kye	kyi	kyo	kyu	kyä	kyë	kyö
nya	nye	nyi	nyo	nyu	nyä	nyë	nyö
sga	sge	sgi	sgo	sgu	sgä	sgë	sgö
sha	she	shi	sho	shu	shä	shë	shö
sta	ste	sti	sto	stu	stä	stë	stö
swa	swe	swi	swo	swu	swä	swë	swö
sya	sye	syi	syo	syu	syä	syë	syö
tga	tge	tgi	tgo	tgu	tgä	tgë	tgö
tha	the	thi	tho	thu	thä	thë	thö
tsa	tse	tsi	tso	tsu	tsä	tsë	tsö
twa	twe	twi	two	twu	twä	twë	twö

Triple Consonant Combinations

Sgwa	as in	ga'sgwa:' - stone	gë:nösgwa' - stone-coat being
Skna	as in	a:sknega:nön - give me a drink	
Snya	as in	snya:wëh - yours(d)	wa:snye't - he spoke

The Functions of H

1. If a word ends with a vowel, or a colon (:), an (**h**) completes it: wiyo:**h**; ne**h**.
2. An (**h**) serves as an aspired accent in a word: a**h**dahgwa'; ga'seh**d**a'.
3. An (**h**) combines with K,k or with T,t if it can be heard: he:**tha**'. It is
   for this reason that this consonant combination is on the chart. The letters 't'
   and the 'h' are pronounced separately. It is NOT to be confused with the **th**
   in thing, there, or this.
   More often than not, the 'tha' in a Seneca word may simply be 'ta'.

Double Vowels

Many Seneca words contain **double vowels**. Each vowel is pronounced,
practice voicing the sounds so that each is distinct; then contour the two sounds
to sound as one. Consider the word **soy** (as in soy sauce); if this word was
written in Seneca vowels, it would be spelled **soe**. Soy and soe would be
pronounced the same; the '**o**' and the '**e**' would be distinct and "smoothed out"
or contoured. nyagwa**i**' (bear); **s**oe (night); awëö' (flower)

Word Pronunciation Practice List

One syllable words:

Hae' - Hi	neh - the	a:a: - yuk'
Soe - night	ë:h -yes	sëh - 3
A:e' - again	nyoh -okay	ı:s – you

Two syllable words:

No'yëh - mother	ha'nih - father	akso:d - gramma
Ga:jih - come	wa:se:' - new	nyawëh - thanks
Ni:wu' - tiny	ji:yäh - dog	go:wëh – hers

Three syllable words:

Ga:wa:sa' - snowsnake	dago:ji' –dark cat	gaya'da'- doll
Gaya'da:' - picture	gaya:da' - thigh	gatgwë'da'- purse
Hade:jë's - doctor	owä:noe' - sweet	ë:göhgë'- I'll see you

Four syllable words:

Owisä:ta' - butter	ga'sehdi:yoh – nice car	niyagu'u:h – its tiny
Ögwe'öweh – real People	gadeyësta' – I read	seha'tsi:sas - you want a job
Wënitsi:yoh – good day	akwisda:yë' – I have $	dwadekö:nih – let's eat

Five syllable words:

Dwadekö:nyanöh – let's go eat	dedwajisgwa:e:k – let's play ball	onëhjigo:wa:h – long ago
Negayano'dë:h – its habit	yöntähgöndahgwa' - oven	Onödagö:gwa:h Bucktown
Yöndekwagwa'geh – on the table	wajesa'gesdöh – on sale	hënödeyë:sta' they study

Double Vowel Words:

Yaikneh - June	joäshä' - heron	sadaödi:yos- you listen
Daodiä'tëöje' – they are climbing up	osae'da' - bean	onëö'- corn
Jinyowae' - blue	neyoö:daka:a – low bush	gaöshä'- box

Other pronunciation practice word-phrases:
1. dagai'stowanëö:je'   da/gai'/sto/wa/nëö:/je' - loud noise coming
2. o:tsi'gayagaha:dö:h   o:/tsi'/ga/ya/ga/ha:/dö:h – chair rocking
3. dao:nöto'jinönda:je'   dao/nö/to'/ji/nön/da/je' - skaters coming
4. hodiyadöshägahadö:h   ho/di/ya/dö/shä/ga/ha/dö:h – they turn pages
5. dayo:ga'hadadenyö:je'   da/yo:/ga'/ha/da/de/nyö:/je' - log rolling
6. dayodë'nisgahadenyö:je'   da/yo/dë'/nis/ga/ha/de/nyö:/je' - wheel rolling
7. hënödënögwatwahsyönyöh   hë/nö/dë/nö/gwa/twah/syö/nyöh - they are yodeling

Social Conduct

Nyawëh

The Seneca word nyawëh means ' thanks '; not thank you, but simply "thanks". There is no part in the word nyawëh that translates as "you". Nyawëh is a very important word. It is used with real meaning and sincerity by the person speaking that word of courtesy.

Cultural Notation

Nyawëh is spoken after one finishes a meal. Thanks is not meant for the cook, but rather to the Creator for having provided sustenance in food to be cooked, served, and enjoyed.

Nyawëh is also said by a person who is confronted and receives insults from another person. Instruction from the Creator teaches that the person receiving these insults should not become angry, but to say "nyawëh" and move away, because at that instant any injustice belongs to the speaker of ill will. People are by instruction to be good, honest, and kind to one another. Anyone who stands in judgment upon another only brings harm to himself and becomes personally responsible for his/her own redemption with the Creator.

Nyawëh - thanks
Nyo – okay, alright (response to nyawëh)

Cultural Notation

The traditional instruction is that all people are to greet one another in a respectful manner. That it is only after this acknowledgement of each other that any interaction takes place. *First section in Ganönyög.

Formal Greeting

Nyawëh – thankfulness   sgënö' – refers to good health, peace, well being

"Nyawëh sgënö'" is a formal greeting. It is expressed sincerely – often with a hand shake.

"Nyawëh   sgënö'" literally means "I am thankful that you are in good health and in peace."
It can also mean "I am thankful for your well being".

The confirmation to the formal greeting is a simple one word "doges" meaning 'true'.
It is a polite gesture to include "i:s koh ?" which means ; 'you too?'.

