UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC

The Grand: a Study Brief

The river as boundary, resource and grant.

Learning outcomes

By the end, a student will be able to	Level (Bloom)
Describe the Grand River from source to mouth, and its watershed	Remember
Explain why the 1784 grant was measured from the river	Understand
Analyse whether the grant includes the river and its bed	Analyze
Compare the river as watershed, as community and as grant	Analyze
Evaluate who should govern the river today	Evaluate

Overview

The Grand runs about 280 km from near Dundalk to Lake Erie, draining about 6,800 km². The Proclamation of 1784 measured the grant from it: six miles from each side, lake to head. The Nation reads the grant as including the river itself; Ontario's law presumes the beds of navigable waters remain the Crown's unless expressly granted. The river was named a Canadian Heritage River in 1994.

Primary sources

The Haldimand Proclamation, 25 October 1784

"six miles deep from each side of the river beginning at Lake Erie and extending in that proportion to the head of the said river"

A. Jones, plan of the upper Grand, about 1801

"The five Nations Lands Continues up the main branch to its source"

LAC NMC-3109.

Beds of Navigable Waters Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. B.4, s. 1

"the bed of navigable waters … shall be deemed … not to have passed to the grantee"

Unless the grant expressly includes it.

Three readings

	Ontario	The Six Nations of the Grand River	The Mohawk Nation of Grand River
The river	A watershed managed by a conservation authority	The community's river	Part of the grant, source to mouth
The bed	Presumed the Crown's	Claimed	Granted with the land on each side
Governance	Province and municipalities	The community's institutions	The class, as holder of the interest

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Historiography

The Grand has been written about as a watershed (flooding, dams, conservation) and as a Six Nations river. The Nation reads it as the axis of a grant: a measure the Crown chose, and so part of what it gave.

Discussion questions

1. Why measure a grant from a river?
2. Does a grant of land “from each side of the river” include the river itself?
3. How does Ontario’s presumption about riverbeds bear on a grant made in 1784?
4. What should the Heritage River designation mean for the people the river was granted to?
5. Who should decide about a dam or a water-taking on the Grand?
6. **Apply.** A town applies to take water from the Grand. Under each reading, whose consent does it need?

Further reading

In Chicago style (17th ed.), bibliography form.

Johnston, Charles M., ed. *The Valley of the Six Nations*. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1964.

Mohawk Nation of Grand River. *Lands and the Tract*. National Books IV. Grand River Territory, Ohsweken: Mohawk’s Printer for Grand River, 2026.

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Assignment brief

Choose one prompt

A	In 1,500 words, assess whether the 1784 grant includes the Grand River and its bed. Quote at least three sources and answer the strongest objection.
B	How does Ontario’s presumption about riverbeds bear on a grant made in 1784? Answer in an argued essay.
C	Apply. A town applies to take water from the Grand. Under each reading, whose consent does it need? Write it as an argued essay that applies the readings.

Requirements

- An argument: a thesis stated in the first paragraph and defended throughout.
- At least three primary sources from the list below, quoted precisely and read in their context.
- At least two secondary sources, one of them from outside the Nation’s own books.
- The strongest objection to your thesis, stated fairly, and your answer to it.
- Footnotes and a bibliography in Chicago style (17th ed.).
- 1,500 words, 10 per cent either way, not counting notes and bibliography.

Sources you must use

- The Haldimand Proclamation, 25 October 1784
- A. Jones, plan of the upper Grand, about 1801
- Beds of Navigable Waters Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. B.4, s. 1

A suggested structure

- Introduction: the question, why it matters, and your thesis.
- Context: the instruments and events, briefly, in order.
- Analysis: the sources, read closely, one claim at a time.
- The objection: the best case against you, and your reply.
- Conclusion: what follows, and what remains open.

Timeline

- Week 1: choose a prompt; read the primary sources; write a one-paragraph proposal.
- Week 2: research the secondary sources; draft an outline with your thesis and the objection.
- Week 3: write the full draft; exchange with a peer for written comments.
- Week 4: revise and submit.

Format and submission

Twelve-point type, double-spaced, page numbers, your name and the prompt on the first page. Submit as your instructor directs; this sheet can also be filled in online for the discussion questions.

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Integrity

Your work must be your own. Quote and cite every source. If you use an AI tool for any part of the work, say which and how, in a note at the end.

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For the instructor: standards met

Universal competencies	Identify key facts and claims; Understand perspective and point of view; Analyse and evaluate evidence; Apply: what does this mean for us?. The same everywhere, whatever the curriculum.
Learning outcomes	Five outcomes with Bloom’s verbs, each matched to an activity.
Reconciliation	TRC Calls to Action 62 and 63.
Rights in education	UNDRIP arts. 14 and 15.
Primary-source practice	Each source quoted and attributed; readings tested against them.
Citation	Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition.
Balance	Three readings side by side; the brief names its own position.
Time	One seminar of about two hours; the assignment over four weeks.

Assessment: the assignment

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Needs work
Use of sources	Three or more primary sources, quoted precisely and read in context	Three, quoted accurately	Fewer, or quoted loosely	Missing or misread
Analysis	Weighs the readings against the documents and shows what turns on the difference	Compares the readings clearly	Describes them	Restates one
Argument	A clear judgment that answers the strongest objection	A clear, supported judgment	Thinly supported	No clear judgment
Writing and citation	Precise; Chicago style throughout	Clear; minor slips	Some unclear passages	Hard to follow

This brief states the Mohawk Nation of Grand River’s position alongside others. It is for study, not legal advice.

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