

GOLD COINS

St. Patricks Day STEM

This simple activity uses salt and vinegar to clean coins! It can be made into a science investigation by experimenting with different combinations of salt, vinegar and water or leaving the coins in vinegar for different amounts of time!

You'll need

Vinegar
Salt
Small Bowl
Copper coins



Instructions

Place a teaspoon of salt into the bowl.

Add about 50ml of vinegar and stir to dissolve.

Place the coins in the vinegar and salt solution and leave for about 30 minutes.

When the coins look shiny, take them out of the vinegar and rinse with water.

Why does it work?

Copper coins don't stay shiny because the copper reacts with oxygen in the air to form copper oxide, which is a dull greenish-grey colour.

When you mix salt (sodium chloride) with vinegar (acetic acid), sodium acetate and hydrogen chloride form. Hydrogen chloride is an acid which works well at rapidly cleaning the surface of the copper coin, leaving it beautifully shiny and removing the oxide.