Informal Greeting

 "Sgënö'   dihnä:h ?" is an expression used for an informal greeting. It is conveyed casually – a hand shake is not necessary.
It would be equal to the slang expression "are you okay?"

"Sgënö' dihnä:h?" literally means 'are you in good health then?'.
Individually, sgënö' refers to 'good health, peace, well being'; and "dihnä:h" mean 'then'.

The response to the informal greeting is a simple "ë:h" meaning 'yes'.
It is also good manners to include "i:s koh?"

Health Related Responses to Greetings

"Sgënö' dihnä:h ?"
Positive Responses: A:yë:' nä:h ha'degayei:'. - It seems I'm well enough.
                              Ë:h, gadögweta' -   Yes, I feel better.
                              A:yë:' nä:h göhi:yoh. - It seems I'm in good health.

"Sgënö' dihnä:h ?"
Negative Responses: Hë'ëh, aknö:kdanih. - No, I am sick.
                               Hë'ëh, akno'ë:gö's. - No, I have a headache.
                               Hë'ëh, agatowinyö'se:h - No, I have a cold.
                               Hë'ëh, de'sgënö'. - No, I'm not well.
                               Hë'ëh, de'gadögwe:ta'. - No, I don't feel good.

Cultural Value

It should be noted here that moderate expressions of health and well being is a native cultural value. There are no words to express "I feel great!' or 'I feel wonderful!'. It is said that health related boasting, in particular, brings personal health related misfortune.

Comprehension Exercise

My mom and I were at the clinic. We were waiting for the doctor to see my mom. My friend came in and we said "Hae'" to one another. I went up to the receptionist's desk for a pencil. She said to Mrs. Green "sgënö' na:h ?".

When I came back to my seat, Mrs. Green, who had sat next to my mom, said to her "Sgënö' dihnä:h ?". She told her, "E:h, i:s dih ?".

Mrs. Green said, "Hë'ëh, de'gadögwe:ta'".

An elderly man known as Josey came in to pick up someone. My mom stood and went to him saying, "Nyawëh sgënö' !" as she shook his hand. He said, "Ë:h, a:yë:' nä:h ha'degayei'". Then my mom was called in to see the doctor....

Understanding the Usage

1. In this scenario, about how old am I?
2. About how old is my friend?
3. Are the receptionist and Mrs. Green nearer in age?
4. Who is older, Mom or Josey?

No Good Bye

Webster's Dictionary defines "good bye" as 'farewell'. A definition meaning 'an expression of cheerful departure'. Although 'farewell' is no longer used to express departure, "good bye" is the term used by everyone – "good bye" over the telephone; "good bye" at the door; "good bye" anytime. There are times when "good bye" is used with hostility, in direct conflict with Webster's "farewell, cheerful departure". The meaning and its changes are a matter of semantics.

In Seneca there is no word for "good bye" or "farewell".
The words of parting are absolute in structure and explicit in definition:

Ësgö:gë' ae'	-	I'll see you again.
Dëjinyata'së' ae'	-	Our paths shall cross again.
Dëjinyadade:gë' ae'	-	We will see each other again.

These words of parting cannot possibly be construed as alienating – not even in the broadest sense.

Ësgö:gë' ae' extends continued communication.
Dëjinyata'së' ae' creates an 'open door'.
Dëjinyadade:gë' ae' is comforting.

Greetings and Departures
Greetings:

1. nyawĕh sgënö′   (formal) in thanks for your well being.
2. sgëno′ dïhnä: (informal) are you okay?
3. gwe, sgënö′ ?   hey, you okay?
4. hae′   hi!

Responses:

1. doges, sgënö′   it's true, I'm well.
2. ë:h, I:s koh ?   yes, you too?
3. ë:h, I:s dih ?   yes, you then?
4. ë:h, sgënö′ näh.   yes, (I'm) fine.

Invitation:

1. dënshe′ niyosnowe′.   come (back) quickly.
2. dënshe′ ae′.   come again.
3. jigwoshöh dënshe' ?   will you be back soon?

Departures:

1. sot, ësgö:gĕ′ ae′.   well, I'll see you again.
2. jigwas ësgö:gĕ′.   I'll see you soon.
3. dëntge′ ae′   I'll come again.
4. ësgöge′ ae′   I'll see you again.
5. dëjihnyata′sĕ′ ae′.   our paths shall cross again.
6. dëjihnyadade:gĕ′ ae′.   we will see each other again.

Responses to invitations and departures is simply **'nyo'** (okay).

Number (Persons)

The grammantical definition of number is the form of a word as indicating either Singular, Dual, and Plural. Number can be one, two, or more.

SINGULAR (S):
> **One (1) person is known to be singular in number.**
>> Johnny - singular (S)
>> Jane   - singular (S)

DUAL (D):
> **Two (2) persons are known to be dual in number.**
>> Johnny and Jane – dual (D)
>> Judy and Alice – dual (D)

Note: All the 6 Nations dialects have the Dual (2) number of persons.

PLURAL (P)
> **Three (3) persons or more are known to be plural in number.**
>> Johnny, Jane, and Judy – plural (P)
>> Judy, Alice, Joe, and all the rest – plural (P)

Exclusive and Inclusive

The DUAL (D) number appears in **Exclusive** and **Inclusive** pronouns.

    Exclusive (Exc.) means: without you as the speaker.
        Pronoun: snyawĕh (yours (D) – belonging to you both (you and 1 other)
        Usage: gayadöshä' snyawĕh – The book belongs to you Alice, and Judy.
    Inclusive (Inc.) means: including you as the speaker.
        Pronoun: ögyawĕh (ours (D) – belonging to us (me and you) or
                                      (me and one other)
        Usage: gayadöshä' ögyawĕh – The book belongs to me and Jane.
    The Plural (P) appears in **Exclusive** and **Inclusive** Pronouns.
    Exclusive (Exc.) means: without me as the speaker.
        Pronoun: swawĕh (yours (P) – belongs to all of you
        Usage: gayadöshä' swawĕh – The book belongs to all of you.
    Inclusive (Inc.) means: with me as the speaker.
        Pronoun: ögwawĕh (ours (P) – belongs to all of us
        Usage: gayadöshä' ögwawĕh – The book belongs to all of us.

GENDER

Three classifications of gender: Feminine (F); Masculine (M); Neuter (N).
The Feminine gender refers to females.

