

## U.S. Coins: Reminders of History and Heritage

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An assortment of American coins.

Coins have many uses. People save them or spend them. Some people collect coins for fun or for profit. Others "toss a coin" to make a decision or use coins in magic tricks. Children use coins in tabletop games such as "penny hockey." Sometimes coins are used in jewelry or as adornment on clothes. But few people who use coins every day think about such things as: Why does a coin look the

way it does? Why is it a particular size? Why are certain words or images on the coin? A close examination of coins will not only answer these questions but will reveal a lot about a nation's history and culture.

In the United States, six coins are currently in circulation. Each coin has a different *denomination*, or value. The six coins are the one-cent coin, the five-cent coin, the ten-cent coin, the 25-cent coin, the 50-cent coin (half dollar) and 100-cent (dollar) coin. Americans usually refer to their coins by names rather than by values. A one-cent coin is called a penny; it is a copper-colored coin. A five-cent coin is called a nickel, a ten-cent coin is a dime, and a 25-cent coin is a quarter. Nickels, dimes, and quarters are silver colored. Americans use these four coins regularly in their transactions, as customers making purchases and as shopkeepers giving change.

The other two U.S. coins in circulation, the half dollar coin and the dollar coin, are rarely used. Yet, the dollar is the basic unit of exchange in the United States. It exists both in the form of a coin and as paper money and it is always equal to 100 cents. All other forms of U.S. currency, both coins and paper money, are valued in relation to the dollar. For example, a quarter is equal to one-fourth of a dollar, a dime is one-tenth of a dollar, and so on.

The dollar dates back to the earliest days of U.S. history. In the 17th century, when England still ruled the American colonies, the colonists used whatever foreign coins they had for currency. There were not many British coins available. The coin most commonly used was a large silver Spanish dollar or peso. It is believed that the U.S. dollar was modeled after this Spanish coin. Although the origin of the dollar sign (\$) is not definitively known, some say it may have developed from the way people wrote *ps*, an abbreviation of the word *peso*.

The Spanish dollars were also called *pieces of eight* because a person could make change by chopping the coin into eight pie-shaped pieces that were called bits. Two bits equaled one-fourth of the coin. Even now, more than 200 years later, some Americans still refer to a U.S. quarter as "two bits."

(Disponível em: < <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol45/no1/p43.htm> > Acesso em: 06/07/2009)

## FAMILIARIZAÇÃO COM O TEXTO

- 1 Observando o título e a ilustração do texto, procure antecipar o assunto do mesmo.
- 2 Através de uma leitura rápida, confirme ou descarte suas hipóteses. Em seguida, descreva em poucas palavras a ideia geral do texto.

- 3 Leia o texto novamente, procurando localizar as seguintes informações:

- a O número de moedas em circulação nos Estados Unidos atualmente: \_\_\_\_\_
- b O valor das seguintes moedas: a penny: \_\_\_\_\_  
a nickel: \_\_\_\_\_ a quarter: \_\_\_\_\_
- c A cor das moedas de: um centavo: \_\_\_\_\_ 25 centavos \_\_\_\_\_
- d As moedas pouco usadas: \_\_\_\_\_
- e A origem do símbolo (\$), de acordo com a opinião de algumas pessoas: \_\_\_\_\_

**4** Utilizando o contexto, procure inferir o significado das palavras/expressões em negrito:  
Some people collect coins for **fun** or for **profit**. Others "**toss a coin**" to make a decision or use  
coins in magic **tricks**.

All other forms of U.S. **currency**, both coins and paper money, are valued in relation to the  
dollar.

**5** Tendo por base a apresentação do assunto, relacione os tópicos abaixo com os parágrafos  
do texto:

- a Introdução (comentários genéricos) (§ \_\_\_\_\_)
- b Exposição (informações mais específicas do tema) (§ \_\_\_\_\_)
- c Dados históricos (§ \_\_\_\_\_)

## APRESENTAÇÃO E PRÁTICA DE ASPECTO LINGUÍSTICO

### APOSTOS

**UM APOSTO** (da palavra 'apor': colocar junto) é uma palavra (ou grupo de palavras) colocada  
ao lado de outra palavra cujo significado ela descreve/explica/define. Apositivos devem ter a  
mesma classe e função gramatical das palavras que eles descrevem. Geralmente os apostos  
ocorrem após a palavra que explicam e são frequentemente separados por vírgulas ou traves-  
sões. Assim, os apostos interrompem o fluxo da sentença com o objetivo de fornecer informa-  
ção adicional.

Exemplos:

*The capital of France, **Paris**, is an exciting city.*

*Albert Einstein, **one of the most brilliant men of the twentieth century**, permitted his brain to  
be dissected after his death.*

Veja o exemplo abaixo, extraído do texto.

*The other two U.S. coins in circulation, **the half dollar coin and the dollar coin**, are rarely used.*

Na maioria das vezes os apostos podem ser omitidos sem afetar a estrutura e o significado  
da sentença visto que não contêm informação essencial à sua compreensão.

*The other two U.S. coins in circulation are rarely used.*

Como você pôde perceber, as construções apositivas são um recurso prático e eficiente que  
o escritor pode utilizar para acrescentar detalhes a uma sentença.

Volte ao texto 'U.S. Coins: Reminders of History and Heritage'. Localize e transcreva abaixo outras sentenças contendo apostos. Em seguida, sublinhe as construções apositivas.

## CONSOLIDAÇÃO

### TEMPOS VERBAIS: PRESENTE, PASSADO SIMPLES E VOZ PASSIVA

1 Identifique o tempo verbal predominante nos:

a três parágrafos iniciais: \_\_\_\_\_

b dois parágrafos finais: \_\_\_\_\_

2 Identifique, no parágrafo 4, outras pistas que sinalizam a mudança de tempo verbal em relação aos parágrafos anteriores.

3 Identifique as formas verbais no parágrafo transcrito abaixo. Em seguida, decida se as mesmas estão na voz ativa ou passiva.

The other two U.S. coins in circulation, the half dollar coin and the dollar coin, are rarely used. Yet, the dollar is the basic unit of exchange in the United States. It exists both in the form of a coin and as paper money and it is always equal to 100 cents. All other forms of U.S. currency, both coins and paper money, are valued in relation to the dollar. For example, a quarter is equal to one-fourth of a dollar, a dime is one-tenth of a dollar, and so on.