MIDDLE SCHOOL · AGES 11 TO 14

The So-Called Reserves

A reserve can be made only on land the Crown holds; the Crown does not hold the Tract.

Read

The Indian Act of 1876 said a reserve is land set apart for a band, whose legal title is held by the Crown. In other words, the Crown can only set apart land it holds.

In 1784 the Crown gave the Tract, six miles from each side of the Grand River, to the class and its posterity, for ever. The Mohawk Nation of Grand River says the Crown therefore did not hold the Tract. So, it says, a reserve can truly lie only outside it.

On Canada’s own map, the Six Nations Reserve covers about 45,580 acres. About 44,160 acres are inside the six-mile line and about 1,420 outside. The New Credit Reserve covers about 6,130 acres, about 1,650 inside and about 4,480 outside. The Nation calls the reserves “so-called” because most of their land lies inside the Tract.

Look

How to read it: inside the line in purple, outside in red.



Natural Resources Canada, v. 2.189

Words to know

Word	What it means here
Reserve	Land set apart for a band under the Indian Act.
Band	A group recognized under the Indian Act.
Legal title	Ownership in law.
Set apart	Kept aside for a purpose.
Tract	The land six miles from each bank of the Grand.
Six-mile line	The edge of the Tract, measured from the river.
So-called	Called by a name the speaker thinks is not quite right.

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Work with a primary source

> *"... any tract or part of the public lands ... of which the legal title is in the Crown, but which is unsurrendered ... set apart for the use or benefit of any particular band of Indians ..."*
>
> Indian Act, S.C. 1876, c. 18, s. 3(6) (shortened).

Ask the source	Your answer
Who must hold the legal title to reserve land?	
Who is a reserve set apart for?	
What does the Nation say the Crown did with the Tract in 1784?	
What can the source not tell us?	

Three points of view

What the reserve is, described three ways. Read each, then explain why they differ.

Who	What the reserve is
Canada	A reserve held by the Crown for the Six Nations band, under the Indian Act.
The Six Nations of the Grand River	The community's remaining land, with claims to much more.
The Mohawk Nation of Grand River	A "so-called" reserve: inside the Tract the land was already given; only the part outside can truly be a reserve.

Claim, evidence, reasoning

Choose one claim the poster makes, for example "a reserve can lie only outside the Tract". Then fill in the table.

Claim	Evidence	Reasoning

Answer

1. **Historical significance.** Why does the definition of a reserve in 1876 matter to the Nation's argument?

2. **Evidence.** Which words in the source say who must hold the land?

3. **Cause and consequence.** If the Crown gave the Tract away in 1784, what follows for a reserve drawn inside it?

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4. **Continuity and change.** What happened to the land between 1784 and today, on the Crown’s account?

5. **Historical perspective.** Why might the Six Nations value the reserve, whatever its legal footing?

6. **Ethical dimension.** Should a map decide whose land it is? What else should?

Think about it. Look at the acres. Why might New Credit have more land outside the line than inside?

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Performance task: Inside and outside the line: a map that explains itself.

Show what you have learned by explaining it to someone else. Your work should help a reader who has never seen the poster understand it.

Choose one

A letter	Write a one-page letter to your Member of Parliament or to the King explaining why the Nation calls the reserves “so-called”, using the Indian Act’s own definition and the acres inside and outside the line.
An infographic	Design a one-page poster that explains why the Nation calls the reserves “so-called”, using the Indian Act’s own definition and the acres inside and outside the line, with a drawing that puts a person in the picture.
A short talk or podcast	Record or give a two-to-three-minute talk explaining why the Nation calls the reserves “so-called”, using the Indian Act’s own definition and the acres inside and outside the line to someone your age.

What your work must include

- At least three facts with their dates.
- One quotation from the primary source, Indian Act, S.C. 1876, c. 18, s. 3, in quotation marks.
- At least three of the “Words to know”, used correctly.
- One point of view other than the Mohawk Nation of Grand River’s, explained fairly (Canada, The Six Nations of the Grand River).
- Your own claim, with the evidence and reasoning behind it.
- A list of the sources you used.

Steps

- Day 1: reread the poster and this sheet; choose your format; write your claim in one sentence.
- Day 2: gather your facts, your quotation and the other point of view; plan your work.
- Day 3: make a first draft; trade with a partner and give each other one compliment and one suggestion.
- Day 4: improve your draft, check the success criteria, and hand it in.

Success criteria: check before you hand it in

☐	My claim is clear.
☐	My facts and dates are correct.
☐	I quoted the source exactly and said where it is from.
☐	I explained another point of view fairly.
☐	I used at least three new words correctly.
☐	I listed my sources.

Due: About four class days from the start. Marked with the Achievement Chart on the teacher’s page.

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For the teacher: standards met

Universal competencies	Identify key facts and claims; Understand perspective and point of view; Make connections, personal to community to larger systems; Analyse and evaluate evidence. The same everywhere, whatever the curriculum.
Curriculum	Ontario History, Grade 8, Strand A (the Indian Act), and Grade 9 Geography (CGC1D/W): maps and land.
Specific expectations	Teachers choose which specific expectations to assess. The sheet supports the overall expectations named above.
Historical thinking	Each question names its concept: significance, evidence, cause and consequence, continuity and change, perspective, ethical dimension.
Reading level	Flesch–Kincaid grade 6.1 (reading ease 79)
Plain language	Written to ISO 24495-1; new words taught in “Words to know”.
Balance	Three views of the reserve, side by side.
Time and materials	Two periods of 40 to 50 minutes.
Accommodations	Read aloud; give the bars with the numbers highlighted.

Assessment: the Achievement Chart

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Knowledge and Understanding	Names some facts with help	Names the main facts and dates	Explains them accurately	Explains them and how they connect
Thinking	Answers with little use of the source	Uses the source in part	Uses the source to support answers	Weighs the points of view against the source
Communication	Ideas are unclear	Some ideas are clear	Clear, with the new words	Clear, precise, new words used well
Application	Makes few connections	A simple connection to today	Connects the past to today	Explains why it still matters

Answer key

	A good answer includes
1	It says the Crown must hold the legal title, which is the Nation’s whole point.
2	“of which the legal title is in the Crown”.
3	On the Nation’s reading, the Crown could not set it apart, because it no longer held it.
4	In the Crown’s account the land was sold and surrendered until a reserve remained.
5	It is the community’s home and land base, whatever the law says.
6	A reasoned view: for example, the grant’s words, consent, and fairness.

Sources: the Indian Act, 1876, s. 3(6); the Haldimand Proclamation, 1784; the Land Board minutes of 1791; reserve limits from Natural Resources Canada, version 2.189. This sheet explains the Mohawk Nation of Grand River’s position beside others.

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