Girl (F/S)	Girls (F/D)	Girls (F/P)
Woman (F/S)	Women (F/D)	Women (F/P)

The Masculine gender refers to males.

Boy (M/S)	Boys (M/D)	Boys (M/P)
Men (M/S)	Men (M/D)	Men (M/P)

The Neuter (N) gender refers to other living things, animals, birds, etc... of unknown gender.

Cultural Notation

The tradition of the Hodinösö:ni' uphold the importance and prominence of women (wĕnö:gweh). From the time of Sky-woman and all that was created on Turtle Island, to today's still existing Confederacy and the clan mothers, there has been respect for the feminine gender. There is the belief in the earth as our mother (etino'ĕh), grandmother moon (etiso:d), and the three sisters corn, beans, and squash (jöhehgöh).
Traditional women execise their powers as clan mothers in the appointment or the removal of chiefs (hodiyane:h).
Women in this society have an important voice in the making of decisions. The strength and determination of the women could be considered a barometer in the efficiency of the society. The matrilineal clan system exists today. The children (hadiksa'shö'öh) still inherit the clan lineage of the mother (no'yĕh).

A society oriented in equality would necessitate a language complimentary to its culture.

PRONOUNS

Much of the grammar of Seneca has not been analyzed and explained into grammar rules. However, for general purposes the stress is the importance and function of pronouns in Seneca.

Pronouns serve to designate persons – who, number, gender.
    Who – I, me, you, she, he, it, us, we, they
Number – you (S), (D), (P); us (D); we (P); they (P)
    Exclusive (Exc.) without me, the speaker
    Inclusive (Inc.) with me, the speaker
Gender – feminine (F); masculine (M); neuter (N)

Pronouns as person(s) let us know... Show by symbol(s) below.
    <u>Who</u> is doing whatever...
        I am eating.   ___(S)_____
        It flew away.   _____
        He walked here.   _____

    How <u>many</u> are doing whatever...
        You and Sue went there.   _____
        We will talk tomorrow.   _____
        The people sang.   _____

    What <u>gender</u> is doing whatever...
        The baby girl is playing.   _____
        Jake, the dog is barking.   _____
        The twin boys waved bye bye.   _____

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Possessive Pronouns indicate ownership. There are 13 possessive pronouns:

Singular (S)	agawëh	-	mine (S)
	sawëh	-	you, yours (S)
	gowëh	-	hers (S-F)
	howëh	-	his (S-M)
	owëh	-	its (S-N)
Dual (D)	snyawëh	-	yours (D-Exc.)
	ögyawëh	-	ours (D-Inc.)
	onöwëh	-	theirs (D-F)
	honöwëh	-	theirs (D-M)

Plural (P)	swawëh	-	yours (P-Exc.)
	ögwawëh	-	ours (P-Inc.)
	honöwëh	-	theirs (M-P), (M/F-P)
	onöwëh	-	theirs (F-P)

A short refresher course on common grammar terms; terms which will be necessary to explain how Seneca language 'works'. Seneca is a language which has all the parts any other language has. They just haven't all been defined yet.

a) a **Noun** is a person, place or thing : Deputy, Precinct, Badge
b) a **Verb** is an action word: standing
c) an **Adjective** describes: straight
d) **C-P** is short for Connecting Phrase: the (neh); and (koh)
e) **Prefix**, an affix at the beginning of a word: unseen
f) **Suffix**, an affix at the end of a word: standing
g) **Stem**, that part of a word which remains unchanged: unseemingly

As new learners of Seneca language, you are learning the basics. This component is the foundation which prepares you in your effort in understanding that Seneca is as sophisticated as any other language and worthy of study and use in communication

Using Whole Pronouns

It is appropriate to use a whole possessive pronoun in a sentence with other Seneca words. New learners of Seneca language often begin this way to communicate effectively. As long as the **person** agrees with the **number** as shown below.

Phrases using whole Pronouns:
a) Gayadöshä' gowëh neh Jane - (the) book belongs to Jane.
b) Gayadöshä' onöwëh neh Judy, koh neh Alice.
c) Gayadöshä' agawëh. - (the) book (is) mine.
d) Gayadöshä' ögwawëh. - (the) book (is) ours.

Possessive Pronouns as Prefixes

Next to the extreme importance of learning the Seneca vowels, is learning the Pronouns. The possessive pronouns listed below are regular pronouns. Learn these first. The prefixes support other words. Pronoun prefixes play a major role in the compounding of most Seneca words. Become familiar with the prefixes, they hold important information regarding the rest of the word-phrase. It helps to memorize the pronouns and prefixes in the order written.
Pronominal prefixes show Number and/or Gender:

agawëh	-	(S)
sawëh	-	(S)

gowëh	-	(S-F)
howëh	-	(S-M)
ow**ë**h	-	(S-N)
snyawëh	-	(D-Exc.)
ögyawëh	-	(D-Inc.)
onöwëh	-	(D-F)
honöwëh	-	(D-M)
swawëh	-	(P-Exc.)
ögwawëh	-	(P-Inc.)
honöwëh	-	(P-M), (P-M/F), (D-M)
onöwëh	-	(P-F), (D-F)

The Pronoun prefixes give you an indication who is involved in the rest of the word; is that person a male or female, or is it neither; how many persons are involved in the rest of the word, 1,2, or more? Just by knowing this much is important in comprehending the rest of the word.

WORD-PHRASE

A word to be used with increased frequency will be 'word-phrase'. It must be studied and learned how words are compounded (built up). English words are also compounded, i.e. happy   happily   **un**happi**ly** or that famous of compounded words: anti-establish-mentarianism. We know how to use prefixes like un, pre, re and suffixes like ing, ed, ly.

Seneca also has prefixes like de′, tga, and suffixes like e:s, iyoh. Most Seneca prefixes are pronominal prefixes. The function of Seneca suffixes generally describes. These compounded words become noun-phrases, verb-phrases; and adjective-phrases.

We know as many English words as we need to get points across and to communicate effectively. We don't use ALL the words in Webster's dictionary, but we can read, pronounce; and use them. The major reason to reading. And in learning how to read Seneca. We can't memorize ALL the words in a Seneca dictionary, but with the ability to read, words can be pronounced correctly and used to expand vocabulary. Learning Seneca is a challenge, its all about memory. But there's no need to be overwhelmed, there will be steps and explanation, learning is easier if you understand the "why" of things.

