

“Where Do I Look?”

For education:

- Your local coin club meetings, which is also a great way to be inspired or share certain interests and passions within the hobby,
- PCGS CoinFacts at <https://www.pcgs.com/coinfacts>
- NGC Coin Explorer at <https://www.ngccoin.com/research.aspx>
- *The Guide to United States Coins* aka “The Redbook”
(While the most recent books will be the most up to date on prices, past-year Redbooks still have enormous value in the wealth of information on each coin they carry. A staple for many coin collectors and coin dealers), and
- YouTube - YouTube is currently FULL of coin videos, but very many are misleading. Try cross referencing videos with other sources for complete accuracy. An excellent, collector friendly channel to start with is “CoinHELPU.”
- For Kids, the U.S. Mint also has an interactive website for education and play: <https://www.usmint.gov/learn/kids>

For quick retail price references and for detailed examples of different coin type varieties:

- Usacoinbook.com
or for example, type into Google:
“1873 \$20 liberty close open 3 usacoinbook” and it will bring you directly to the page you want for that coin on the site. The Google search engine is a little easier for direct results than their site searchbar.
- *The Guide to United States Coins* aka “The Redbook”
- PCGS or NGC price guides

For Grading coins:

- *Official American Numismatic Association Grading Standards for United States Coins* book, also available as a Kindle book
- *Making the Grade, A Grading Guide to the Top 50 Most widely Collected U.S. Coins* book by Beth Deisher, with coin grading by Michael Fahey. Not always the easiest to find, but sometimes available used online for a decent price. Has good illustration about what points on a coin you’re looking at, like which sections or high points wear first, as well as a typed explanation of what to look for. This book is kind of like a combination of the written grading explanations the Redbook offers, combined with the image-type resource from PCGS photograde, plus highlighted points. Keep in mind even grading is slightly subjective or standards may have changed, this isn’t a new book, but for generalized skill, it’s an excellent and most informative catch-all resource.

- pcgs.com/photograde or PCGS Coinfacts app, then go to PCGS Photograde, for high resolution picture examples broken down for each grade for different kinds of U.S. coins
- <https://info.money.org/summer-2021> - Recorded free webinars from the ANA's eLearning academy seminar samples

For purchasing coins:

- A trusted, honest local coin shop, coin shows,
- Great Collections,
- Heritage, Stacks Bowers, and Legend Auctions,
- ebay (but again trusted sellers or especially NGC/PCGS certified coins, be wary of gimmicks, cleaning, and artificial toning),
- or at your local coin club.
- New forms have risen like Facebook and Instagram auctions, but it may be harder to verify authentic dealers or address customer service issues

It's easiest to know the quality and eye appeal when you buy your coins in-person. If you're a collector, of course you want to like your collection. But, some sources offer images and coins that are hard to find elsewhere.

Your best protection in buying is educating yourself on how to grade, keeping a price guide handy, buying from known and trusted sellers, and counsel for a second opinion if you need it. When buying certified coins, try to buy what you love and not just the label, but buying certified does offer further buyer protection for authenticity as well as grade (so you know your purchase is not cleaned or altered - this is a big deal in how it affects your coin's value!) - buying certified may be an especially good idea if you consider yourself a novice coin grader.

Buying Certified protects against counterfeit coins and dishonest sales tactics, but security measures protect from counterfeit Holders. Double Check your NGC/PCGS certification number on their sites or apps to make sure there's no red flags before you buy a coin! Fake holders do exist but many times they're known, as the certification companies are actively fighting counterfeiting and incorporating security measures into their holders. This is not a perfect system but double checking the number definitely helps close some gaps.

Can you ever get an amazing coin, for an amazing deal, "raw" and not certified? Absolutely! But it's best to know what you're doing ahead of time, so you can have confidence to make that call. Knowing for sure only comes with experience.

For Coin-Community Involvement:

Some local shops and relationships you may build at coin shows or classmates you may meet if you attend the ANA summer seminars, but primarily, your local coin club!! Some clubs will also offer charter buses and companionship to distanced coin shows, which can be cost effective, more fun, and safer travel.

- Your Local Clubs.
- Your Local Coin Shop (depending on how laid-back the environment is. Many shops don't have the space or time to have lengthy conversations with a single person, so please be respectful of others' livelihoods while building relationships).
- Social Media does have a growing coin community as well, from Facebook groups, Instagram, and the incorporation of Social Media+Business, on platforms like WhatNot. Make sure to hang with people you know and trust, or can have people vouch for them. If the deal is too good to be true and/or content is being posted at a wild rate, be especially wary, just points like that. Some pages operate as a blacklist page to point out sellers caught in scams, to protect you and to protect the industry. Good reputation is very important.
Social Media yes, can have misinformation, but can also have memes, jokes, and a helpful and educational community, as with any other topic.