

Most High School class rings are made of 10K Gold.

Silver was used in the making of halves quarters and dimes until 1964

Wartime silver nickels (1942-1945) -

Most of them look unusually gray and have a big mintmark (P, D, or S) above the dome in back. I've found about a dozen of them - a 1942-P, 2 1943-Ps, a 1943-S, a 1944-P, 4 1945-Ps, a 1945-D, and 2 1945-Ss. These tend to be worth \$.30 to \$1, depending on condition.

with 35% silver content and a value of at least \$.50.

Many of the non-silver issues are hard to find as well, like the 1938-D and -S, the 1939-D and -S, and the 1950-D.

There's also a very small chance of finding Buffalo nickels, though I've had much better luck finding them in nickel slot machines.

Liberty Half eagles were produced from 1839 to 1908 these are the 5 dollar gold coins.

Golden Definitions:

Karate System: A system of measurement based on 24 karats being "fine" or "pure" gold. 1 karat equals 1/24th fine gold by weight. This is the system used in the United States.

Plumb Gold: Karat weights are usually determined with a small, fractional variance allowed. Karat gold which has no variance and is exactly the precise fractional karat weight is called "plumb" gold.

European System: A system of measurement based on a fraction of 1,000; or the number of grams of gold in 1 kilogram of alloy.

Karat Gold Parts Gold Percentage Gold Normal European Stamping

9 kt 9 in 24 37.50% 375

10 kt 10 in 24 41.67% 416

12 kt 12 in 24 50% 500

14 kt 14 in 24 58.33% 583 or 585

18 kt 18 in 24 75% 750

22 kt 22 in 24 91.67% 917

24 kt 24 in 24 99.99% 999 or .99999

Vocabulary of Silver

Sterling Silver - an alloy, containing 925 parts pure silver and 75 parts copper.

Britannia Standard - the legal standard for all silver pieces produced between 1697 and 1720. It contained 958 parts pure silver - 33% more silver than sterling.

Martele Silver - Gorham Silver Company from 1899 to 1912 - it was 950 out of 1000 parts silver.

Assay - a test of the silver content in a piece to be sure it meets sterling standard.

Sheffield Plate - a cheaper substitute for sterling, produced by fusing sheets of silver to the top and bottom of a sheet of copper or base metal. This "silver sandwich" was then worked into finished pieces. At first it was only put on one side and later was on top and bottom.

Electroplate - the name given to articles coated with pure silver by electrolysis (electrical currents passed through a plating bath which deposit silver on the base metal). Today we call this type silverplate and pieces frequently bear the stamp EPNS (Electroplated Nickel Silver) and EPBM (Electroplated Britannia Metal).

Engraving - designs cut by use of sharp tools called scorpers or gravers which remove small amounts of metal.

Chasing - produces designs similar to engraving, but with a softer look. No metal is removed. Instead, lines are slightly depressed into the surface.

Repousse - the process of embossing metal from the back by hammering, then giving further definition to the relief by chasing up from the front.

Cut-Card - a decorative technique similar to appliqué work in sewing. Thin sheets of silver are cut into patterns which are then applied as ornamentation.

Patina - that special soft sheen, color and feel which only years of loving use can give to silver.

Troy Weight - the unit of weight employed by silversmiths. One pound Troy comprises 12 ounces of 20 pennyweights (dwts.) each. A troy ounce is equivalent to 1.097 ounces avoirdupois, or 31.1 grams.

Hallmarks - marks stamped into a piece to guarantee the sterling standard, maker, date, and city of origin.

Vermeil - silver which has been gilded with gold.

Coin Silver - made of coins. Premium, Dollar, Standard, Pure Coin or the letter C or D are all American terms, but some Irish makers used them as well. Some silversmiths only used their name.

Paktong - In the 18th Century paktong (alloy of nickel, zinc and copper) was imported into England from China and used in imitation of silver. Craftsmen used paktong to fashion objects such as chafing dishes, inkstands, sugar tongs, wine coasters and candlesticks.

Fer Éules - Iron ring on a staff - Pearl handle with flatware with silver bands

English Silver Marks

The hall mark indicates the date of manufacture as well as the assay office where the silver was tested, the maker and standard of the silver. The English have been making and marking silver since 1300. The standard of sterling silver is set at 11 oz. 2 dwt. of fine silver or 18 dwt. of alloy to the Tray pound.

Britannia 11 oz. 10 dwt. of fine silver + 610 dwt. of alloy (usually copper) or 958 parts pure silver dwt. of 1000 from March 1697-1720. Standard ceased and went back to sterling.

In 1363 every gold and/or silversmith had to have a mark of his own. It could be a symbol such as a bird, flower, etc.

In 1697 the worker's mark consisted of the first two letters of his surname. In 1739 that was changed to the initials of his Christian name and surname, a system that has continued to the present day.

Colonial Coins

Half Cents

Liberty Cap (1793-1797)

Draped Bust (1800-1808)

Classic Head (1810-1836)

Braided Hair (1840-1857)

Large Cents

Flowing Hair, Chain Reverse (1793)

Flowing Hair, Wreath Reverse (1793)

Liberty Cap (1793-1796)

Draped Bust (1796-1807)

Classic Head (1808-1814)

Matron Head (1816-1839)

Braided Hair (1839-1857)

Small Cents

Flying Eagle (1856-1858)

Indian Head (1859-1909)

