

Lesson Ideas

Introduction

Below you will find a list of lesson ideas to support learning about Australian coins. The lessons, sorted according to learning areas, are broad and flexible so that teachers of both primary and middle years can select those suitable for the students in their class.

Broad learning outcomes

- Students will learn about the history of Australian coins, including the change to decimal currency in 1966.
- Students will explore the role and operations of the Royal Australian Mint, including how our coins are designed and produced.
- Students will consider the role of currency within societies.

English

- Students to brainstorm what they know about Australian coins and record their responses on the '**Coin KWL chart**' activity sheet.
- Put a large collection of Australian coins (including 1c and 2c coins) in a paper bag. In small groups, have students reach into the bag and select a coin. Without looking, students use descriptive language to describe how the coin feels before removing it. Can they identify the coin before they look at it? Once they remove the coin, students use further adjectives to describe it.
- Students to record Mint and coin-specific vocabulary on the '**Alphabet grid**' activity sheet as they learn about coins.
- Students to read the information on the 'Robots at the Mint' fact sheet, then complete the '**Coin comprehension**' activity sheet.
- Students to write a persuasive article/debate/short essay about one of the following topics:
 - We should bring back the 1c and 2c coins.
 - Australia needs a \$5 coin.
 - Coin collecting is a great hobby.

Mathematics

- Students to test their knowledge of Australian coins by completing the '**Coin ordering**' activity sheet.
- In small groups, students to play 'Fast money' (a version of the game known as 'Bang Bang') using coin-related questions (e.g. $\$1.20 + \2.40). There are some examples on the '**Fast money**' activity sheet to get started. Alternatively, students could create their own questions to share with other groups.

Investigating Australian Coins

- In small groups, students to play a game of 'Heads or Tails' and make predictions about which side each coin will land on after being flipped. They should record their results and see if they can make probability predictions based on them. Discuss how a large sample of data allows for more accurate predictions. Collate the data from all of the groups to increase the sample size. This data can also be used to discuss percentages, fractions, statistics and representations.
- Students to practice their coordinate plotting skills by completing the '**Coin coordinates**' activity sheet.
- Students to test their basic number knowledge to complete the '**Crack the currency code**' activity sheet.
- Students to bring coins and currency from different countries and discuss their similarities and differences to Australian currency. Discuss concepts related to value and exchange rate (e.g. ratios, percentages and fractions).
- Provide students with a list of coins. Have students represent the respective value of each coin using place value – i.e. in relation to tens of cents, dollars, tens of dollars, hundreds of dollars and thousands of dollars (e.g. 5c is one tenth of 50c, or one hundredth of \$5 etc.).
- Provide students with a list of current exchange rates. Have students use this information to graph the relative value of different currencies in relation to the Australian dollar.

Science

- Students to investigate the metals used to make each coin (e.g. copper, nickel, aluminium, etc.). From the information found discuss:
 - the properties of the metals
 - why students think these materials are used in coin production
 - why gold is not used to make the gold coins
 - why silver is not used to make the silver coins
 - what else could be used to make coins.
- Students to research the animals on the Australian decimal currency. They should record their information on the '**Currency creatures**' activity sheet.

Humanities and Social Sciences

History

- Students to research to find out more about the 'holey dollar'. There are only around 300 still in existence today. How much are they worth? Why are they so valuable? What are some of the factors that make some coins worth more than others? What are the most valuable Australian coins? Why are they so valuable?
- The people, places and events we commemorate on our coins reflect our history and our culture. Students to select a coin design and research to find out more about the person or event depicted.

Investigating Australian Coins

- Students to read through the events on the '**Coin timeline**' activity sheet and then research to find out what else was happening in Australia at those times. Once completed, discuss if there are any relationships or links between the coin event and what was happening in the nation around that time.
- Students to investigate the idea of trade/currency/bartering in one ancient civilisation. Compare this to modern-day trading.
- Students to consider how the idea of expanding contacts changed the nature of trade and currency.
- Students to look at the images on the '**Decimal currency**' and '**Pre-decimal currency**' posters (available with the activity sheets) and discuss the similarities and differences between the pre-decimal currency and the currency we use today.

Geography

- Students to research one or two international currencies of their choice (e.g. the Euro, US dollar, Pesos, Real, etc.). How does their chosen currency differ from Australian money (e.g. coin and note denominations, colour, size, etc.)? How is the currency produced? Is there any difference to Australian currency in relation to production? These comparisons can be made on the '**Coin Venn diagram**' activity sheet.

Economics and Business

- Students to research the history of money and how it evolved from traditional trade and barter. Consider how money works and how it is premised on a universal acceptance of its value. Consider new and emerging forms of currency – e.g. bitcoins.
- Many transactions are now completed online or using credit cards. Students to discuss if they think we will still need coins in the future? If so, what will they look like?

Civics and Citizenship

- Students to research the role of the Royal Australian Mint and the service it provides to the nation.

The Arts

- Students to investigate the coin making process, focussing specifically on the initial design and sculpting process. Attempt a similar technique to create a piece of artwork.
- Students to collect images of coins from Australia and around the world to create a 'virtual coin gallery'. View the coins as artworks and consider techniques, styles, form etc.
- Students to use their observational drawing skills to complete the missing parts of the coins on the '**Finish the coin**' activity sheet.

Investigating Australian Coins

- Students to design their own coin. What would they put on the reverse side? Consider:

- Flora (Flowers and Plants)
- Fauna (Animals)
- Sports
- Famous Faces
- The anniversary/commemoration of something special

How can students make sure that the picture is detailed enough, but still appropriate for a small item? Will students add any descriptive words or an inscription? What is the value of the coin? Would students keep the portrait of the monarch on the obverse side or choose something different?

Encourage students to explore different ways to record their design (e.g. paper and pencil, digital technologies, clay etc.)

- Students to select an image on the reverse of any Australian coin (including a commemorative coin) and research:
 - why that particular image was selected
 - who it was designed by
 - what makes it unique.
- Students to view the 'introduction to decimal currency' television commercials via the links below and discuss how the elements (script, music, style etc.) of the commercials helped communicate their message. Compare these to more contemporary commercials. What are the similarities and differences?
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6JawKH2yaQ
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZTeWLA1LAs
- Students to research coin designer Stuart Devlin. How did he move from art teacher to coin designer? Does he have a particular style in his coin designs?

Technologies

- Students to research some of the latest developments in minting technology such as holographic coins, pad printing and inserting objects under glass in the coin.
- Students to design a brand new currency. What will it look like? What values will it include? What material/s will be used to make it? Remember, currency needs to last a long time and be durable as it is handled frequently.