

## Artist's Challenge Coins (ACCs)

To trade, share, or keep  
— these coins carry a  
personalized message and  
mini artwork

Challenge Coins are specially designed and minted for service personnel to recognize an achievement, enhance morale, or to signify membership in (or experience on) a particular mission. The first Challenge Coins were given to Roman soldiers in recognition of service. Coins were cast during WWI to indicate attachment to a certain unit became a tradition for special forces units during the Vietnam War. Gaining popularity during Operation Desert Storm, each branch of the U.S. military now has Challenge Coins, as well as firefighters, police officers, fraternal organizations, athletic groups, and others.

A personal Artist's Challenge Coin (ACC) can be created by students for sharing or collecting. On one side of a coin-shaped disk, the artist makes a small drawing, painting, print, collage, stamp, or photo appliqué. On the reverse, he or she writes a challenge or message that expresses:

- a reminder of a personal goal
- a motto, purpose, or mission statement to share
- a memento of a special relationship or event
- a shared bond as part of a group or experience
- a message of encouragement or a challenge to someone to meet a goal or commitment
- a means of expressing gratitude, recognizing achievement, or honoring an outstanding idea or performance

The Challenge Coins are then traded, given away, or collected. Not just for students to create — teachers, parents, organizations, and groups can use them as awards, incentives, congratulations.

Coin collections can be made into jewelry, strung together or stored in sleeves.

**GRADES K-12** Note: instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.



### Materials

[Crescent 215 Hot Press Illustration Board](#), 18 pt, 15" x 20", White (13411-108); share one board across class

[Olfa Compass Circle Cutter](#), (57471-0000); need one for class

[Westcott C-Thru Circle Template, Large Circles](#) (55475-1008); share one between two students

[Maped Ultimate Scissors, ambidextrous](#), 5" (58470-1005); one per student

Assorted materials for designing surface of coins, including:

[Sargent Art<sup>®</sup> Metallic Acrylics](#), 8-oz, assorted colors (00730-)

[Sharpie<sup>®</sup> Ultra-Fine Point Markers](#), assorted colors (21315-)

[Blick Studio<sup>®</sup> Artists' Colored Pencils](#), assorted (22063-)

[Liquitex<sup>®</sup> Pouring Medium](#), 8-oz (02001-1002); share one among class

### Optional Materials

[2-Prong Bail with Loop](#), 12-pack, Silver (60692-2410) or Gold (60692-4030)

[Krylon<sup>®</sup> Crystal Clear<sup>®</sup> Acrylic Coating](#), 6-oz (21703-1006)





*Step 1: Cut coin-sized circles from illustration board. Paint, draw, write, print, stamp, or collage a personal piece of art on one side of the coin. Write a message or challenge on the back.*



*Step 2: Seal the artwork with acrylic medium or spray.*



## Process

1. Cut circles from heavy cardboard or illustration board, 1" to 2" in diameter. To make precise cuts, a circle-cutting tool may be used. Or trace with a circle template and cut carefully with a small pair of scissors.
  2. ACCs may be created in any manner, with any materials that can be used on a small surface. Making them an expression of personal ideas and choices is the important concept — students are using them to share a small part of themselves.
- Here are a few ideas:
- Paint the coin with metallic gold, silver, or copper acrylics.
  - Use small brushes to create small paintings in acrylic paint or ink.
  - Draw images with fine-point permanent markers or colored pencils.
  - Create elegant script lettering with calligraphy markers or dip pens and permanent ink.
  - Use an ink pad and small stamps to make designs.
- Incorporate small photos, photocopied images, found illustrations, and computer-generated text.
  - Collage decorative paper and words cut from magazines and newspapers.
  - Use stickers, decals, or small paper-punched designs.
3. Seal and strengthen ACCs with O pouring medium, which leaves a smooth, glossy surface. Apply generously on one side, allow to dry for 2-3 hours, then turn over and coat second side.

## Options

- Crimp a jewelry bail at the top of the coin and use it as a charm for a necklace, bracelet, or other jewelry.
- Display an ACC collection by stringing them together with transparent line, or displaying them in coin collector's pages (available at coin-collecting websites).

## National Core Arts Standards Visual Arts

### Creating

**Anchor Standard 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

**Anchor Standard 2:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

### Presenting

**Anchor Standard 4:** Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.

### Connecting

**Anchor Standard 10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

**Anchor Standard 11:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.