

ADVENTURES IN COINS

ELECTIVE ADVENTURE



SNAPSHOT OF ADVENTURE



To most people, coins are used to buy things they want or need. But coins can also tell a story. The pictures on United States coins tell a lot about our country's culture and history. In this Adventure, you will get to be a numismatist (noo-MIZ-muh-tist). A numismatist is a person who studies coins and money. You'll learn where coins are made and the meaning of their pictures and words.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Identify different parts of a coin.
2. Find the mint mark on a coin, and identify the mint facility where it was made and the year it was made.
3. Play a coin game.
4. Choose a coin that interests you and make a coin rubbing. List information next to the coin detailing the pictures on it, the year it was made, and the mint where it was made.



- Elective Adventure
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REQUIREMENT 1

Identify different parts of a coin.

Many things have been used for money. Some were useful, like salt, animal hides, and arrowheads, which were traded for other items people needed. Other objects used for money, like shells, had no real value but became symbols of wealth.

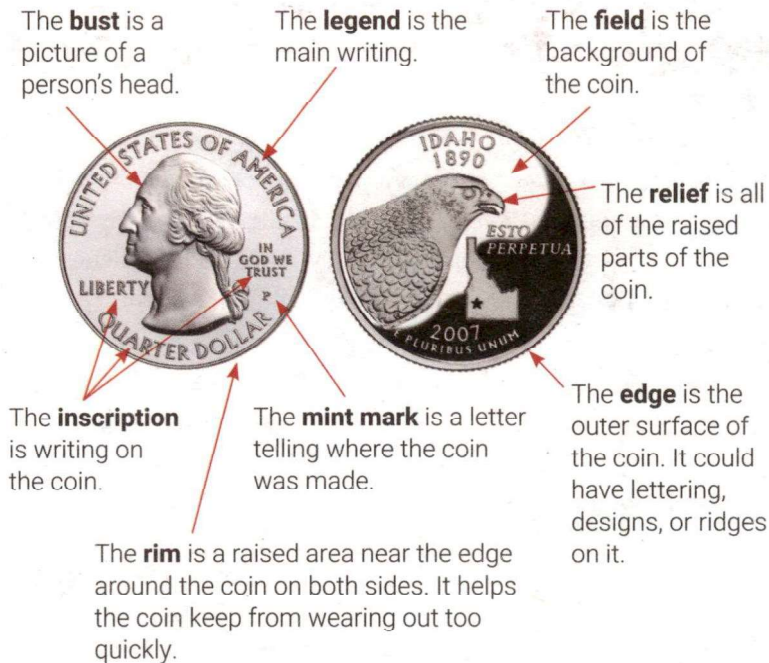
Even before it was made into coins, metal was used for money. Long ago, each tiny piece of metal had to be weighed every time it was used to figure out its value. Soon, the custom of stamping the weight on the metal became widely used. It made the pieces of metal easier to use for buying and selling things.

While it is a mystery who invented the first coins, experts believe the first coins were minted, or made from metal, in the region around ancient Greece. It wasn't long before many countries were making coins by hand that showed pictures of their rulers and animals.

Modern American coins are made by machines. However, artists design the coins, and scientists work hard to improve how they are made.



Look at a coin. What is special about it? See how many parts you can name.



Ridges on the outer edge of the coin can be felt by rubbing your finger across them. They look like lines imprinted on the side of the coin. The ridges, or milling, were included on coins to keep dishonest people from shaving off the edge of a coin to use the precious metal for other purposes. Now that you have learned the parts of a coin, share what you learned with your den leader or a parent or legal guardian.



Date _____

Adult's Signature _____

REQUIREMENT 2

Find the mint mark on a coin and identify the mint facility where it was made and the year it was made.

Did you know that the United States Mint makes 65 million to 80 million coins each day? That's a lot of pocket change! The job of the United States Mint is to make the coins that Americans use. Coins in the United States are made only in its secure facilities, while paper money is made in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Most coins have a mint mark, which is a letter below the date that tells where they were made. Four facilities make coins and use mint marks. Find the mint mark on a coin and identify the mint facility where it was made and the year it was made.



PHILADELPHIA = P
SAN FRANCISCO = S
DENVER = D
WEST POINT = W



Today, only the mints in Philadelphia and Denver make circulating coins. (They also make coins for collectors.) Circulating coins are the coins at a bank, in a cash register, or in people's pockets and are used to buy things.

The San Francisco and West Point mints make coins only for collectors. These coins could be used as money, but many collectors keep them in their original packaging and never touch them, with the hope that the rare coins will become more valuable over time.

In the past, other United States Mint locations made coins. It is possible you might see one of their mint marks on a coin, such as New Orleans, Louisiana, "O"; Charlotte, North Carolina, "C"; and Carson City, Nevada, "CC." You may even find some coins with no mint mark at all.

Now look for the date on the coin. The date of issue is the year the coin was produced. It is usually found on the front of a coin, but on quarters in the 50 State Quarters® Program, the date is on the back of the coin. Isn't it amazing how much you can learn from looking closely at a single coin?



Date

Adult's Signature

REQUIREMENT 3

Play a coin game.

