

## PART ONE: HEAVY METAL

- 1 The United States Mint is the government agency that produces physical money. Watch the video about how quarters are made. Then, the table below shows how many pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters the Mint produced in 2023. Which coin accounted for the greatest amount of money in total?



	PENNY	NICKEL	DIME	QUARTER
VALUE OF COIN	1¢	5¢	10¢	25¢
NO. PRODUCED	4,136,000,000	1,416,000,000	2,666,000,000	2,274,000,000

- 2 After the Mint produces coins, it sells them to banks around the country for the amount that they're worth (e.g. banks pay \$0.01 for a penny). If a coin is worth more than it costs to produce, the Mint earns money. If a coin is worth less, the Mint loses money. The term "seigniorage" refers to the difference between how much a coin is worth and how much it costs to produce.

The following table shows how much it cost the Mint to produce each type of coin in 2023. Calculate the seigniorage for each coin. Based on this, which coin would you say was the worst deal for the Mint and why?

	PENNY	NICKEL	DIME	QUARTER
COST TO PRODUCE	3.1¢	11.5¢	5.3¢	11.6¢
SEIGNIORAGE				

## PART TWO: KEEP THE CHANGE?

- 3 Just because a country has a coin doesn't mean it needs to keep it forever. In 2013, Canada got rid of its penny. When a shopper bought something and paid in cash, the store would round the price up or down to the nearest \$0.05. Watch the videos about this.

Then, imagine the U.S. got rid of the penny and rounded like Canada does. If a shopper bought each of the following items *separately* and paid in cash, how much would each item cost? What if the Mint stopped producing another coin, as well? (You can pick the coin.)

							
		BREAD	MILK	EGGS	COFFEE	BANANAS	DETERG.
ORIGINAL PRICE		\$2.50	\$4.03	\$3.07	\$1.89	\$0.63	\$14.21
CASH NEEDED							
							

- 4 For each scenario above – no more penny, and no more coin-of-your-choosing – calculate how much the shopper would lose/save if they purchased all the items separately. If the country got rid of these coins, do you think it would have a big impact on people?
- 5 Many people think the United States government should stop producing the penny (and maybe other coins, as well). If it did, what might be some consequences, both positive and negative? If the government does decide to stop producing certain coins, what do you think would be the best/most interesting uses for the coins that currently exist?