Lincoln Head (1909-Date)
Two Cents
Three Cents
Silver (1851-1873)
Nickel (1865-1889)
Half Dimes
Flowing Hair (1794-1795)
Draped Bust (1796-1805)
Capped Bust (1829-1837)
Seated Liberty (1837-1873)
Five Cents (Nickels)
Shield (1866-1883)
Liberty Head (1883-1913)
Indian Head (or Buffalo) (1913-1938)
Jefferson Head (1938-Date)
Ten Cents (Dimes)
Draped Bust (1796-1807)
Capped Bust (1809-1837)
Seated Liberty (1837-1891)
Barber (1892-1916)
"Mercury Head" (1916-1945)
Roosevelt Head (1946-Date)
Twenty Cents
Quarter Dollars
Draped Bust (1796-1807)
Capped Bust (1815-1837)
Seated Liberty (1838-1891)
Barber (1892-1916)
Standing Liberty (1916-1930)
Washington Head (1932-Date)
50 States Quarters™
Half Dollars
Flowing Hair (1794-1795)
Draped Bust (1796-1807)
Capped Bust (1807-1839)
Seated Liberty (1839-1891)
Barber (1892-1915)
Walking Liberty (1916-1945)
Franklin Head (1948-1963)
Kennedy Head (1964-Date)
One Dollar (Silver)
Flowing Hair (1794-1795)
Draped Bust (1796-1804)
Seated Liberty (1836-1873)
Trade (1873-1885)
Morgan (1878-1921)

Peace (1921-1935)
Eisenhower Head (1971-1978)
Susan B. Anthony (1979-1999)
One Dollar (Gold)
Liberty Head (1849-1854)
Indian Princess (1854-1889)
\$2-1/2 Gold (Quarter Eagles)
Turban Head (1796-1807)
Capped Bust (1808-1834)
Classic Head (1834-1839)
Liberty Head (1840-1907)
Indian Head (1908-1929)
\$3 Gold
\$5 Gold (Half Eagles)
Turban Head (1795-1807)
Capped Bust (1807-1834)
Classic Head (1834-1838)
Liberty Head (1839-1908)
Indian Head (1908-1929)
\$10 Gold (Eagles)
Turban Head (1795-1804)
Liberty Head (1839-1907)
Indian Head (1907-1933)
\$20 Gold (Double Eagles)
Liberty Head (1849-1907)
Saint Gaudens (1907-1933)

MINT MARKS

U.S. Mints & The Mint Marks you should know..

(P) - Philadelphia
(D) - Denver
(S) - San Francisco
(W) - West Point

Older coins may have letters other than "D" or "S."

These letters represent old closed down mints listed below..

(C) for Charlotte, North Carolina (on gold coins only)..
(CC) for Carson City, Nevada...
(D) Dahlonega, Georgia-used only for gold coins minted from 1838-1861.
(O) for New Orleans, Louisiana...

On some gold coins
minted from 1838 to 1861, you may find the letter

(D) Showing the coin was minted at Dahlonega, Georgia..
the Denver Mint was not yet in operation.

Listing of each type of US Coins
and where to find their Mint Marks...

Half Cents-All Half Cents were minted at the Philadelphia Mint, thus they had no mint mark..

Large Cents-All Large Cents were minted at the Philadelphia Mint, thus no mint mark..

Flying Eagle Cents-All Flying Eagle Cents were minted at the Philadelphia Mint, thus no mint mark..

Indian Cents-on only Two years, 1908 & 1909, under the wreath on the back of the coin..

Lincoln Cents-on the front, under the date..

Two Cent Piece-All Two Cent Pieces were minted at the Philadelphia Mint, thus no mint mark..

Three Cent Pieces-All Three Cent Pieces were minted at the Philadelphia Mint (no mint mark), except 1851 which were minted in New Orleans (O) mint mark on the back to the right of the Roman Number III)..

Shield Nickels-All of the Shield Nickels were minted at the Philadelphia Mint, thus no mint mark..

Liberty Nickels-All Liberty Nickels were minted at the Philadelphia Mint (no mint mark), except the 1912 that may have a D or S on the back to the left of the word CENTS..

Buffalo Nickels-found on the back under the words FIVE CENTS..

Jefferson Nickels-1938-1964 on the back to the right of the building..
1968 to present day on the front near the date..
1942-1945 (The War Years) Mint Mark above the Dome of the Monticello Building..

Half Dimes-on the back either in or below the wreath..

Bust Dimes-All bust Dimes were minted at the Philadelphia Mint, thus no mint mark..

Seated Dimes-on the back either in or just below the wreath..

Barber Dimes-on back centered on the bottom near rim..

Mercury Dimes-on back bottom left of the fasces (Looks like a pole)..

Roosevelt Dimes-1946-1964 on the back, the bottom left of the torch..
1968 and up on front above the date..

Twenty Cent Pieces-on back under the Eagle..

Bust Quarters-All Bust Quarters were minted at the Philadelphia Mint, thus no mint mark..

Seated Quarters-on back under the Eagle above Quarter Dollar..

Barber Quarters-on back under the Eagle above Quarter Dollar..

Standing Liberty Quarters-on front small mint mark above date just to the left..

Washington Quarters-1946-1964, on the back, centered under the Eagle..
1968 and up, on front to the right of the hair ribbon..

Bust Half Dollars-on the front above the date..

Seated Half Dollars-on the back just below the Eagle (above HALF DOLLAR)..

Barber Half Dollars-on the back just below the Eagle (above HALF DOLLAR)..

Standing Liberty Half Dollars-1916 & some 1917 on the front just below TRUST..
1917-1947, on back, lower left just below branch..

Ben Franklin Half Dollars-on back, centered above the Liberty Bell beam..

Kennedy Half Dollars-1964 on back to the left of the olive branch near claw..
1968 and up, on front centered above date near neck..

Bust Dollars-on the back under the Eagle..

Liberty Seated Dollars-on the back under the Eagle..

Morgan Dollars-on the back under the Eagle..

Peace Dollars-on back , left side at tip of Eagles Wing..

Trade Dollars-on back under the Eagle..