

WHAT IN THE WORLD?

LEVEL 2 (GRADES 8 AND UP)

Ontario's Greenbelt Scandal

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Sample

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SAMPLE EDITION
2023/2024: ISSUE 2



WHAT YOU'RE MISSING



NATIONAL

CANADA'S HOUSING CRISIS



Ken Eaton has a full-time job that pays nearly \$75,000 a year – some \$15,000 more than the average Canadian worker. After income tax and other deductions, he brings home around \$3400 each month. That sounds like a lot. However, the 55-year-old Vancouver man...

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INTERNATIONAL

TWO DISASTERS STRIKE AFRICA



Mother Nature raised an angry fist in two African nations in early September, killing and injuring thousands of people and leaving thousands more with no place to live.

The first catastrophe took place in Morocco...

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WHAT IN THE WORLD?

Level 2, 2023/2024: Issue 2

PUBLISHER

Eric Wieczorek

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Janet Radschun Wieczorek

ILLUSTRATOR

Mike Deas

CONTRIBUTORS

Vivien Bowers

Krista Clarke

Rosa Harris

Catriona Misfeldt

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LesPlan Educational Services Ltd.



LesPlan

#1 - 4144 Wilkinson Road

Victoria BC V8Z 5A7

www.lesplan.com

info@lesplan.com

PHONE: (toll free) 888 240-2212

FAX: (toll free) 888 240-2246

TWITTER: @LesPlan

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HAY'SXW'QA!

LesPlan is grateful to the Lkwungen Peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose unceded land we now live, and do our work.

We welcome your comments and appreciate your suggestions. Please contact us at any time.

MISSION STATEMENT

LesPlan Educational Services Ltd. aims to help teachers develop students' engagement in, understanding of, and ability to critically assess current issues and events by providing quality, up-to-date, affordable, ready-to-use resources appropriate for use across the curriculum.



I have had many parents comment to me about how great they think *What in the World?* is, and they look forward to each month's issue coming home... This is a great resource for a small country school to explore the global issues that affect us all.

K. Camelon, Grade 7/8 teacher

Admaston, ON



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NATIONAL

ONTARIO'S GREENBELT SCANDAL

– PREMIER FORD REVERSES HIS GOVERNMENT'S CONTROVERSIAL DECISION

BEFORE READING

1. Write the word 'Greenbelt' on the board.
2. Ask students to turn to a neighbour and discuss what they think a Greenbelt is. (E.g., *a clothing accessory, something you earn in karate, a natural area where people recycle, a protected natural region, etc.*)
3. Share ideas as a class.
4. Project this map of Ontario's Greenbelt from **Greenbelt.ca**, a foundation with the purpose of ensuring that the Greenbelt remains “permanent, protected, and prosperous”:
<https://files.ontario.ca/on-2019/mmah-greenbeltmaps-en-1-schedule-1-greenbelt-area.pdf>
5. Ask students to share what they notice about the map. (E.g., *it's in southern Ontario; it seems to be a strip of undeveloped land; it forms a connected band or belt beside large cities in Ontario like Toronto, Hamilton, and Niagara Falls; it touches Lake Ontario, Lake Huron, and Lake Simcoe; it's a big chunk of land; etc.*)
6. Finally, invite students to set a purpose for reading the article, referring to the resource page **Setting A Purpose Before Reading** as needed.



NATIONAL

ONTARIO'S GREENBELT SCANDAL

– PREMIER FORD REVERSES HIS GOVERNMENT'S CONTROVERSIAL DECISION



In late September, Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced that the government was reversing its controversial decision to open up parts of the province's Greenbelt to development. The announcement was a huge victory for environmentalists, First Nations, opposition parties, and other critics of the plan who had strenuously objected to the government's proposal.

THE ONTARIO GREENBELT

The Ontario Greenbelt is an 8100 square-kilometre region, larger than Prince Edward Island, that stretches from Bruce Peninsula in the north, where Lake Huron and Georgian Bay meet, to the Niagara Escarpment in the south. In the east it starts at Halton Region, home to Burlington and other municipalities, and extends west to Northumberland County on the northern shore of Lake Ontario.

The Greenbelt encompasses the Golden Horseshoe, one of the fastest growing urban areas in North America. Covering some 10,100 square kilometres, with Toronto at its centre, the Golden Horseshoe is home

to nearly eight million Canadians, or about 20 percent of the nation's population as a whole.