NOUNS

A pronominal prefix in combination with a NOUN stem indicates number and/or gender in that combination. NOUNS are whole words, but lose their first syllable to accommodate the pronoun prefix. This 'Grammar' part will not be a point to stress right now. It's just to show that it's a study in itself. First things first. Its to show where the pronoun prefix appears in a word.

Pronoun: **sa**wëh -your (S)   Noun: gahigwä:' - hat
Pronoun prefix: **sa**   Noun stem: higwä:'
Noun-phrase: **sa**higwä:' - your hat

Pronoun: **onö**wĕh – theirs (D-F) Noun: ahdahgwa' – shoes
Pronoun prefix: **onö**   Noun stem - dahgwa'
            Noun-phrase: **onö**:dahgwa' – the (twin) girl's shoes

Notice the colon (:) in place of the 1st **h** in ahdahgwa', that is because the **h** served as a slight accent, the (:) lengthens enough to make a smooth transition. Note: do not be concerned about what letter drops and why that symbol or that stress took its place. It just shows that Seneca is a "real" language and has rules. Rules we have not worked out yet.

Pronouns and Nouns

It bears repeating, it is okay to use whole pronouns with nouns. You will be speaking some Seneca and you will be understood. For practice, say these nouns before each of the 13 pronouns listed on page 23.

Car – ga'sehda' (gawh!-say-dawh!)   Ex: Ga'sehda' agawĕh.
Hat – gahi:gwä' (gaw-hee-gwäh!)
Pen – yeyadöhgwa' (yay-yaw-donh-gwah!)
Gum - o:sowa'da' (oh-soh-wawh!-dawh)
$ 1.00 – sga:wisda:d (sgaw-wees-dawd)

In this exercise, say the pronoun first, say the, and then a noun.
    The – neh (nayh)   Ex: agawĕh neh ga'sehda'.

In this last exercise, begin with a name (omit yourself), pronoun, the, then the noun. Remember the number, gender, and pronoun must be compatible. Keep in mind the Inclusive and the exclusive. Hey! you are speaking Seneca!!

        And – koh (koh)
        Me – I' (eeh!)
    Ex: Alice, koh neh Jill onöwĕh neh ga'sehda'.

About Nouns:

There are two types of nouns, those that are descriptive and those that are not. The descriptive words, which can be dissected are original words because our ancestors identified them that way; seeing their natural elements. Those that cannot be dissected are also original for the same reason.
It was not until people from other lands across the oceans came bringing with them different things that our ancestors invented words. These words were also descriptive, but they described the new things. Its for this reason that word development can be linked to stages of time in terms of eras.
Ex: ga'sgwa:' (stone); gayahdowe'sha' (thigh covers); gaisda'es (clock)
    (orig.)   (orig./ can dissect.)   (invented)

Noun-Phrases

There are many, many Seneca nouns. Besides being prefixed with pronouns, they are suffixed with description. Ho′sehdase:′ – he has a new car. This noun-phrase is a combination of: **ho**wëh+ga′**sehda**′+wa**se:′**. New learners are given tools for conversing, starting with vowels, then pronouns, followed with noun lists, and some verb-phrases to start sentences. Numbers, colors, animals, and foods (bare nouns) are added so the conversation progresses from single utterances to meaningful communication. It is just as well to introduce noun-phrases without analyzing the word's makeup or history. The goal is to help the learner of language succeed in speaking the language.

Examples of Regular Noun Phrases

age′se:da′ – my car   sahso:d – your gramma
godöni′a:a – baby girl   ho′nih – his father
ono′ëh – its mother   snyahdahgwa′ – your shoes
ögwadeo′ – our friend   swa′se:da′ – your car
ögwa′se:da′ – our car   honöhdahgwa′ – their shoes
onöhdahgwa′ – their shoes   snyadeo′ – your friend

Self test: make sure you understand these noun phrases, what's the gender, the number, is it inclusive or exclusive? Compose your own phrases, use the noun stems and your choice of pronoun prefix:

1.   4.
2.   5.
3.   6.

VERB PHRASES

Verbs, being action words are an important part of every conversation. Unlike English verbs which can stand alone without the support of a pronoun i.e. he runs; she sings, they dance. **Seneca verbs cannot stand or act alone**. They need the support of a pronoun. Someone or something needs to be doing whatever.

There is no way of listing bare verbs. If one was to say "dekönih", it is an incomplete word, it is only a verb stem of 'eat'. It needs a pronoun to complete it, like: **sa**dekönih – you(S) eat; **snya**dekönih – (the) 2 of you eat (D/Exc.);
        swadekönih – (the) 4 of you eat (P/Exc.).
another ex: jë:h is a verb stem of 'sit'. To complete the word is to use the pronoun prefixes of: **sa**jë:h; **snya**jë:h; **swa**jë:h. Six perfectly appointed sentences now for your use: sadekönih; snyadekönih; swadekönih; sajë:h; snyajë:h; swajë:h.

Take the time to review The Seneca Verb, this book contains many verbs conjugated in all thirteen pronouns. These verbs are conjugated in both regular

and irregular pronoun prefixes. Do your research under the Present tense portion of the Pronoun grids, in particular.

Seneca does not use an excessive amount of words. Notice the Seneca word snyadekönih. It takes five English words to give the meaning of one word (the two of you eat).

The pronoun prefix "snya" holds relevant information, we know that there's 2 persons, and that I'm not 1 of them being invited, what is not known is the gender of the 2 persons. If the sentence read: Jane, Alice, snyadekönih; now we would know that the gender was feminine, either 2 girls or 2 women. If the sentence read: Jane, Alice, snyajë:h, snyadekönih. A perfect sentence. Number and gender are compatible in both verb-phrases.

Jane, Alice (D females); **snya**jë:h (you D sit); **snya**dekönih (you D eat).

Examples of Regular Verb Phrases

sadeyësta′ – you are studying   gotöde′ – she hears
hotga:nye:h – he's playing   odeköni:h – it's eating
snya:dë:dih – you go   ögyahjö′öh – we're afraid
swëda′öh – you're asleep   honö:dë:jö:h – they have gone
ohjö′öh – it's afraid   goda′öh – she's asleep
agatga:nye:h – I'm playing   onötöde′ – they heard

Self test: Make sure you understand these verb phrases, what is the gender, the number, is it inclusive or exclusive? Compose your own phrases using the verb stems and your choice of pronoun prefixes:

1.   5.
2.   6.
3.   7.
4.   8.

