UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC

The Grand River Dollar: a Study Brief

A fully backed community currency: design, proof and risk.

Learning outcomes

By the end, a student will be able to	Level (Bloom)
Describe how the Grand River dollar is issued, backed and redeemed	Remember
Explain the local multiplier effect	Understand
Analyse the daily proof of reserves	Analyze
Compare the GR$ with other community and complementary currencies	Analyze
Evaluate its risks and safeguards	Evaluate

Overview

The Grand River dollar is issued one for one against Canadian dollars held on deposit at two institutions and never lent. Payments are made by phone; each night they are sealed in a Merkle tree whose root is recorded on the Ledger and anchored in Bitcoin; each day the amounts owed, held and issued are published. Redemption is at par. The design aims to keep value circulating inside the Nation; its main risk, which the Nation names first, is adoption.

Primary sources

The Grand River Dollar poster

“One Grand River dollar is one Canadian dollar. Always.”

Book XXIII, The Grand River Dollar

“owed, held and on Stellar agree, published at /reserves/”

The daily proof.

The Nation’s reserves page

“the amounts owed, held and issued”

Published daily.

Three readings

	Monetary regulators	Community-currency scholars	The Mohawk Nation of Grand River
What it is	A payment instrument, subject to oversight	A complementary currency	The Nation’s own money, at par
Its value	Depends on the reserve	Depends on local acceptance	Guaranteed by full backing and daily proof
Its risk	Consumer protection	Low uptake	Named first: adoption

Historiography

Community currencies, from scrip to local pounds, have a long history; most failed for lack of acceptance or backing. The GR$ answers both with full reserves and public proof, and asks whether a Nation’s own currency can build an economy.

© Mohawk’s Printer for Grand River, 2026, for the Mohawk Nation of Grand River · Grand River Territory, Ohsweken. Free to copy for teaching.

The Grand River Dollar: a Study Brief

Discussion questions

1. What makes people trust a currency?
2. How does full backing differ from fractional reserve banking?
3. What does publishing the reserves every day achieve?
4. What can a local currency do that a national currency cannot?
5. What could make the GR$ fail, and how would you guard against it?
6. **Apply.** Design a launch plan for the GR$ in one town on the Tract.

Further reading

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

Mohawk Nation of Grand River. *The Grand River Dollar*. National Books XXIII. Grand River Territory, Ohsweken: Mohawk's Printer for Grand River, 2026.

North, Peter. *Local Money*. Totnes: Green Books, 2010.

© Mohawk's Printer for Grand River, 2026, for the Mohawk Nation of Grand River · Grand River Territory, Ohsweken. Free to copy for teaching.

UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC

The Grand River Dollar: a Study Brief

Assignment brief

Choose one prompt

A	In 1,500 words, assess whether the Grand River dollar can keep value circulating inside the Nation. Use at least three sources, including one study of a community currency.
B	What does publishing the reserves every day achieve? Answer in an argued essay.
C	Apply. Design a launch plan for the GR$ in one town on the Tract. 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 Grand River Dollar poster
- Book XXIII, The Grand River Dollar
- The Nation’s reserves page

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.

© Mohawk’s Printer for Grand River, 2026, for the Mohawk Nation of Grand River · Grand River Territory, Ohsweken. Free to copy for teaching.

The Grand River Dollar: a Study Brief

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; 92 on economic development.
Rights in education	UNDRIP arts. 14 and 15; art. 20 on economic activities.
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.

© Mohawk’s Printer for Grand River, 2026, for the Mohawk Nation of Grand River · Grand River Territory, Ohsweken. Free to copy for teaching.