In 2005, the Greenbelt was established to permanently protect the region's rich agriculture, fertile wetlands, and the natural habitat of resident species – at least 78 of which are at risk – from urban sprawl.

A CHANGE OF PLANS

When he first ran for election in 2018, Mr. Ford promised that his government wouldn't develop Greenbelt territory. But he also pledged to build 1.5 million homes before 2031 to address a housing emergency in the province, and the pressure to build new homes has only increased since that time due to rapid population growth.

DID YOU KNOW?

In a recent 12-month period, Ontario's population increased by over 500,000.

Last year, Mr. Ford said that the government had no option but to change course and allow homes to

be built in the Greenbelt. The new development would remove about 3000 hectares of land in 15 areas of the protected region. However, in exchange, nearly 4000 hectares would be added to the Greenbelt in other areas.

STRONG OPPOSITION

Environmentalists were quick to oppose the plan. They argued that swapping acreage that is highly vulnerable for land that is less at risk runs counter to the Greenbelt's purpose.

"This idea that you can destroy part of the Greenbelt and then somehow make up for it – it's just not the way the natural world works," said Gideon Forman, an analyst with the Suzuki Foundation. "When you start to take chunks of the Greenbelt out of the Greenbelt, you compromise the integrity of an ecosystem. And that's what's so damaging."

Opponents also argued that the land swap wasn't necessary, and a task force commissioned by Mr. Ford's own government agreed. In 2022 it reported that there was enough

DEFINITIONS

ECOSYSTEM: all the plants and animals in a particular area, considered as a system with parts that depend on one another

ESCARPMENT: a steep slope that separates an area of high ground from an area of lower ground

HECTARE: a unit of area equal to 10,000 square metres and approximately 2.471 acres

INTEGRITY: the state of being whole and not divided

TASK FORCE: a group of people who are brought together to do a particular job, especially when there is a problem to solve



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land outside the Greenbelt to address the housing shortage despite the premier's claims.

AN \$8.3 BILLION SCANDAL!

As questions about the plan mounted, and as public outcry grew, **Auditor General** Bonnie Lysyk and Ontario Integrity Commissioner David Wake launched separate inquiries into the government's decision to **encroach** on Greenbelt land. Their conclusions, released in August, shocked many people.

Ms. Lysyk reported that before decisions were made in 2022 about which Greenbelt land to remove, Ryan Amato, a key figure in the Ontario housing ministry, received a package at an industry function. In it were recommendations on the topic from developers – some of whom had donated money to the Ontario Progressive Conservatives. With no input from unbiased experts, the government eventually accepted all but one of the builders' 15 proposals, giving them access to buy 92 percent of the land taken from the Greenbelt.

Critics hint that Mr. Ford's government might have alerted these donors that highly valuable land would soon become available to scoop up. Ms. Lysyk seemed to agree. She said that the government's flawed decision-making was "biased" in favour of the builders. In fact, she said that those who had bought the newly freed-up lands could make as much as \$8.3 billion once the sites are developed.

"We found that how the land sites were selected was not transparent, fair, objective, or fully informed," Ms. Lysyk wrote. "What occurred here cannot be described as a standard or defensible process."

For his part, the Integrity Commissioner said the government had violated ethics. He accused then-minister of housing Steven Clark of turning a blind eye when Mr. Amato broke **conflict-of-interest** rules and shared privileged information.

"It may seem incredible that Minister Clark would have chosen to stick his head in the sand on such an important initiative being undertaken by his ministry but I believe that was exactly what he did," wrote Mr. Wake.

THE FALLOUT

Just weeks after both reports were issued, Mr. Amato resigned and on September 4, Mr. Clark left his post as housing minister, although he remains an MPP. Then on September 20, a second **cabinet** minister, Kaleed Rasheed, resigned in connection to the scandal.

Finally, following two days of **caucus** and cabinet meetings, on September 21, Premier Ford apologized and announced that his government was changing course.

"I made a promise to you that I wouldn't touch the Greenbelt. I broke that promise. And for that I'm very, very sorry," the premier said. "It was a mistake to open the Greenbelt. It was a mistake to establish a process that moved too fast. This process, it

CANADA'S PROTECTED FARMLANDS

Ontario's Greenbelt encompassing Toronto isn't the only one in the province. A Greenbelt was established around Ottawa in 1956. It is a 203-square-kilometre horseshoe-shaped collection of farmland, forests, and wetlands that border the west, south, and east ends of the city.

