



project.org

STUDENT HANDOUT

GREEN LEVEL
MORE SUPPORT

Small Works of Power

Grades 5–8 • Art

James Tissot (1836–1902), Brooklyn Museum

ADMIT ONE

NAME

DATE

CLASS

Every coin is a tiny work of art. Before anyone could read it, they could see it: a face, a symbol, a ring of letters. Two thousand years ago, rulers in Jerusalem and Rome chose those designs carefully, because a coin passed through every hand in the land.

PART 1

O1

Three words for reading a coin

Coin designers work with three things. Learn the words, then find them.

Portrait a picture of a person's face

Symbol an object that stands for an idea

Inscription words written on the coin

PART 2

O2

Look closely at two coins



CASE 7 • REPLICA

The Tribute Penny

Silver denarius, 14–37 AD. A museum-quality replica. One side carries the face of the emperor Tiberius; the other the inscription PONTIF MAXIM — *High Priest*.



CASE 7 • GENUINE

Pontius Pilate's prutah

Bronze, minted in 29/30 AD. One side carries a simpulum, a Roman libation ladle; the other, three bound ears of grain. No face at all.

Fill in the table. Write **yes** or **no**, then say what you see.

DOES IT HAVE...

THE TRIBUTE PENNY

PILATE'S PRUTAH

A **portrait**? Whose?

A **symbol**? What?

An **inscription**?

03

PART 3

What does each coin say?

The Tribute Penny shows the emperor's face. Pilate's coin shows a ladle used in pagan worship and three ears of grain. Finish each sentence.

The Tribute Penny says: the emperor is...

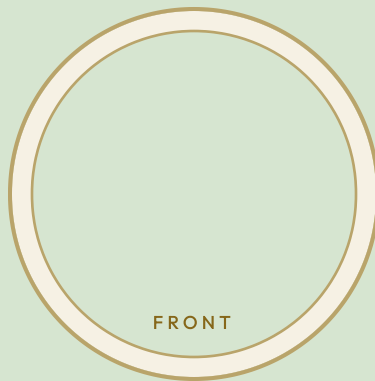
Pilate's coin says: Rome is...

04

PART 4

Design your own coin

Draw a **portrait** or a **symbol** on the front. On the back, write an **inscription** around the edge and add one small symbol in the middle.



05

PART 5

Tell us about it

My coin shows _____ because...

MINI MUSEUM CONNECTION

At the exhibition, look at each coin in Cases 6 and 7. Count how many have a face and how many have only symbols.

minimuseumproject.org/exhibitions/in-their-hands