**The Tale of Grassy Narrows – Answer Key**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Approximately how many people live in Grassy Narrows? (1 mark) Approximately **1000 people** live in Grassy Narrows.
2. Where is Grassy Narrows located? (2 marks) Grassy Narrows is located in **northwestern Ontario**.
3. What is the name of the river that feeds into Grassy Narrows Lake? (1 mark) The **Wabigoon-English River** feeds into Grassy Narrows Lake.
4. How many wells in Grassy Narrows service a portion of Grassy Narrows’ population? (1 mark) **Three** wells service a portion of Grassy Narrows’ population.
5. When was it that former owners of the Reed paper mill upstream in Dryden dumped 9000 kg of mercury waste into the river? (2 marks) It was from **1962 to 1970**.
6. Why did the residents continue to eat the fish caught from nearby lakes and rivers despite the mercury poisoning? (2 marks) The **commercial fishery in the community closed** and this **devastated Grassy Narrows’ economy**. With **few local economic opportunities** and **little money**, residents continue to eat the fish caught from nearby lakes and rivers.
7. Mercury accumulates in the body over time. Name three things that large doses of

mercury can cause. (3 marks) Large doses of mercury can cause **numbness in the limbs, sickness, and neurological damage**.
8. Almost what percentage of the children and adults in Grassy Narrows show signs of

mercury poisoning? (1 mark) Almost **90%** of the children and adults in Grassy Narrows show signs of mercury poisoning.
9. Explain the health problems which residents who have been diagnosed with mercury poisoning are more likely to suffer from and how much more likely they are to suffer

from them. (8 marks) The **physical and mental health of people in Grassy Narrows is considerably worse than that of other First Nations in Ontario**. **Mercury exposure** through the consumption of contaminated fish is **associated with poor health and well-being**. The **health of community members can’t be understood without taking their history of mercury poisoning into account**. **Only 21 percent** of Grassy Narrows members **reported their health as being good or excellent**. They are **almost six times more likely to have a neuropsychological disorder**. They are **five times more likely to have stomach and intestinal problems**. They are **four times more likely to suffer from a range of problems, including hearing loss and joint pain in people over 30 years of age**. They are **three times more likely to have blindness or vision problems**.
10. Why do you think the rate of attempted suicide in Grassy Narrows is more than double

the rate of other First Nations? (4 marks) **Psychological distress** is a **major determinant for suicide** and **risk factors for psychological distress include food and financial insecurity, disability, and chronic health conditions** – all of which **exist in almost all of the residents** of Grassy Narrows.
11. What percentage of community members reported losing a close friend or family

member to suicide? (1 mark) **Thirty-three percent** of community members reported losing a close friend or family member to suicide.
12. What are two of the problems at Grassy Narrows’ surface water treatment plant? (4 marks) Grassy Narrows’ surface water treatment plant **does not screen out many harmful protozoa** and the **highly turbid water is not in contact with treatment chemicals long enough for disinfection to occur, which produces by-products** which may be harmful for consumption.
13. List six of the recommendations that were made in Mergler’s report. (6 marks)
14. **Cleaning up the pollution from the river**
15. **Bettering a wide range of treatment and health care** available to residents
16. **Increased funding and better programs for treating physical and mental injury**
17. **Specialized long-term care facility** in Grassy Narrows
18. **Programs for food security**, including access to non-contaminated walleye
19. **Permanent institutions to facilitate traditional healing**
20. How much money has Ontario committed for the remediation of the river? (1 mark) Ontario has committed **$85 million** for the remediation of the river.
21. How can uranium contamination in the well water be mitigated? (1 mark) Uranium contamination in the well water can be mitigated **by installing point-of-entry anion exchange devices** on well-reliant homes.
22. What was the 2011 estimated total cost of upgrading, servicing, operating, and

maintaining Grassy Narrows’ surface water treatment system? (1 mark) The 2011 estimated total cost of upgrading, servicing, operating, and maintaining Grassy Narrows’ surface water treatment system is **$24 million**.
23. What does the main implementation challenge involve? (2 marks) The main implementation challenge involves **navigating between the short-term need for potable water on-reserve and the long-term need for sustainable human capital and mercury decontamination in Grassy Narrows Lake**.
24. What is the current interim plan? (2 marks) The current interim plan is to **substitute the well water with a regularly-refilled cistern containing treated surface water**.
25. How much money has Infrastructure Canada’s Small Communities Fund approved for

critical plant upgrades? (1 mark) Infrastructure Canada’s Small Communities Fund approved **$1 million** for critical plant upgrades.
26. How did you feel after watching the video “The Story of Grassy Narrows”? Why? (3 marks) Answers will vary. Students might feel sad or mad, for example. They might feel this way because there are youth like them who are really struggling due to the water quality situation, whose health is being affected by the water.
27. Compare and contrast The Tale of Yellow Quill with The Tale of Grassy Narrows. (6 marks) Answers will vary. Some possible answers include: They are similar in that they are **both First Nations** communities. They are different in that **Yellow Quill is in Saskatchewan** and **Grassy Narrows is in Ontario**. They are also different in that the **situation in Yellow Quill has been resolved** but the **situation in Grassy Narrows has not yet been resolved**. They are similar in that **both communities had water issues for a very long time**. They are **different in terms of the cause of the problems** (in Yellow Quill they had really awful source water in general and in Grassy Narrows they have turbid water with protozoa in it and mercury has contaminated the river). They are different in that in **Grassy Narrows one specific problem caused the vast majority of the water issues, whereas in Yellow Quill there were a number of different problems that caused the water issues**.

Total: \_\_\_\_/53