

*U.S. Mint Coin Classroom Lesson Plan: Exploring the Semiquincentennial Coin Program*



## Exploring the Semiquincentennial Coin Program

**Subject:** Social Studies, U.S. History, Art, Economics

**Grade Level:** 3–12 (adaptable by grade band)

**Summary:** This lesson uses the United States Mint’s Semiquincentennial circulating coins as primary sources to help students explore U.S. history, values and founding principles. Through observation, discussion, and creative application, students learn how coins tell stories and commemorate memorable events.

### BIG QUESTIONS

- What is the story behind a coin design?
- How do coins relate to history, art and economics?
- What are some common symbols featured on coins?

### TIMING

45 to 50 minutes

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain what the Semiquincentennial (250th anniversary) represents.
- Analyze circulating coins as historical artifacts.
- Identify symbols and themes on the Semiquincentennial circulating coins.
- Connect coin designs to key events in U.S. history.
- Create and justify their own coin design.

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### MATERIALS

- [Images](#) or physical examples of the Semiquincentennial circulating coins
- Projector or interactive board
- Coin Analysis Worksheet
- Historical Connection Worksheet
- Design Your Own Coin Worksheet
- Paper, pencils, coloring tools or digital design tools
- Optional: magnifying glasses

### Lesson 1: Introduction & Coin Exploration

#### **Warm-Up (10 minutes): What Can a Coin Tell Us?**

1. Display a Semiquincentennial circulating coin image.
2. Ask students:
  - What do you notice first?
  - What symbols, people, or words do you see?
  - What do you think this coin is commemorating?
3. Briefly explain that coins can be primary sources that reflect history and values.

#### **Mini-Lesson (10 minutes): What Is the Semiquincentennial?**

- Explain that the United States is approaching its 250th anniversary.
- Define “Semiquincentennial.”
- Discuss how the U.S. Mint creates coins to mark important national moments.
- Emphasize that designs are chosen carefully to represent ideas, history, and cultural identity and values.

#### **Activity 1 (20 minutes): Coin Analysis**

Students work individually or in pairs to complete the Coin Analysis Worksheet:

- Describe images, symbols, and inscriptions
- Identify themes and what the coin commemorates
- Infer the message the designer wanted to communicate

**Discussion:** How might people interpret the same coin differently?

## Lesson 2: Making Connections

### Activity 2 (15 minutes): Historical Connections

As a class or in small groups, connect coin imagery to:

- Events from the American Revolution
- Founding ideals and documents (liberty, equality, representation)
- Key historical events

### Grade Band Adaptations:

- **Elementary:** Focus on symbols and simple timelines
  - **Middle School:** Connect imagery to specific historical events or principles
  - **High School:** Analyze representation, historical memory, and perspective
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### Activity 3 (25 minutes): Design Your Own Commemorative Coin

Students design a coin to commemorate:

- A historical person, theme or event
- Their community, school, or generation

### Requirements:

- At least one symbol
  - A word, phrase, or date
  - A short-written explanation of their design choices
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## Assessment

- Completed Coin Analysis Worksheet
- Student-designed coin
- Written or oral explanation connecting the design to a historical event or concept

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## ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- Compare U.S. coins to those from other countries.
- Write a persuasive paragraph to advocate for a new coin design.
- Research how coins have changed over time.

## RELATED

- [U.S. Mint Coin Classroom](#)

# Worksheet 1: Coin Analysis

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

## Step 1: Observe Closely

Look carefully at the Semiquincentennial circulating coin your teacher shared.

1. List three things you notice right away:

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2. Draw a quick sketch of the coin or one important detail:

## Step 2: Identify Symbols & Words

3. What symbols, images, or people do you see on the coin?

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4. What words, dates, or phrases appear on the coin?

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### Step 3: Interpret Meaning

5. What do you think this coin is commemorating?

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6. Which ideas or values do the coin represent? (Circle all that apply)

Liberty, Democracy, Unity, Independence, Equality, Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Why do you think the designer chose these symbols?

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## Worksheet 2: Historical Connections

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

1. The Semiquincentennial marks \_\_\_\_\_ years since the founding of the United States.

2. What important events or ideas from early U.S. history connect to this coin?

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3. How does this coin help tell the story of the United States?

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4. Whose stories or perspectives do you think are represented on this coin?

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5. Are there any stories or perspectives you think are missing? Why?

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# Worksheet 3: Design Your Own Coin

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

## Step 1: Plan Your Coin

1. What will your coin commemorate?  250 years of America  My community  My school  Another important idea or group: \_\_\_\_\_

2. List at least two symbols you will include:

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3. Write one word, phrase, or date that will appear on your coin:

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## Step 2: Design Your Coin

**Front (Obverse):**

**Back (Reverse):**

### Step 3: Explain Your Design

4. What does your coin represent?

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5. Why did you choose the symbols, words, and images on your coin?

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6. How does your coin reflect ideas, values, or history that matter to you?

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# Design Your Own Coin

What will coins look like in the next 250 years of American history? Help design your own future coin!

