UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC

The Royal Chapel: a Study Brief

A Chapel Royal on the Grand: faith, Crown and jurisdiction.

Learning outcomes

By the end, a student will be able to	Level (Bloom)
Recount the chapel's history from 1710 to 2023	Remember
Explain what a Chapel Royal is	Understand
Analyse the Crown's marks in the chapel as evidence	Analyze
Compare the chapel as historic site, as church and as free chapel of the Crown	Analyze
Evaluate the Nation's claim that no denomination should own it	Evaluate

Overview

Queen Anne's gifts of 1712 came from Fort Hunter to the Grand, where the Crown built the chapel in 1785. It became a Chapel Royal in 1904 and a National Historic Site in 1981, and received its own arms in 2023. Over the door hang the Royal Arms of George III with the lilies of France, dropped in 1801, so the carving is as old as the chapel; the bell carries the King's broad arrow. The Nation reads the chapel as a free chapel of the Crown, with exempt jurisdiction.

Primary sources

The federal plaque, 1 October 1984

"Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks"

In English, French and Mohawk.

Queen Anne's silver, 1712

"For Her Majesty's Church of the Mohawks"

The inscription on her gifts.

The Royal Arms over the door

"the lilies of France, dropped from the arms in 1801"

A dating clue: the carving predates 1801.

Three readings

	Canada	Its keepers	The Mohawk Nation of Grand River
What it is	A National Historic Site	A chapel of the church	A free chapel of the Crown
Who governs it	Heritage law	The church and its institutions	The Crown and the Mohawk prerogative
Its marks	Heritage features	Church furnishings	Evidence of the Crown's direct relationship

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Historiography

The chapel has been written about as Ontario’s oldest surviving church and a monument to the Mohawk–Crown alliance. The Nation reads its Crown marks as legal evidence: a royal foundation, a royal chapel, and a direct relationship between the Mohawk and the King.

Discussion questions

1. What makes a chapel “royal”, and what follows from it?
2. What do the Royal Arms over the door and the broad arrow on the bell prove?
3. Why does a three-language plaque matter?
4. Is the chapel a church, a monument, or a free chapel of the Crown? Can it be all three?
5. Who should decide its future?
6. **Apply.** A denomination proposes to sell the chapel’s silver. Under each reading, who decides?

Further reading

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

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Assignment brief

Choose one prompt

A	In 1,500 words, assess the claim that the chapel is a free chapel of the Crown. Use at least three sources.
B	Why does a three-language plaque matter? Answer in an argued essay.
C	Apply. A denomination proposes to sell the chapel’s silver. Under each reading, who decides? 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 federal plaque, 1 October 1984
- Queen Anne’s silver, 1712
- The Royal Arms over the door

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.

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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