Adjective-Phrases

Adjectives, like nouns, are whole words. Adjectives describe, words like new, old, ugly, long, nice. A pronominal prefix in combination with an Adjective stem indicates number and gender in that combination. Adjectives are neutral words; they are 'it' words: its new-wa:se:′; its cute-oja:nön; its ugly-ga:etgë′; its tasty-oga′öh.

There are many irregular pronoun prefixes: wa; o; ga; and more, as you have seen in the Seneca Verb book.

The Possessive pronouns also work with adjectives: he is cute – hoja:nön, she is cute - goja:nön;   you are cute - saja:nön; they are cute – honöja:nön.
Ex: your new…- sawa:se:′; my new…- agawa:se:′;   our new…- ogwawa:se:′

Take the time to look over any of the available dictionaries and reference books. Foods generally start with the letter 'o', even though they are nouns, they are also 'it' words. Remember the pronoun 'its', **owëh**.

Examples of Regular Pronoun Adjective Phrases

The adjective stem for this exercise is: **ja:nön** (cute). After each word, write the meaning and include the identifiers (S); (D); (P); (F); (M); (N); (Exc.); (Inc.).

1. onöja:nön -
2. hoja:nön -
3. oja:nön -
4. ögyja:nön -

5. swaja:nön –
6. onöja:nön –
7. snyaja:nön –
8. ögwaja:nön -

Example of Regular Pronoun Adjective Phrases

Self test: you will write out an adjective phrase of each of the 13 possessive pronouns using this adjective stem: __**de'sehdase:sdöh** (__have/has gotten a new car). Include the identifiers (S); (D); (P), (F); (M); (N); (Exc.); (Inc.) as needed for each phrase.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.

OBJECTIVE PRONOUNS

An Objective Pronoun relates to a Possessive Pronoun prefix in any noun, verb, or adjective phrase. If this combination of objective/possessive pronouns is used both pronouns must be compatible in number and gender.

In English one could say "the boy said he was going to his home". The words 'he' and 'his' is an objective/possessive combination and compatible because boy, he, and his are each Singular in number and Masculine in gender. This is true in Seneca grammar as well.

Neh	haksa'a	waë'	tonöhso:d	hëshe:'.
The	boy	he said	to his home	he was going.
	(S/M)	(S/M)	(S/M)	(S/M)

Note: The sentence above illustrates number and gender compatibility only. No doubt you have noticed unfamiliar pronoun prefixes. Explanations are forthcoming. First things first.

Objective Pronouns

i′ ; ni′	-	me; I; us (D-Inc., P-Inc.)
i:s ; nis	-	you (S, D-Inc., D-Exc., P)
ga:hö′	-	she; her
ha:hö′	-	he, him
a:hö′	-	it
honöhö′	-	them; they (M, M/F)
onöhö′	-	them; they (F)

Objective/Possessive Combinations

i′ agawëh	me/mine (S)
i:s sawëh	you/your (S)
ga:hö′ gowëh	her/hers (F-S)
ha:hö′ howëh	him/his (M/S)
a:hö′ owëh	it/its (N/S)
i:s snyawëh	you/yours (D-Exc.)
i′ ögywëh	us/ours (D-Inc.)
onöhö′ onöwëh	they/theirs (D/F)
honöhö′ honöwëh	they/theirs (D/M)
i:s swawëh	you/yours (P-Exc.)
i′ ögwawëh	us/ours (P-Inc.)
onöhö′ onöwëh	they/theirs (P-F)
honöh′ honöwëh	they/theirs (P-M/F)

Back in the section USING WHOLE PRONOUNS it was said that it's okay to use a whole pronoun with a noun in a sentence. It is also okay to use an objective and possessive pronoun combination with a noun. A simple sentence? Yes, but you will be understood. And you will be speaking good Seneca. You can say:

I′ agawëh gayadöshä′. [My book.]   gayadöshä′ – book
Ha:hö′ howëh neh gayadöshä′. [His book.]   neh – the
I:s swawëh hi:gëh gayadöshä′shö′öh.   hi:gëh – that   [shö′öh – plural suffix].
Ga:hö′ gowëh hi:gëh yeyadöhgwa′ .   yeyadöhgwa′ – pen or pencil
Ga:hö′ gowëh neh gaji′ga:ya′.   gaji′ga:ya′ - chair
Ga:hö′ gowëh neh gayadöshä′, koh neh yeyadöhgwa′.   koh - and

The aim of this lesson is to introduce Objective Pronouns, how they work with possessive pronouns and their purpose is to provide emphasis in this combination in usage. At some point in communicating in Seneca, it will be appropriate to respond to a question using this pronoun combo method; or just to make a statement.

Note: To ask a question regarding **ownership**, and this section is about possession, one would ask in English: who's is this? Or who does this belong to?   [söh – who]

In Seneca, if the item might belong to a female, one would ask: *söh gowëh ?*
If the item may belong to a male, one would ask: *söh howëh ?*
If the item is of a general nature, the question would be: *söh gowëh ?*
In response, if it belongs to you, you'd say: *i' agawëh.*
If it belongs to a female who is not present to claim it, if you know, and want to say, you can say: Rhoda gowëh; or if it belongs to a male, you can say: Edgar howëh.

It is important to speak Seneca at every least little bit of opportunity. Even if you just substitute a Seneca word here and there, even little words like koh, and neh. The goal is to "own" the words, and to say the words like you mean it, with expression. In this lesson, *i' agawëh* can be expressed in passing, or it can be said matter-of-factly, or it can be said more emphatically. Try it…

Note: even though *neh* is equivalent of **'the'**, it is not used in conversation as the beginning of a sentence. To begin any sentence above with *neh* would not sound right; it would sound like the sentence stopped midway, that there was more to be said and wasn't. An objective/possessive combo <u>starts</u> the sentence as the six sample sentences above illustrate.
An objective/possessive combination type of a sentence's use is some what limited, but it does have its place in your 'language repretoire'. It adds to one's language skills and readily available when needed.

