



A closer look at coins

The use of a common system of coinage united all countries of the Roman Empire. The emperor's image reminded them who was in charge.

Coins have two sides. The side with the Emperor's head on it is the **obverse face**. Around the edge there is an inscription giving the emperor's name and listing his achievements.



The other side of the coin is the **reverse face**. Designs on this side are used for imperial propaganda.



This coin is a bronze dupondius. What is the significance of the eagle standing on the globe on the reverse?

The abbreviations on this coin mean:-

IMP (*Imperator*), the Imperial title

CAES (*Caesar*), each emperor after Julius Caesar held this title to show that he was his legitimate successor

VESPASIAN Emperor's name

AVG (*Augustus*), the Great

COS (*Consul*), head and most powerful member of the Roman government

III, the number of times the post was held by the emperor

The letters **SC** stand for *Senatus Consulto* which means 'by decree of the Senate'.

These are silver *denarii* of a later emperor, Constantine. The **obverse** of this denarius shows Constantine dressed as a priest; on the **reverse** is an image of an altar.



In AD 313 Constantine signed the Edict of Milan allowing Christians freedom of worship throughout the Roman Empire.

The reverse of this coin shows the Christian Chi Rho symbol (the first two Greek letters for Christ), a message to all inhabitants of the Empire declaring Constantine's new religious allegiance.



What is this modern coin and in what ways do you think it is similar to the coins of the Roman Emperors?



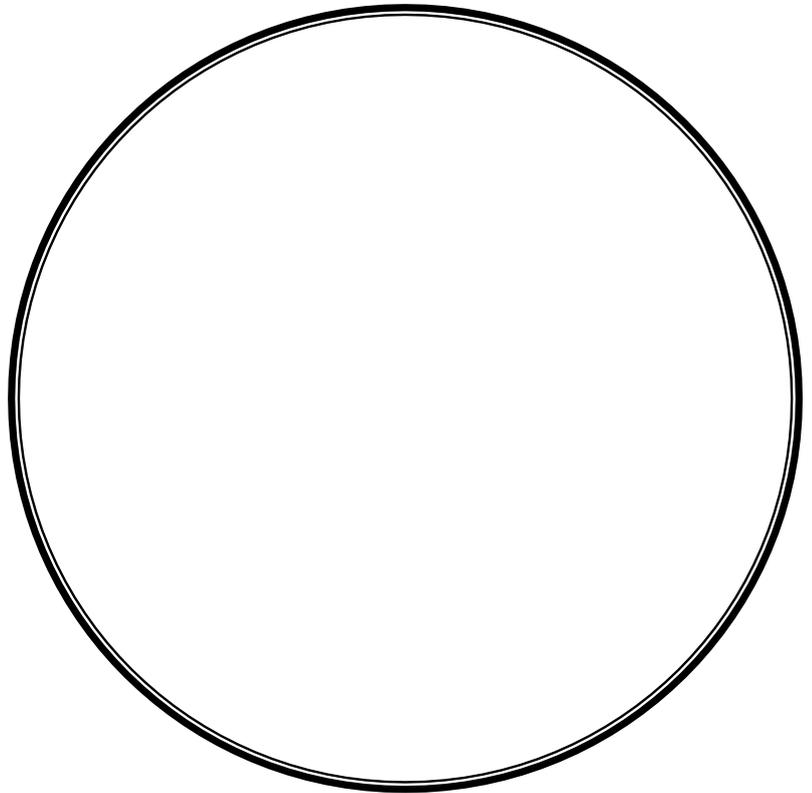
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Look at the coins in use today. Why do you think the images used were chosen? Do you think they are meant to mean something? If so, what?

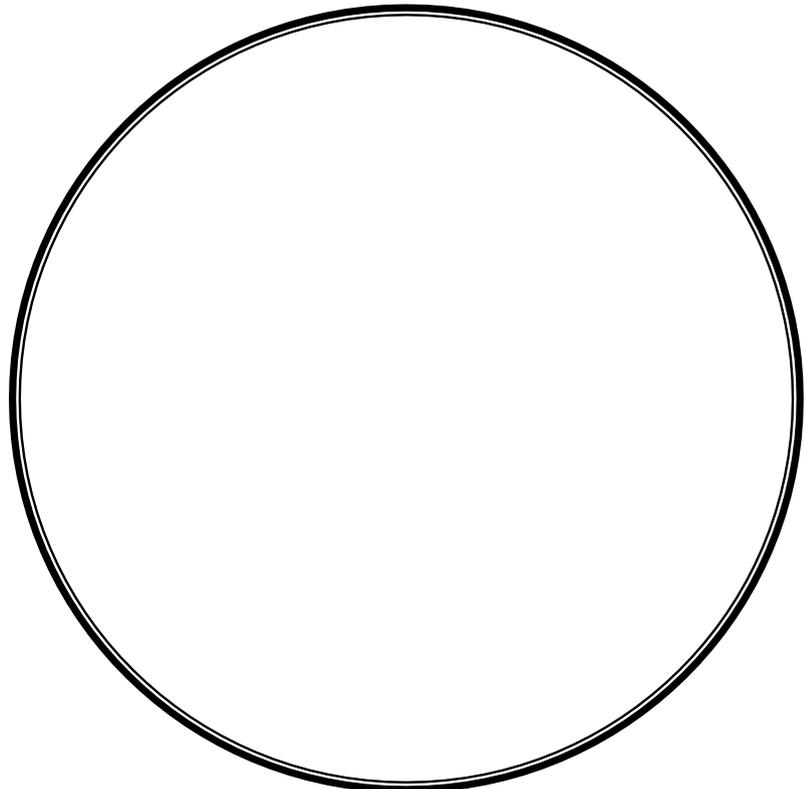
Now design your own coin.

This is the **obverse face**. Think carefully about what sort of face you want to show to the World.

Maybe you want to be seen as a peace bringer or a warrior, a maker of just laws or a tyrant.



This is the **reverse face**. What images will you use to display the things and ideas that are important to you?



Use the space below to write the inscription that you would like to have inscribed around the edge of your coin.