In Quebec, the Regional Agricultural Conservation maintains an agricultural zone to protect farming that covers 63,000 square kilometres. And British Columbia's Agricultural Land Reserve prioritizes 47,000 square kilometres for farming, restricting its use for non-agricultural purposes.

left too much room for some people to benefit over others. It caused people to question our motives. As a first step to earn back your trust, I'll be reversing the changes we made and won't make any changes to the Greenbelt in the future."

Land-swap opponents celebrated the announcement. However, all three opposition parties said many questions remain unanswered, and Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner called for a public inquiry.

"How can we trust that he won't try the same thing again?" he asked. "We can't let this reversal be a get-out-of-jail-free card for Premier Ford or his cabinet." ★

DEFINITIONS

AUDITOR GENERAL: an independent officer of the government who examines government operations, finances, and records

CABINET: a group of government members who are chosen by the leader to give advice and be responsible for its policies

CAUCUS: a group of people who meet to discuss a particular issue or to work together for a shared political goal

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: a situation in which somebody has two jobs, aims, roles, etc. and cannot treat both of them equally and fairly at the same time

ENCROACH: to slowly begin to cover more and more of an area



NATIONAL

ONTARIO'S GREENBELT SCANDAL

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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Name the premier of Ontario. Which political party is in power in this province?

2. Who created the Ontario Greenbelt? When was this protected area set up and why? Explain.

3. Describe the area covered by the Greenbelt.

4. What is the Golden Horseshoe? Where it is located and how many people live in this region?

5. Describe the recent population growth in Ontario.

6. What did the provincial government announce late last year regarding Ontario's Greenbelt?

7. List the two main reasons why some people were opposed to this policy reversal.

8. What did the Ontario Auditor General find when she investigated?

9. What did the Ontario Integrity Commissioner find when he investigated?

10. What did Premier Ford announce on September 21?



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QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. The article quotes Gideon Forman, an analyst with the Suzuki Foundation: "*This idea that you can destroy part of the Greenbelt and then somehow make up for it – it's just not the way the natural world works. When you start to take chunks of the Greenbelt out of the Greenbelt, you compromise the integrity of an ecosystem. And that's what's so damaging.*" What do you think Mr. Forman means by this? Explain.

2. Premier Doug Ford claims that with the recent population growth in Ontario, his government had no choice but to allow homes to be built in the Greenbelt. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons to support your response.

3. Two separate inquiries into this controversy, one by the Auditor General and the other by the Ontario Integrity Commissioner, have described the actions of the Ford government as not defensible and unethical. For what reasons do you agree with this characterization? For what reasons do you disagree?





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QUESTIONS FOR ONLINE EXPLORATION

Note: The links below are listed at www.lesplan.com/en/links for easy access.

1. Learn more about this controversy in these general reports. What new information did you gather?

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2254018115750> [11:34]

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/greenbelt-questions-answered-1.6958853>

2. Learn the details of Auditor General Lysyk's report. Which piece of information did you find interesting?

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-auditor-general-greenbelt-report-1.6930390> [0:49]

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2253709891807> [1:37:49] full report

3. What did Integrity Commissioner Wake conclude in his report?

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/integrity-commissioner-greenbelt-report-1.6952542>

4. Listen to Premier Ford address the Auditor General's findings in this situation and his surprising decision to reverse development of the Greenbelt.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ford-stag-and-doe-integrity-commissioner-1.6974058>

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2261250627978> [1:47]

5. Two of Premier Ford's MPPs and a Ministry of Housing staffer have resigned from their positions in recent days:

• Minister of Housing Steven Clark: <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2260961347904> [2:16]

• Conservative MPP Kaleed Rasheed: <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2265498179776> [1:56]

• Ministry of Housing Staffer Ryan Amato: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-housing-amato-resigns-1.6944225>

What questions do you have about these resignations?

6. Hear from Ontario farmers and First Nations about their perspectives on this issue.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-greenbelt-farmers-doug-ford-1.6971694>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/chiefs-of-ontario-greenbelt-vote-1.6949826>

7. Visit greenbelt.ca to learn more about this organization and its efforts to ensure that the Greenbelt remains "permanent, protected, and prosperous":

<https://www.greenbelt.ca/about>



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ONTARIO'S GREENBELT SCANDAL
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Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt Wildlife



INSECTS



REPTILES

NABST '23 nease.compon's.com



BIRDS



MAMMALS

YOUR TASK:

Examine the editorial cartoon. Then, use the questions below to help you decode the cartoon's message. Be specific and include as many details as possible in your answers. *Note:* The **Editorial Cartoons** resource page (p. 52) may be useful.

