

The Penny: Is This The End? [B1]

I costi di produzione di un penny sono più alti del suo valore nominale. Vale la pena continuare a produrre questa moneta? Secondo il presidente Trump, no.

Every day, the US [Mint](#) produces about thirty million [pennies](#), which cost over three times more to produce than they're [worth](#). This year, US President Donald Trump instructed the Department of the Treasury to end the production of the penny. However, it's not yet clear if the coin will really be [discontinued](#) or not.

HEADS OR TAILS?

The US penny, officially known as 'the cent', was first produced in 1787, and has been issued primarily as a copper or [copper-plated coin](#). Since 1909, the year President Abraham Lincoln would have [turned](#) a hundred, the coin has [featured](#) President Lincoln's profile. Modern [pennies](#) feature the president's profile on the [obverse \(heads\)](#) of the coin and a Union [Shield](#) on the reverse ([tails](#)). The thirteen [stripes](#) on the shield represent the thirteen original states, and the bar across the top represents Congress and the Federal Government.

EXPENSIVE METAL

The penny has been the lowest-value unit of US currency since the half-cent coin was [discontinued](#) in 1857. In the early 2010s, the price of the metal used to make [pennies](#) increased significantly. The most recent report from the US [Mint](#) says that each penny costs 3.7 cents to make, including three cents for production, and 0.7 cents for administrative and distribution costs. Because of inflation, [pennies](#) have lost practically all their [purchasing power](#), and so are often perceived as a [nuisance](#) by institutions and people in general.

HOW DO YOU SAY...?

Un sacco di soldi. A pretty penny.

SO WASTEFUL!

In February, President Trump said on his Truth Social platform that he had instructed the Treasury Secretary, Scott Bessent, to end production of the penny, which he described as “so wasteful.” “Let’s rip the waste out of our great nation’s budget, even if it’s a penny at a time,” he wrote. The US will not be the first country to eliminate the penny. New Zealand and Australia ended the production of their pennies back in 1989 and 1992, respectively, and Canada ended production of its penny in 2012.

WHAT ABOUT THE NICKEL?

The abolition of the US penny is a big deal and will probably require congressional approval. This is because if the US eliminates its penny, it will have to produce more of its second-lowest-value coin: the five-cent coin, or ‘nickel’. But nickels cost even more to produce than pennies, at 13.8 cents. So, perhaps the US penny is better left alone, at least for now!

Glossary

- **pennies** = centesimi
- **obverse** = dritto
- **nation's budget** = bilancio nazionale
- **big deal** = cosa seria
- **Mint** = zecca
- **heads** = testa
- **purchasing power** = potere d'acquisto
- **a penny at a time** = uno alla volta
- **left alone** = lasciare in pace
- **rip the waste out** = strappare via
- **copper-plated coin** = moneta placcata in rame
- **turned** = compiere gli anni
- **featured** = presentare
- **tails** = croce
- **nuisance** = fastidio, seccatura
- **worth** = valere
- **discontinued** = interrompere, mettere fine
- **Shield** = scudo
- **stripes** = strisce
- **wasteful** = inutile