

Use Coupon Math for Cash!

Many parents use the Sunday paper to look for coupons and cost savings on household items. Instead of doing all the work yourself, why not ask for help from your fifth grader? "Cash for Coupons" is a simple, fun activity which will save you time and reinforce your child's math skills along the way. Plus, it will give your child an opportunity to experience practical application of the math he's learning in the classroom.



What You Need:

- Sunday paper – coupon section
- Scissors
- Grocery list
- Paper/pencil

What You Do:

1. After completing your weekly grocery list, ask your fifth grader to help you cut coupons for items on the list. Motivate her by offering an incentive: she will get a percentage of the savings from the coupons – in cash!
2. Clip coupons together and make one big pile. Next, ask your child to sort the coupons by category – food, bathroom items (toiletries), cleaning supplies, etc.
3. Once all coupons are sorted, show your child how to use mental math to calculate the savings. For example, if she has five coupons for paper products - \$1.00, \$.50, \$.25, \$1.50, \$1.50 – she can mentally add them this way:

Add dollar amounts first: $\$1.00 + \$1.00 + \$1.00 = \3.00

Add change: $\$.50 + \$.50 + \$.50 + \$.25 = 7 \text{ quarters} = \1.75

Total: $\$3.00 + \$1.75 = \$4.75$

Ask her to calculate the savings for each category. Then, add the savings in each category to get a total.

4. Finally, calculate your child's "cash incentive". If she gets 20% of the total savings, show her that 20% written as a decimal is .20. Multiply the total savings by .20.

For example, if the total savings with coupons is \$11.25:

$\$11.25 \times .20 = \2.25 cash incentive

5. Show your child how to calculate her monthly and yearly cash incentive if she helps with the coupons every week:

For example, if her average weekly cash incentive is \$2.25:

$\$2.25 \times 4 = \$9.00/\text{month}$

$\$2.25 \times 52 = \$117.00/\text{year}$

Now, sit back and wait for her to ask when she can practice calculating more decimals!

Extension:

Extend the activity by writing a dollar amount (estimate) next to each item on your grocery list. Ask your fifth-grader to use mental math to estimate the cost of the groceries before the coupons. Then, show her how to subtract the amount of coupons to get an estimated total.

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