INITIAL READING: What can an initial look reveal?

1. Glance quickly at the cartoon. What is your first impression – your “gut response”?
2. Consider your background knowledge. What do you already know about the context of the cartoon – the time, place or situation? (List key facts.)

CLOSER LOOK: What's happening in the cartoon?

3. Describe what you *see* and *read* in the cartoon.

DRAW CONCLUSIONS: What overall impression can you draw?

4. Identify possible biases. Whose perspective or point of view is expressed in the cartoon?
5. Explain the overall message of the cartoon in a paragraph. (Remember, a good interpretation is *specific* and *detailed*.) ★



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Write the inner and outer dialogue for two or more people in this scene. Show what the person is thinking/feeling (inner voice) and saying (outer voice). *A believable conversation conveys appropriate ideas, thoughts, feelings or reactions; is on topic; extends the details of the scene; and is convincing.*



Ontario Premier Doug Ford announces that he will be reversing his government's decision to open the Greenbelt to developers during a press conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario, on Sept. 21, 2023. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Tara Walton)

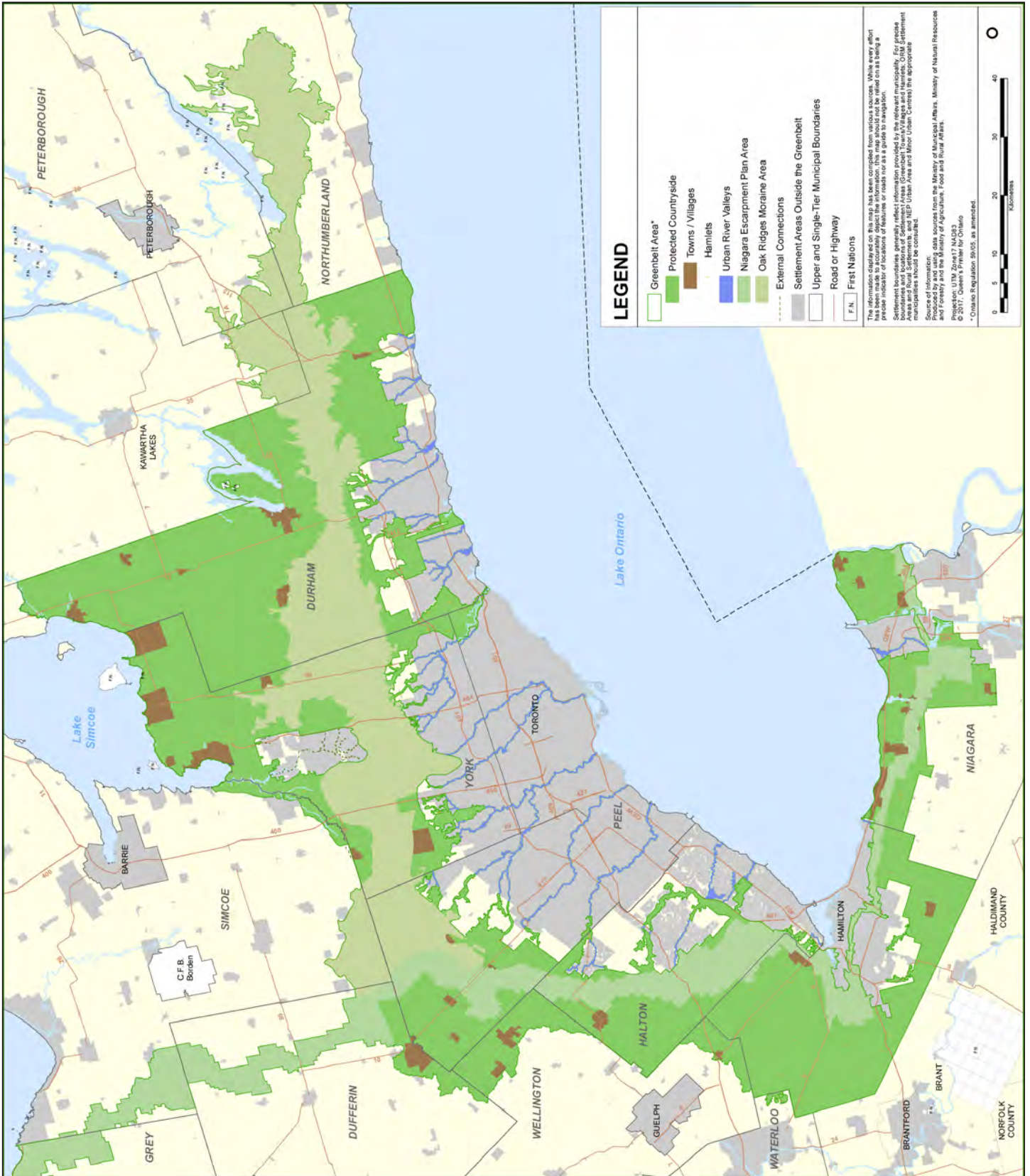


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INFOGRAPHIC



<https://files.ontario.ca/on-2019/mmah-greenbeltmaps-en-1-schedule-1-greenbelt-area.pdf>

