

Coin Riddles: What's in Your Wallet?

Coin counting can be a very challenging concept for children to learn. Even by third grade, though your child may be confident identifying his coins, he may still need some practice combining and calculating coins to equal a certain value. In this activity, bolster your child's coin-counting and logical thinking skills by solving some coin riddles! This activity is very easy to prepare and can be used repeatedly.



What You Need:

- Change purse or wallet with change compartment
- Collection of either play or real coins equaling no more than \$1.00 each (approximately 2 half-dollars, 4 quarters, 10 dimes, 10 nickels, and 30 pennies). The exact quantity of each coin will depend on the riddles you will write.
- Index cards
- Pencil

What You Do:

1. Write coin riddles on the index cards. These riddles will tell how many coins are in the purse and what the specific value of the coins is. For example, one card might read: "I hold three coins. They total 15 cents. What coins do I have?"
2. Here is a list of sample riddles to get you started:
 - I hold 4 coins. They total 61 cents. What coins do I have?
 - I hold 3 coins. They total 27 cents. What coins do I have?
 - I hold 5 coins. They total 76 cents. What coins do I have?
 - There are 4 coins. The coins total 30 cents. What coins do I have?
 - There are 4 coins. They total 60 cents. What coins do I have?
 - There are 3 coins. The coins total 35 cents. What coins do I have?
 - I hold 5 coins. They total 95 cents. What coins do I have?
3. Demonstrate how to play the game with a warm-up question. Without showing him, place a quarter and a dime in the change purse. Now give him the following clues: "I have two coins. They add up to 35 cents. What coins do I have?"
4. Allow him to manipulate the play or real coins and tell you what he thinks you have in the purse. If necessary, repeat this demonstration until you feel he is comfortable with the game concept.
5. Explain to him that you have several more riddles written on index cards and you will both try to guess what coins are in the change purse or wallet.
6. Take turns being either the "guesser", the person who guesses what coins are in the wallet, or the "wallet owner," the person who places the correct coins in the wallet to total the given amount.
7. Let him use coins to manipulate and solve the riddles. On your turn, allow him to see how you use the coins to solve the riddle.

Feel free to add more difficult riddles as he gains more confidence. And don't be surprised if he wants to write a riddle for all of the coins in your actual wallet. You'll have loads of fun guessing and challenging each other to write the most difficult riddle!