MIDDLE SCHOOL · AGES 11 TO 14

The Tract, and What Is Left of It

Six miles from each bank, mouth to source: what was given, and what the Crown’s account says now.

Read

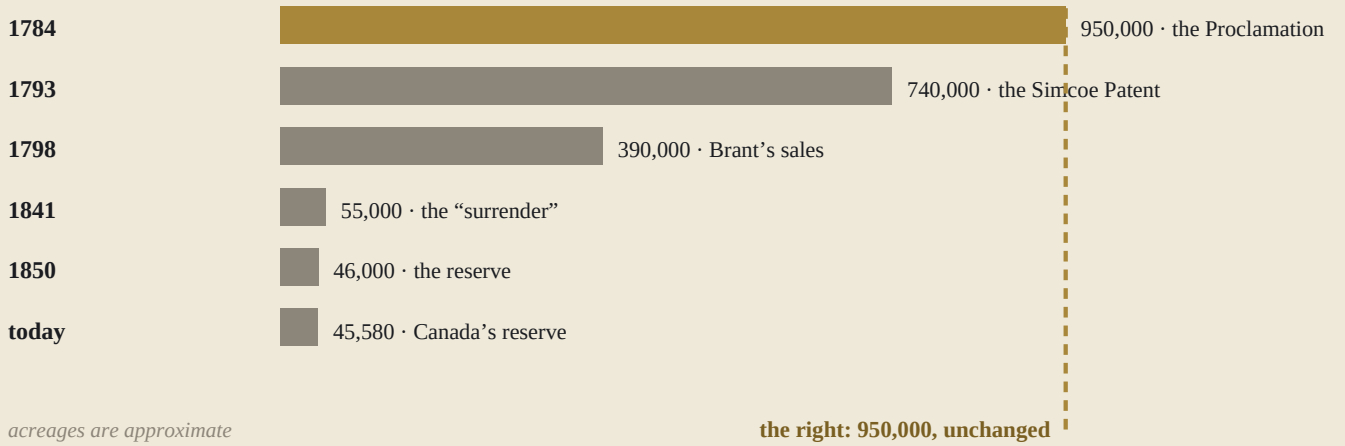
In 1784 the Crown set apart land for the Mohawks of three villages and their posterity. It ran six miles deep on each side of the Grand River, from Lake Erie to the river’s source. The Mohawk Nation of Grand River counts it as about 950,000 acres. This land is called the Tract.

In the Crown’s own account, the land got smaller step by step. The Simcoe Patent of 1793 described about 740,000 acres. Joseph Brant sold large blocks in 1798. A general surrender in 1841 left about 55,000. By 1850 the reserve was about 46,000 acres. Today Canada’s own limits put the Six Nations Reserve at about 45,580.

The Mohawk Nation of Grand River reads this differently. It says the class the land was given to never surrendered it. So in right, all 950,000 acres are still theirs, even though almost none is in their hands. Towns like Brantford, Paris, Cambridge, Kitchener and Elora are all inside the six-mile lines.

Look

How to read it: each bar is the land in the Crown’s account in that year; the dashed line is the class’s right, which never moves.



Words to know

Word	What it means here
Tract	A stretch of land set apart, here six miles from each bank of the Grand.
Acre	A measure of land, about the size of a football field without the end zones.
Survey	Measuring and marking land on the ground and on a map.
Surrender	Giving land up to the Crown.
Reserve	Land held by the Crown for a band under the Indian Act.
Posterity	All of a person’s descendants, including those not yet born.
Deed of gift	A written gift of land that asks nothing back.

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Work with a primary source

> *"... allotting to them for that purpose 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, which them and their posterity are to enjoy for ever."*
>
> The Haldimand Proclamation, 25 October 1784 (shortened).

Ask the source	Your answer
How deep is the land on each side of the river?	
Where does it begin, and where does it end?	
Who is it for, and for how long?	
What can it not tell us?	

Three points of view

The land between the six-mile lines today, described three ways. Read each, then explain why they differ.

Who	How they describe the land today
Canada and Ontario	Mostly private land under Ontario law, with a reserve held by the Crown for the Six Nations.
The Six Nations of the Grand River	Land much of which was taken wrongly; claims to it were filed in 1995 and are before the courts.
The Mohawk Nation of Grand River	Acquired territory, never surrendered by the class it was given to: still theirs in right.

Claim, evidence, reasoning

Choose one claim the poster makes, for example "every town is inside the line" or "the class never surrendered". Then fill in the table.

Claim	Evidence	Reasoning

Answer

1. **Historical significance.** Why does it matter that the land runs "to the head of the said river"?

2. **Evidence.** Use the bars: how much land does the Crown's account show today, and how much was given in 1784?

3. **Cause and consequence.** Name two events that made the land in the Crown's account smaller.

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4. **Continuity and change.** What changed on the land between 1784 and today, and what does the Nation say did not change?

5. **Historical perspective.** Choose one point of view from the table. Why might that group describe the land that way?

6. **Ethical dimension.** If land was given “for ever” and later sold by others, what would be fair now?

Think about it. Look at a map of where you live. Is it inside the six-mile lines? What would that mean to you?

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Performance task: Find your town on the map: is it inside the six-mile lines?

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 how much land was given in 1784, how the Crown’s account of it shrank, and why the Nation says the right did not.
An infographic	Design a one-page poster that explains how much land was given in 1784, how the Crown’s account of it shrank, and why the Nation says the right did not, 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 how much land was given in 1784, how the Crown’s account of it shrank, and why the Nation says the right did not to someone your age.

What your work must include

- At least three facts with their dates.
- One quotation from the primary source, The Haldimand Proclamation, 25 October 1784, 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 and Ontario, 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 7, Strand A, *New France and British North America, 1713–1800*, and Strand B, *Canada, 1800–1850*: land, settlement and First Nations. Grade 10 Civics (CHV2O) and NAC2O may use it with the extensions.
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 4.7 (reading ease 82)
Plain language	Written to ISO 24495-1; new words taught in “Words to know”.
Balance	Three points of view on the land side by side; the sheet names its own position.
Time and materials	Two periods of 40 to 50 minutes. A local map is useful for “Think about it”.
Accommodations	Read the passage aloud or in pairs; allow oral answers for questions 1 to 4; 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

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Answer key

	A good answer includes
1	It reaches the river’s source, not just the lower river: the whole Grand.
2	About 45,580 acres today; about 950,000 in 1784.
3	Any two: the Simcoe Patent (1793), Brant’s sales (1798), the general surrender (1841).
4	Towns, farms and roads were built and land was sold; the Nation says the class’s right did not change.
5	A reason tied to that group: Ontario law and titles, the Six Nations’ claims, or the class’s grant.
6	A reasoned view, for example recognition, recording the interest, or a fair share of what the land produced.

Sources: the Haldimand Proclamation, 1784; the Simcoe Patent, 1793; A. Jones’s plan of the upper Grand (LAC NMC-3109); T. Ridout’s plan, 1821 (LAC NMC-3115); reserve limits, Natural Resources Canada. This sheet explains the Mohawk Nation of Grand River’s position beside others.

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