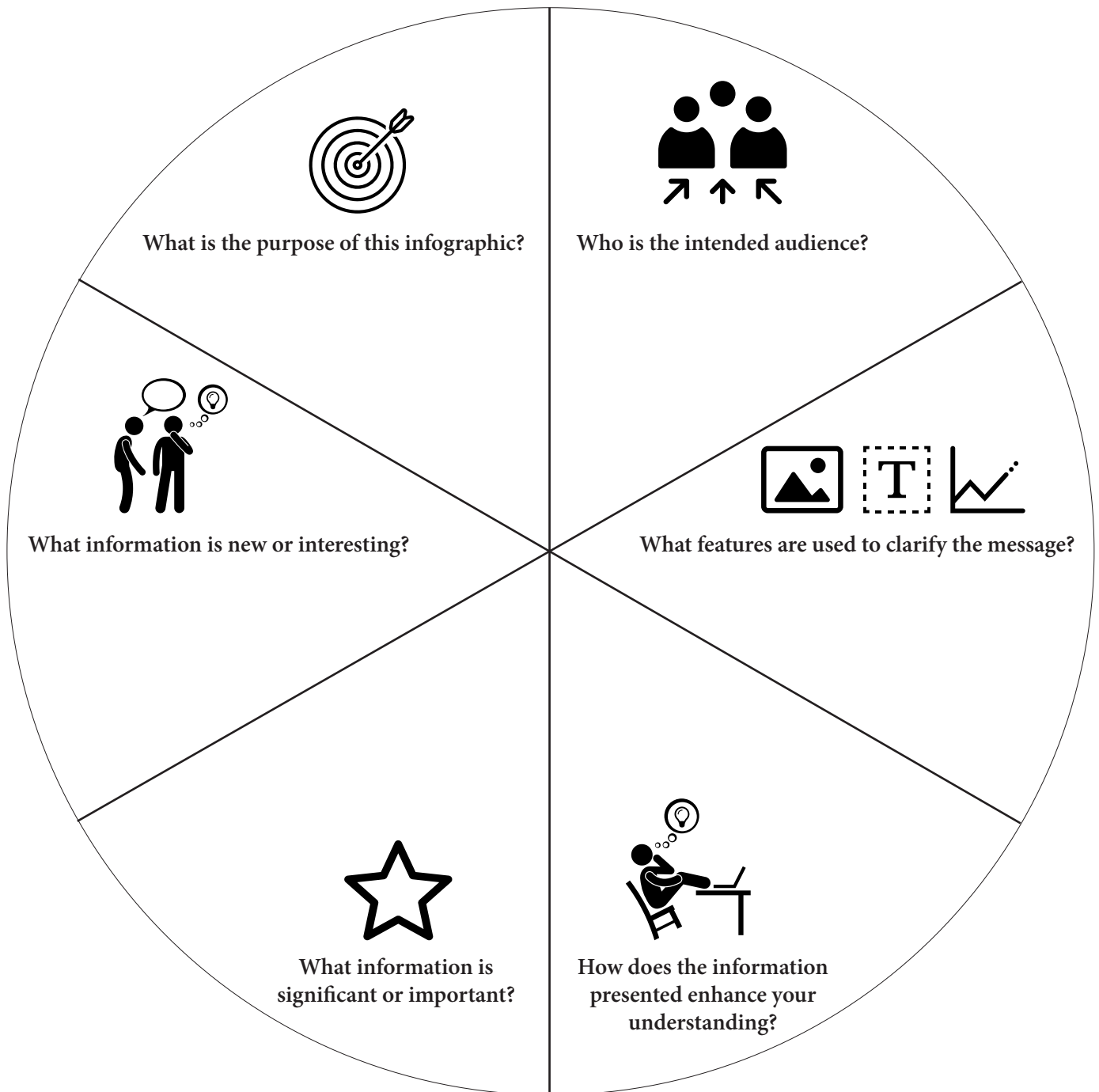


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ANALYZING AN INFOGRAPHIC



What questions do you still have about the topic presented?



ONTARIO GREENBELT REGION

Complete this map assignment to better understand the article *Ontario's Greenbelt Scandal*.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Obtain the required resources and read all the instructions before starting.
2. Colour your map after all labelling is completed.
3. Print in pencil only first, then go over the printing in black ink.
4. Work carefully and neatly.

Resources Required: pencil, black pen, pencil crayons, ruler, eraser and an atlas.

Part A Locate and label Ontario in CAPITAL letters and shade this province dark green.

Part B Locate and label the capital of Ontario and underline this city name.

Part C Locate and label the capital of Canada and underline this city name.

Part D Locate and label the following province and American states in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Quebec (red) | New York (yellow) |