There are many fun counting games you can play with your den or family. Here is one game you can try:

CHANGE MIXER

Materials

- ▶ Posters with four different coin names and values written on them, one for each player
- ▶ Four orange traffic cones (or chairs) set in a large square
- ▶ Music



Instructions

1. Give each player a poster.
2. As the leader plays the music, players walk around the outside of the square.
3. When the music stops, the leader will call out an amount that can be made with the coins.
4. Players must quickly join together at one of the four cones with other players and find the total value of the coins in the group. The goal is for the total value shown on the group's signs to be as close to the value called out as possible.
5. Each group must announce its total correctly. The group that is closest wins the round.



Date

Adult's Signature

COOL COIN FACTS

Each U.S. coin represents a part of a dollar and shows the faces of famous Americans.

Cent The one-cent coin is often called a penny. The inside of a cent is made with zinc. Then the zinc is coated with copper. The cent features the 16th president, Abraham Lincoln. Some of the designs are shown here.



1909–1958: Two ears of wheat symbolize America's abundance.



1959–2008: One-cent coins have the Lincoln Memorial on the back.

2009: The back shows scenes from Lincoln's life.



Lincoln's birthplace in Kentucky



Lincoln as a youth in Indiana



Lincoln as a lawyer in Illinois



Lincoln's presidency in the White House



2010–present: The shield shows the union of states.



Nickel The nickel is worth 5 cents. It is made of copper and nickel, which is how it got its name. It features President Thomas Jefferson and his home, Monticello.



Dime The dime is worth 10 cents and is also made of copper and nickel. It features President Franklin Roosevelt on the front. The back features several items: a torch, which stands for liberty, is in the center; an olive branch for peace is on the left side; and an oak branch for strength is on the right.

Quarter The quarter is worth 25 cents, or one-fourth of a dollar, and is also made of copper and nickel. It features the first U.S. president, George Washington, on the front of the coin. The back of the coin has one of more than 100 different designs, such as a majestic eagle, an outline of a state, U.S. territories, national parks, or the Bicentennial of 1976.



The Bicentennial Quarter celebrates 200 years of American freedom.



State quarters show unique facts about each state.

America the Beautiful Quarters® show national parks and sites in each state; Washington, D.C.; and the U.S. territories.



U.S. Territories Quarters honor the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Northern Mariana Islands.

What is on the back of your state's quarter? What does it show about the history or culture of your state?



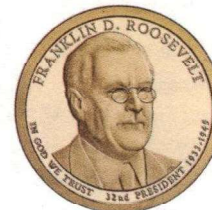
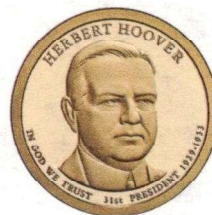
Half-dollar The half-dollar, or 50-cent piece, is made of zinc and nickel. It features President John F. Kennedy on the front and the eagle from the presidential seal on the back. Before President Kennedy's bust was put on the half-dollar, Benjamin Franklin was featured. The Liberty Bell was on the back of the Franklin half-dollar. This coin was made of 90 percent silver and is rare today.

Dollar The current \$1 coin may look like a gold coin, but it is actually made of a special mixture of copper, zinc, manganese, and nickel. There are two coins in circulation today that represent the gold-colored \$1 coin.



The Presidential Gallery of gold \$1 coins shows a U.S. president on the front and the Statue of Liberty on the back.

Each presidential coin has edge lettering that includes the U.S. motto, "E Pluribus Unum," Latin for "Out of many, one." That means we come from many states but we are united as one country. Turn the coin on its side to see the edge lettering.



Native American gold \$1 coins show the contributions of the tribes and individual American Indians to U.S. history and development. Sacagawea is honored on this coin. A Shoshone Indian, she helped Lewis and Clark explore the West all the way to the Pacific Ocean in 1804.

United States Golden Dollar Coin obverse featuring Sacagawea ©1999
United States Mint. All Rights Reserved. Used with permission.

REQUIREMENT 4

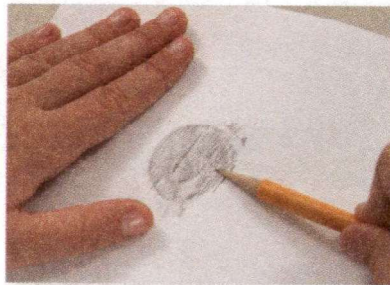
Choose a coin that interests you and make a coin rubbing. List information next to the coin detailing the pictures on it, the year it was made, and the mint where it was made.

You will be amazed at how much detail on a coin comes out when you make a rubbing of it. You can see the incredible amount of work that went into designing, casting, and making a coin.

To make a coin rubbing, you will need:

- ▶ A pencil or colored pencil
 - ▶ Paper or the chart on page 117
 - ▶ A coin
1. Place the paper on top of the coin. Hold the paper firmly and keep the coin steady.
 2. Then, using the side of the pencil lead, rub back and forth across the paper where the coin is lying underneath.
 3. Continue rubbing until the entire side of the coin is copied on your paper. Rub both sides of the coin!

Now find out about the pictures on the coin. Whose image is on the front, and what image is on the back? What year was it made, and where was it made?



Date

Adult's Signature

COIN RUBBINGS

You can use this page for the coin rubbings you make for requirement 4.

Coin Rubbing

Type of coin:

Pictures:

Year:

Mint:

Coin Rubbing

Type of coin:

Pictures:

Year:

Mint:

Coin Rubbing

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