

Visit the Mint!

Discover the Royal Australian Mint

This teachers' supplement is to be used with Project Pullout #29, which is found in issue 82 of DMAG. Students will learn about significant moments in Australian history, with particular reference to our currency, and discover how Minting machines work.

These activities encourage students to:

- Learn and identify significant people and events in the past who have helped develop Australia's identity and heritage
- Identify and examine current events that affect Australia's identity
- Understand how materials are formed, shaped and finished
- Identify the forms and components used in the production of a die

Science: Making It Easy Dies

Four different dies are mentioned on page 48 of the Project Pull-out. These are, the Reduction Punch, Master Die, Working Hob and Production Die. Split the class into four groups and designate each a die to research using the www.ramint.gov.au website. They should find out how it is created and its purpose. Their findings are to be written up on the board in the form of a flowchart explaining the dies' relationships.



The Edge of Reason

DMAG's Project Pull-out outlines how coins are imprinted on either side, but what about the raised rimmed edge? This is called rimming. Ask the class what they think this is for.

Experiment

Mould a piece of clay or play-dough into the shape and size of a 10 cent coin. What happens to the clay when you press a 10 cent coin into it? (Answer: it should spread out.) Mould the clay back into its original shape and now place it within a bottle cap and do the same thing again. What happens this time? Answer: the clay doesn't spread out as far as the bottle cap stops it from doing so. The bottle cap has a similar affect as a coin's rim. Rimming prevents the dies from displacing the metal too much and helps maintain a constant size for coins.

Bonus Question:

Did the class notice anything else with this experiment? It's quite similar to the process of coining, with the clay acting as the blank and the coin as one of dies. Only the imprint that has been made on the clay is in reverse!

Art Cultural Identity

As a class, look at the different "tails" or reverse sides of Australian coins. Each has an Australian icon on it. Ask each student to design a tail side for a new coin. Their design should be something that they believe represents Australia today. It can be a person, symbol, object, animal or event. Once done, ask each student to present their picture to the class and explain why they chose what they did to be on their coin.

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HSIE: History

Significant Events and People

Coin collecting can be fun but can also become a profitable hobby. Over the years some extremely rare and valuable coins have emerged. Divide the class into groups of four and designate them one of the following coins to research. Some information can be found on www.ramint.gov.au.

- 1813 Holey dollar and Dump coin
- 1920 (square) one penny
- 1930 penny
- 1945 Australian shilling

As part of their research, students are to find out what is it about their coin that makes it so rare, the story behind the coin's creation, how many coins were in circulation when they first came out and how many are believed to be around now.

The Coin Age

The first of our modern coins were introduced in 1966. But before this we used bronze and silver coins. Each student is to research the following coins and find out the following: when they were in circulation, when they ceased being circulated, what they looked like and what their equivalent is in terms of our currency today (e.g. a shilling is equal to 10 cents).

- Farthing
- Shilling
- Penny
- Crown
- Sovereign

Maths: The 50 cent Coin

Page 53 of the Project Pull-out states that the 50 cent was once circular. Ask the students why they think this changed. Get them to research and draw up a timeline of the life of the 50 cent coin. On their timeline they must include when it was first created, when and why it stopped being circulated and when today's 12-sided 50 cent coin went into circulation. How justified was this decision to change from a circle to a dodecagon? Get the students to measure the diameter of a 20 cent and 50 cent coin to help answer this.



English: Creative Writing

Brainstorm on the board the importance of money. Ask each student to imagine a world without our current currency system. If money didn't exist, how would people obtain essentials like food? Or get things that they want, like a new videogame? Would they barter items that they own? How would they obtain these items for trade? Where would you go to trade them? Each student is to answer these questions within a two-page story about a day shopping in their money-less world.

Excursion

A trip to the Royal Australian Mint is a great way to learn about money making up-close. The Mint is open all year round except Christmas Day and Good Friday. See www.ramint.gov.au for details or call **1300 652 020**.

Extension exercise:

Many ancient cultures paid their workers in goods rather than money. For instance, ancient Egyptians were paid in wheat and Roman soldiers were paid in salt. In fact, this is where the saying, "worth your weight in salt" comes from. These days however, many people say, "worth your weight in gold" because salt is no longer seen as valuable. The students' mission is to find out why salt was seen as valuable in the past and write an explanation, like an interesting magazine article, about it. Here's a hint to get students started: they didn't have fridges, so how did people preserve food like meat?

Answers to Around The World activity on Student Sheets: Lira, Turkey. Zloty, Poland. Pound, Britain. Rupee, India. Kuna, Croatia. Yen, Japan. Rupiah, Indonesia. Euro, France. Krona, Sweden. American dollar, United States of America. Vatu, Vanuatu. Peso, Mexico. Ruble, Russia. Baht, Thailand. Dinar, Serbia.

About DMAG

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