| Pennsylvania (purple) | New Jersey (pink) |
| Ohio (orange) | Michigan (pink) |

Part E Locate and label the Greenbelt in southern Ontario and shade this region light green

Part F Locate and label the following and shade all fresh water light blue:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Lake Huron | Georgian Bay |
| Saginaw Bay | Lake St. Claire |
| Lake Erie | Lake Ontario |

Part G Locate and label the following Ontario town and cities:

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Mississauga | Brampton |
| Hamilton | London |
| Markham | Vaughan |
| Kitchener | Windsor |
| Kingston | Fort Erie |
| Sudbury | Sault Ste. Marie |

Part H Locate and label the following cities outside Ontario:

- | | |
|-----------|---------|
| Montreal | Buffalo |
| Cleveland | Detroit |

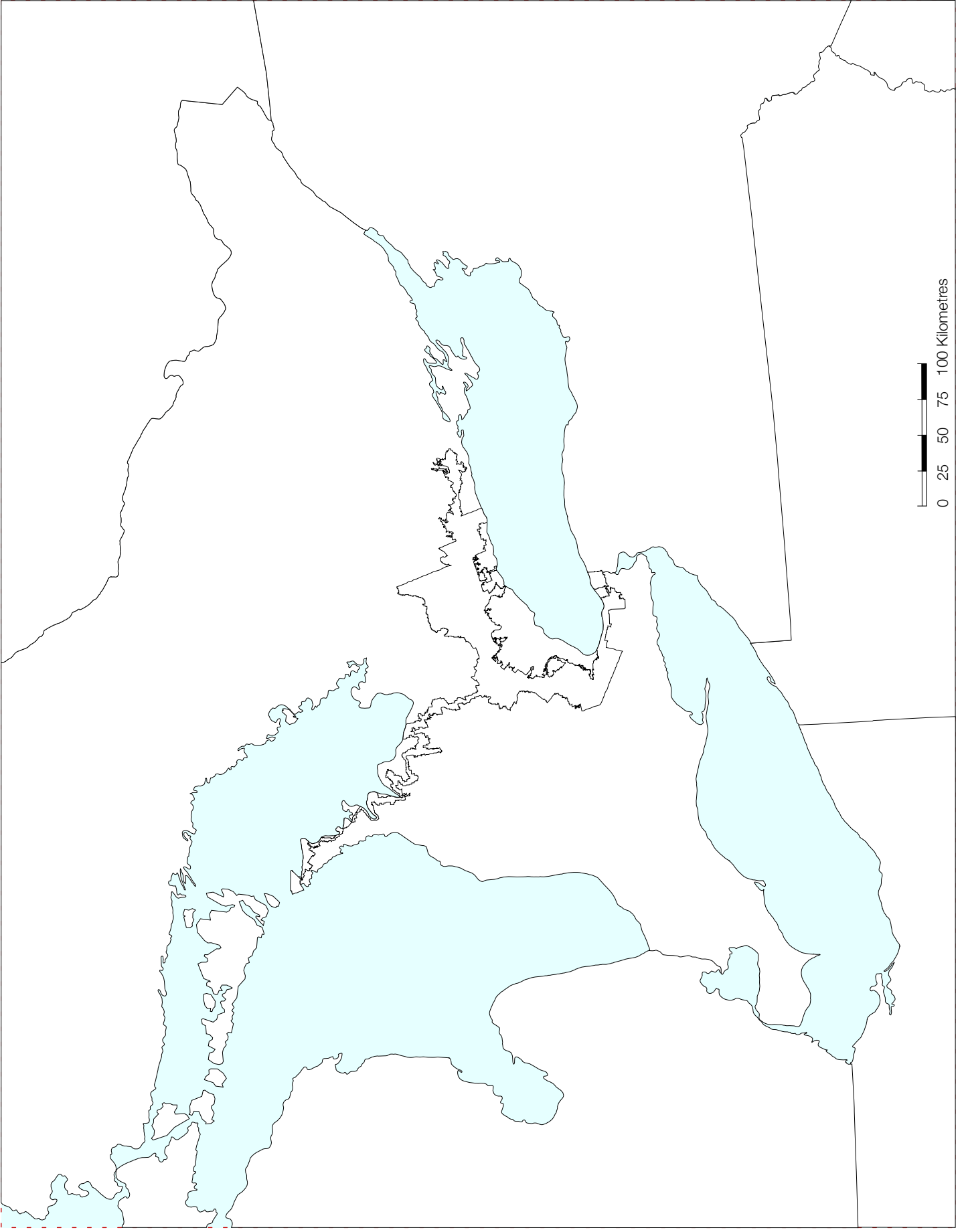
Part I Locate and label the following rivers and shade them light blue:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| St. Lawrence River | Ottawa River |
|--------------------|--------------|