WORD ORDER

There is always the question about **word order** in a sentence. We already know a Seneca sentence does not start with <u>The.</u> Speaking English is so firmly ingrained in our conversation the 'word order' of an English sentence is as natural as breathing, but there is word order, English nouns, verbs and all the rest. That's why there's English class! The English language has been taught a whole lot longer than Seneca. Seneca is still in development, there are few rules; word order is still iffy.
If the verb-phrase is said first, neh/the is used, then the noun: *Gadake', neh jiyäh.*
If the noun is said first, then the verb-phrase; no *the* is needed: *Jiyäh gadake'.*

Both Seneca sentences are right, both make sense, both say the same thing. To put *neh* between *jiyäh* and *gadake'* would make the sentence awkward.

noun: jiyäh – dog ;   verb-phrase: gadake' – it is running; {CP}- **connecting phrase**

These choices of word order seem to consistently work in communication:

A) *Ganöse:sge:gwah daë:ne' neh hënödëno:ta'.*

Ganöse:sge:gwah	daë:ne'	neh	hënödëno:ta'.
toward (the) longhouse	they(PM) are coming	the	singers (PM)

| Noun-phrase | verb-phrase | {CP} | noun |

B) Hënödëno:ta′ daë:ne′ ganösesge:gwah.

Hënödëno:ta′	daë:ne′	ganöse:sge:gwah.
singers (PM)	they (PM) are coming	toward (the) longhouse
Noun	verb-phrase	noun-phrase

C) D′aë:ne′ hënödëno:ta′ ganöse:sge:gwah.

If you are a "man of few words", say: *hënödënota′ daë:ne′.*

The point in this scenario is that 'singers are coming toward the longhouse'. Every sentence above creates a mental picture and **that** is what is important. The mental picture could have been enhanced by adding an adjective-phrase that describes the singers are young, or old, or many. The adjective-phrase [hadigëhjih – old] would precede singers: *hadigëjih hënödëno:ta′.*
Understanding comes when the mental image of an idea, or a concept occurs, and you can think "I see it now".

The scenario below creates a mental picture of someone urging another to 'look at the picture of the cute children':

A) Satsi′waëh hadiya′da:′ neh honönjanön hadiksa′shö′öh.

Satsi′waëh	hadiya′da:′	neh	honönjanön	hadiksa′shö′öh.
you(S) look at	their(PM) picture	the	they(PM) are cute	children(PM)
Verb-phrase	noun-phrase	{CP}	adjective-phrase	noun

B) Honönjanön hadiksa′shö′öh hadiya′da:′, satsi′waëh.

Honönjanön	hadiksa′shö′öh	hadiya′da:′	satsi′waëh.
they(PM) are cute	children(PM)	their(PM) picture	you(S) look at
adjective-phrase	noun	noun-phrase	verb-phrase

C) Hadiya′da:′ honönjanön hadiksa′sö′öh, satsi′waeh.

All these variations of Seneca word-order get the point across to the listener. The words flow smoothly. Even if the *neh* in (A) was omitted the sentence would still make sense and sound right. Now read the English translation of any one of the above as a sentence. Not only is it choppy, but it tends to distort your mental picture, quite like the distortion caused by atmospheric disturbance between the satellite and your television screen. Picture that.

The problem comes when attempts are made to make the Seneca word-order (sentence) to translate as an English word-order (sentence). The English becomes the proverbial square trying to fit a round hole. It must be remembered that the function of English, in addition to supplying letter symbols for writing Seneca words, is as utility; as a tool to help explain the meanings of Seneca vocabulary. Any language, German,

Oneida, Spanish, etc… could explain Seneca vocabulary. An animal with a long trunk can be named and explained in any language regardless of the word-order typical of that language.

CONNECTING PHRASES {CP}

Words like this; that; where, into; etc… take on different grammatical identities according to usage in English. Seneca has these words also. Perhaps in time a linguistic approach will be taken to decipher these words as they exist in Seneca. In the mean time these words are in a grab bag labeled 'Connecting Phrases'.

Learners and young teachers learning Seneca use several approaches to reach their goal, to speak with clarity. Listening to recorded first language speakers, or to elders speaking in the community, they noticed that what they heard was more than what they were learning through prescribed means. What was missing in the latter were these connecting words and phrases. In the past, lists of nouns were taught, lists of numbers, verb-phrases and adjectives, these lists were called family, home, animals, numbers, imperatives, and descriptions. This was okay.

Having said all that, there was this gap and it was hard to create a sentence. Particularly the way the elders spoke because the "helper words" were not being taught. Connecting phrases are words, single, or clustered, which hold the main idea words together. One needs words to express when, how, where, etc…, there, this, that…Below are two question and answer sentences showing the use of *connecting phrases*; and how an elder could say it, and what a student was taught:

Elder: *Gawe* agawëh gayadöshä' *ho:gwah* gaji'gaya'geh gayë:dak ?
　　　　Where is　my　　book　　*there*　chair　　on　setting　was
Student: *Gawe* gayadöshä' ?

Elder: *Nëdah* sawëh gayadöshä' *ho:gwah* gaji'gaya'geh gayë:dak.
　　　　Here is　your　　book　　*there*　chair　　on　setting　was
Student: *Nëdah* gayadöshä'.

Elder: *Dë'ëh gyö'öh*　*naywa'* hadöh　　*hi:gëh* hota:' ?
　　　　What supposedly this time　he's saying *that*　his talk
Student: *Dë'ëh* hadöh ?

Elder: *Di'gwa:h,* da'agatöde' *na'od*　　　hadöh　　*hi:gëh* hota:'.
　　　　Unknown,　I didn't hear *what about*　he's saying *that*　his talk
Student: *Di'gwa:h.*

The methodology and scope of teaching Seneca language expands continuously. More is being learned about the language so that it can be developed and passed on to learners. The goal of developers and writers of the Seneca language is to extract as much of the heart and soul of our beautiful traditionally oral language., so that learners can internalize pictorially the richness and depth of words… First things first.

The 1000 Hours of Elders' Speech CDs are available for listening experience. Seneca spoken naturally by first language speakers will give the learner a sense of rhythm and expression from the use of the stresses so characteristic of Seneca.

The pamphlet Seneca Connecting Phrases is available as a resource. Several of the CDs provided the material from which spoken connecting phrases were isolated, written and made available for teaching more extended sentences. These phrases are not identified grammatically, though many are obviously prepositions. All are given a {CP} icon

Take the time to review the Seneca Connecting Phrases, try to include time in your study to listen to any of the thirty-plus CDs of Elders natural speech. The elders invested nearly two years in the recording of these valuable CDs.

