Currency

Buying and selling goods and services involves the exchange of ***currency*** – coins and paper bills that represent a specific value. Look for instances in your book where characters use money. Take that opportunity to try some of these activities to explore currency:

1. **Investigate the physical properties of different denominations of currency** – Have a penny, nickel, dime, quarter, half-dollar, one dollar bill, and a five dollar bill for students to investigate. Put out magnifiers, rulers, and scales for them to use in their investigation. They can work in groups to come up with as many characteristics of each piece of money as possible. You can then combine their observations to make a class list of characteristics for each denomination.

2. **Coin Patterning** – Students can use coins to work on patterning skills while reinforcing the differences between different coins. Challenge older students to devise their own complex patterns. Younger students can use the enclosed *Coin Patterning* sheet.

3. **Design Your Own Currency** – After investigating the details of U.S. currency, students can design the currency for their own imaginary country. Would it feature famous people and landmarks like U.S. money? Or, would they promote something else on their money? Students can use the *Design Your Own Currency* sheets in this packet, or decide on a whole new shape for their currency.

4. **Learning to Count Change** – Older students might have fun learning to count change, a lost art in the age of computerized cash registers. Divide students into groups and give each group a large handful of mixed change and some fake paper bills. Show them how to calculate the change needed in a transaction by counting on from the price to the amount given to pay for the item.

    For example, if the price of an item is $1.34 and the customer gives $2, the steps to make change are:

    > +1 penny to get to $1.35
    > +1 nickel to get to $1.40
    > +1 dime to get to $1.50
    > +2 quarters to get to $2.00

    Let them practice with various prices and payments until they get the hang of it.