Part J Complete your map with a frame, title and compass. ★



Ontario





SETTING A PURPOSE BEFORE READING

There are a number of reasons we read, and setting a purpose for reading – knowing WHY we are reading – helps us to focus on important information and to better understand and remember what we read. It also helps us decide HOW we will read the text.

We don't read all texts for the same purposes or in the same way. For example, we read an instruction manual for a new Blu-ray player for a different reason than we read a book or a website. How we will read it – the strategies we use – will also differ. We are more likely to skim to find the information we need in a manual. Once we find what we need, we might read the instructions carefully to figure out what to do. Then, we stop reading, put the manual down, and carry out the steps. We may have to reread if we get confused or forget what to do.

This is a very different approach than the one we would use to read a book. When we read a book, we usually read cover-to-cover. We read carefully so we don't miss any details because we want to understand the whole story. Sometimes we make connections or create images in our minds as we read to help us better understand what we are reading. Depending on its length, we may put the book down before we finish reading it but we will start reading where we left off.

Good readers are flexible and responsive. This means that they match their reading strategies to their purpose for reading. What types of text do you read? Why do you read them? What strategies do you use to read each of these texts? The chart below is a summary of the main purposes for reading and what each entails.

Purpose for reading	What it looks like
For enjoyment	Usually student-selected. Allows students to choose a variety of genres and forms. Allows students to pursue what interests them while developing reading skills.
To experience something new	Students make connections between their personal experiences and those of people around the world.
To learn more about themselves and others	Students reflect on what they've read and express opinions and perspectives. Students develop a sense of their personal values and make sense of the world around them.
To gain information	Students use the features of informational texts to gather, analyse and apply what they've learned.
To understand issues	Students develop a sense of perspective. Students pose questions, acknowledge other points of view, critique the opinions presented and support opinions with evidence.
To appreciate writing	Students respond to text in ways other than written answers to apply what they've learned in new contexts.
To appreciate use of media to communicate	Students respond to a variety of media formats (e.g., infographics, political cartoons, videos, etc.) and react to how the format supports the meaning of the message.

* Chart adapted from: A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4-6, p. 11.



ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

This rubric may be helpful in providing students with formative, strength-based feedback and/or assessing students' responses holistically.