PREFIXES and SUFFIXES

Back on page 13, there was a short refresher course briefly explaining what prefixes and suffixes do. That a prefix and a suffix is nothing more than a cluster of a few letters that affixes itself before or after a Seneca word, but it will sure matter in meaning.
It seems like Seneca words cannot get along without these letter clusters. This is what 'compounding' is all about. Attaching prefixes and suffixes to a stem and creating a unique word, something fluent speakers of Seneca can do. There's already volumes of compounded words written and recorded, and more are being written daily. It will help in the process of learning the Seneca language to know a word's "anatomy". Its parts, and the meaning of those parts. To know the word's parts will take the mystery out of Seneca being SO complicated and SO difficult to learn that all that there will be to be said will be 'it's SO hard to remember'. Fundamentals does not cover Memory. It can only introduce the basics of Seneca step by step, and try to provide to the learners some tools to make the effort easier. The result will be totally worthwhile!

Prefix "t"

Take the word for house - *ganöhso:d*, in the mind's eye the house is here. Put a "t" in front as a prefix, *t'ganöhso:d*, and the house is over there.
Take: tree – *gäid*, now you wonder where that tree really is, but not for long; put the prefix "t" in front, *t'gäid,* and the tree is over there.
Your car, you parked it here; *ga'sehdayë'.* The prefix "t" puts it over there, *t'ga'sehdayë'.*
You think about going to the store, *hadëni:nösgeh*; the prefix "t" puts distance between you and the store, *t'hadëni:nösgeh.*

Suffix "geh"

This suffix "geh" means "at". The store you were gong to, *hadëni:nösgeh* is suffixed with "geh". The word for store is *hadëni:nös,* the literal meaning is 'he sells', (verb-

phrase). To add the suffix "geh" changes the word to mean 'he sells at', now the word becomes a <u>place,</u> a noun-phrase, *hadëni:nösgeh*.

The word for longhouse is *ganöhse:s*. The suffix "geh" makes it a <u>place</u>, *ganöse:sgeh*.

Your child needs to see a doctor *hade:jë's* (he cures), you go *hade:jë'sgeh* now!

Car needs repair? Call the mechanic *hade'sehdö:nis* (he fixes cars), and go *hade'sehdö:nisgeh* on Monday.

What images appeared in your mind from the words *hade:jë'sgeh* and *hade'sehdönisgeh* ? If you pictured a doctor in an examining room tending to your child; and if you pictured a mechanic at the garage working on your car, you have internalized these two words pictorially, and you can say "I saw it".

To see it is to comprehend. Some people will say 'I understand Seneca, but I can't speak it'. Understanding Seneca is a great start.

Suffix "shö'öh"

The suffix "shö'öh" makes a word plural, like the 's' in dogs, cats, boys, hats, etc…
Read (aloud) the list left to right. Remember, speak Seneca at every opportunity?

car – ga'sehda'	cars – ga'sehda'shö'öh
dog – jiyäh	dogs - jiyähshö'öh
cat - dagoji'	cats – dagoji'shö'öh
chair – gaji'ga:ya'	chairs – gaji'ga:ya'shö'öh
flower – awëö'	flowers – awëö'
shoe – ahdahgwa'	shoes –
purse – gatgwë'da'	purses –
seed – onöhgwëö'	seeds –

This list and the short interactive exercise is to show what "shö'öh" can do. It generally works for basic noun words of animals, and generic terms.

Some words have their own plural terms, like man (högweh) – men (hĕnögweh); woman (yagögweh) – women (wĕnögweh).

There's some words where "shö'" works better. Number words like ones, as in 'by ones' (sga:shö'); by twos (dekni:shö'); by fives (wi:shö'); by tens (washĕ:shö').

It can't be said with any certainty that "shö'" was once "shö'öh" and through time was shortened; or maybe not.

Just for fun, try using these two suffixes with other words and numbers, some may sound 'right', some may be awkward to say and wrong. Watch teacher's expression…

Suffix "e:s"

The suffix "e:s" indicates 'length'. Below is a list of nouns suffixed with "e:s":

ga'sehda'	ga'sehde:s – long car
ganöhsa'	ganöhse:s – long house
gaji'ga:ya'	gaji'gaye:s – long chair (sofa, bench.etc)
oge'ä'	oge'e:s – long hair

ganyahji'da'   ganyahji'de:s – long braid
gäid   gäide:s – tall tree
onëhda'   onëhde:s – long leaf

This is a list of phrases suffixed with "e:s":
haneye:s   he is tall
deyöhsi'de:s   she has long feet
wenishe:s   it's a long day
gayë:de:s   it's a long game (dish bowl)
ganya'se:s   its long neck - giraffe
gagöswe:s   its long trunk - elephant
honö'kwëse:s   he stays mad long (time)

Suffix "göh"

The suffix "göh" means 'in', as the list below will show:
ganöhsagöh   in the house
ga'sehdagöh   in the car
gayä:göh   in the bag
gatgwe'dagöh   in the purse
gaöshägöh   in the box
ga'ashägöh   in the basket

Suffix "gö:gwah"

This suffix "gö:gwah" comes from the word *nö'gö:gwah* (under, underneath).
ganöhsagö:gwah   under the house
ga'sehdagö:gwah   under the car
gayägö:gwah   under the bag
gatgwë'dagö:gwah   under the purse
gaöshägö:gwah   under the box
ga'ashägö:gwah   under the basket

Suffix "i:yoh"

This suffix "i:yoh" comes from the word *wi:yoh* (good, nice).
ganöhsi:yoh   nice house
ga'sehdi:yoh   nice car
wenitsi:yoh   good day
wahsöndi:yoh   nice night
ohsohgwi:yoh   nice color
gahkwi:yoh   good food

A list of phrases suffixed with "i:yoh":
sögwe'di:yoh   you are a nice person
wajanö'di:yoh   it's a good show/movie

sahdahgwi:yoh	you have nice shoes
hadiksaʹdi:yoh	they are good children
gënjohgwi:yoh	it's a good crowd
sadäʹswi:yoh	you are lucky