	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Supports thinking	Answers or reflections are brief and include obvious facts/details/evidence.	Answers or reflections are general and supported with some relevant facts/details/evidence.	Answers or reflections are clearly supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence.	Answers or reflections are insightful and supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence.
Shows understanding	Responses show a basic understanding of the text, topic, issue or message.	Responses are thoughtful and show a general understanding of the text, topic, issue or message.	Responses are thoughtful and show a complete understanding of the text, topic, issue or message.	Responses are insightful and show a deep understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. May synthesize ideas or explain the 'so what'.
Thinks critically	Makes straightforward connections or inferences. Focuses on retelling.	Makes logical connections to self (T:S) and/or background knowledge (T:S). Inferences are logical.	Makes meaningful connections to self. Considers ideas between texts (T:T). Inferences are plausible.	Makes powerful connections that go between texts and/or beyond the text (T:W). Inferences are plausible and insightful.

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- ✓ Extension activities



Product details: 40 issues. **One subscription** allows all teachers and students access from any Internet-connected device at any time. Available in English and in French.
Currents4Kids/Infos-Jeunes: Grades 3 and up (1 reading level).
News4Youth/Infos-Ados: Grades 5 and up (3 reading levels).

What in the World?

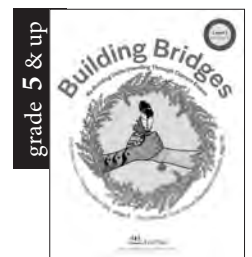
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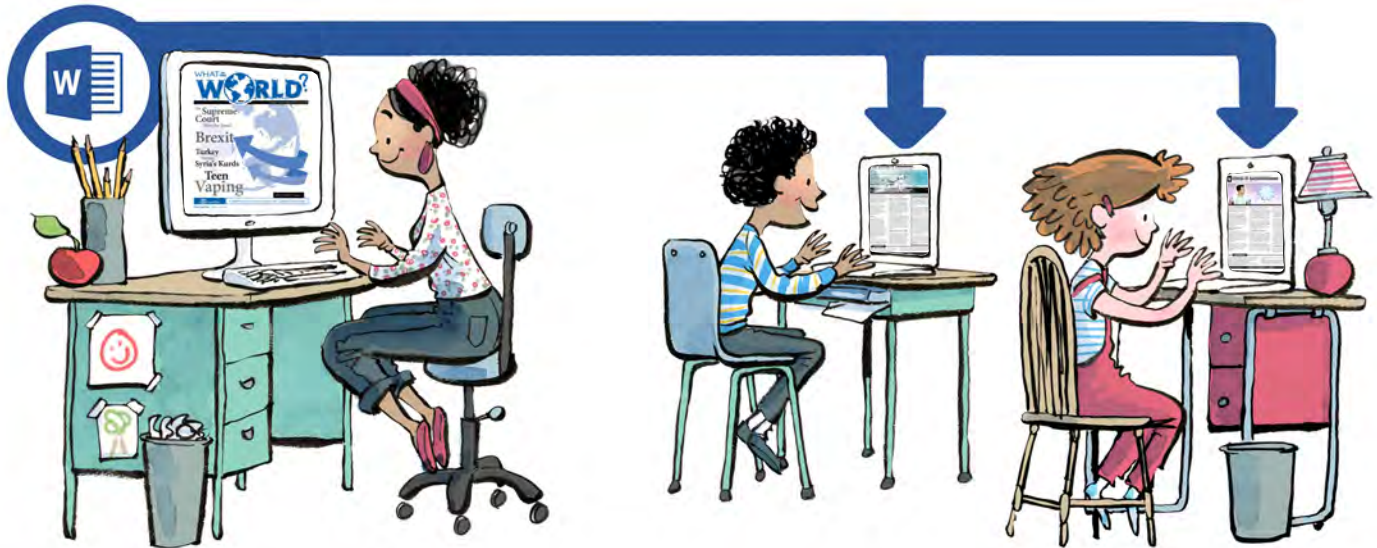
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- 3) To remove the password from a protected Word file, use **Save As** to make a new copy of the file. You can then change the **Security** settings and remove the password.

Google Docs and LibreOffice

- You can easily upload the Word file to **Google Docs** and share it with students or other teachers.
- You can translate **Google Docs** into another language (see *Tools>Translate document*) but you will need to edit the document to suit your requirements. **Google Docs** can translate into over 100 languages including Spanish, Mandarin, and German.
- **LibreOffice** is a free alternate to **Microsoft Office** and offers the same functionality. It's easy to install and use. See: www.libreoffice.org

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