To know the prefixes and suffixes greatly expands vocabulary. It can be seen the mileage the noun *gaʹsehdaʹ* gains by adding suffixes, and there's more…

Suffix "ga:yöh"

The suffix "ga:yöh" comes from the word 'waga:yöh' meaning 'old':

ganöhsaga:yöh	old house
gaʹsehdaga:yöh	old car
gaënöga:yöh	old song
oähgwaga:yöh	old bread
gäidaga:yöh	old tree
gaihwaga:yöh	old story

Suffix "wa:nëh"

This suffix "wa:nëh" comes from the word 'gowa:nëh' meaning 'big, large':

ganöhsowa:nëh	large house
gaʹsehdowa:nëh	big car
owisdowa:nëh	big money
gaiʹstowa:nëh	big noise (noisy)
wënisyowa:nëh	big day
Gajisdowa:nëh	big light

Suffix "shäʹ:

The suffix "shäʹ" comes from the word 'wajäʹdashäʹ' meaning 'used for':

adogwaʹshäʹ	used for dipping
gayahdoweʹshäʹ	used for covering thighs
gayadöshäʹ	used for writing
gaganyaʹshäʹ	used for cutting
gahodögwaʹshäʹ	used for opening
gasgawaʹshäʹ	used for sweeping

Suffix "a:a"

This suffix "a:a" comes from the word 'newaʹa:a' meaning 'it's small, little':

godöniʹa:a	little baby girl
haksaʹa:a	small boy child
yeksaʹa:a	small girl child

The following words are prefixed with 'ne'(**it** is), as well as suffixed with 'a:a':

The noun-stem is 'sandwiched' between 'ne' and 'a:a'. These are **it** words:

neganöhsa'a:a	(it's a)	small house
nega'sehda'a:a	"	small car
neganögda'a:	"	small bed
negëjohgwa'a:a	"	small crowd
neyoi:waka:a	"	small message
neganö'ja'a:a	"	little pail

By now you are wondering why so many of the words in these lists begin with *wa, o,* and mostly *ga* . That is because these are **it** words; non-person, neutral gender (N).

Suffix "se:'"

The suffix "se:'" comes from the word '*wase:*' meaning 'new':

ga'sehdase:'	new car
ganöhsase:'	new house
gaënöse:'	new song
gatgwë'dase:'	new purse
gakwase:'	new food
wënishäse:'	new day

Prefix "de'", "da'"

The prefixes "de'" and "da'" negate, each make a word a negative as these words will show:

doges – true	de'doges – untrue
sawëh – yours	de'sawëh – not yours
knoi's – I like	de'knoi's - I don't like
agënöhdö' – I know	da'agënöhdö' – I don't know
gwisdë' – something	da'gwisdë' – da'gwisdë'
gatga'hoh – somewhere	de'gatga'hoh - nowhere

Prefix "de", Suffix "ge:h"

This prefix "de" and suffix "ge:h" comes from the word dewa:ge:h (of two):

deganöhsa:ge:h	two houses
deyögwe'da:ge:h	two persons
degawisda:ge:h	two dollars
degahsyö'shä:ge:h	two shillings ($.25)
deyosai'dage:h	two beans
degayadöshäge:h	two papers, books

Prefix "ë"

The prefix "ë" designates Future Tense as the following samples will show:

Ë:yeyadö:'	she will write

Ësgahdë:di′	I will be leaving
Ë:sadeköni′	you will eat
Ë:dwado:wi′	we shall drive
Ë:gehsyöni′	I'm going to make
Ë:geha′tsihsa:g	I will look for a job

The book Seneca Verbs is an excellent resource for researching conjugated verbs in all the tenses. Many verbs have been documented, and still more need to be in the future. As you have worked through the prefixes and the suffixes, no doubt notice has been taken that some pronouns have been unfamiliar, not what has been learned as regular pronouns…

That is because there are *irregular* pronouns, but they are important too, very important.

Regular Pronouns were introduced first because they serve to build a strong foundation for understanding the complexities coming later, like the Prefixes, the Suffixes, Tenses and the Irregular Pronouns. Irregular Pronouns may well cause the worst headache…

Fundamentals doesn't address medical problems, but it may suggest gingko biloba for memory. Take a sneak peek at the Irregulars opposite the listed Regular pronouns:

Regular:	Irregular Pronouns within words:
Agawëh	o′ge:gë′; ho′ge′; kninöh; kyadö:′;
Sawëh	ho′se′; tsnöge′; se:gëh; nöda:se:′; sägo:eh;
Gowëh	wa′agë′; yeyadö:′; jagohsa:′; yöjëönya:nih;
Howëh	hade:jë′s; ëö:gë′; wa:e′; shagoyenö:s;
Owëh	gaya′daha′; deyosaid; wa:döh;
Snyawëh	snida′öh; dasnia′;
Ogyawëh	jahdëdih; dehni:dat; nyatsi′waëh;
Onöwëh	knigëh; jonöhsa:′; odigë:h; knya:saha′;
Honöwëh	hi:gëh; i:ne:h; wa:niyö′;
Swawëh	ëswi′; jiswasa:′;
Ögwawëh	dwagëh; deyögwata:′;
Honöwëh	nyonöjeëh; wadigë′; ëödi:yö′; waënötsi′waë′; deodita:′;
Onöwëh	wadi:gëh; odi:ta:′; wënötaine′; neyonöjeëh

The illustrating irregulars are whole words, each of them can be conjugated just like the thirteen regular ones. Many of these irregulars sound similar, like in snya – sni; or swa – swi; onö – odi; ögwa – dwa.

The Seneca Verbs book will be the best tool for learning the Irregular Pronoun words. To start, study only the top Present Tense column first, say each word right down the line, there are thirteen words. Regular Pronoun words are conjugated in that book, as well. Feel free to explore and read aloud. Speaking Seneca is different from speaking English. Reading aloud will greatly help you in the way of speaking to adjust to spoken Seneca.

Fundamentals of Seneca has walked you from the basics to an intermediate level in Seneca Language Education.

I have not taken the path of linguistics, per se, but I have tried to create an environment of learning Seneca and its crucial grammatical parts in a more systematic and analytical way; toward removing some of the mystery of this traditionally oral language. This publication is a revision of the original Fundamentals of Seneca. It is hoped that this present work has surpassed the former edition, and brings greater benefit and success to Seneca Language learners.

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