Overview
District of Columbia and US Territories Quarters Program

In 2009, the United States Mint will produce and issue six quarter-dollar coins in honor of the District of Columbia and the five United States Territories: the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The coins will be issued in that order about every two months.

On the front of these quarters will appear the image of George Washington seen on the front of the 50 State Quarters® coins. The backs will use distinct designs that represent the District of Columbia and each of the five United States territories.

Public Law requires the Secretary of the Treasury to approve each design after consulting with the Chief Executive of the District of Columbia or the territory being honored and with the Commission of Fine Arts. The Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee also is to review each of the designs. The design evaluation and selection process is outlined below.

These coins will be issued for circulation in quantities to meet the needs of the United States, both for commerce and for collectors. In addition, the Secretary has the authority to mint and issue uncirculated and proof coins as well as a 90 percent silver version of each coin. These numismatic versions will be included in the United States Mint's annual product offerings.

THE DESIGN PROCESS PLAN

According to the plan, the design process consists of seven steps.

Step One: The United States Mint starts the design process by contacting the chief executive of the District of Columbia or the territory being honored. The chief executive (or other officials or group the officer designates) appoints an individual to serve as the liaison to the United States Mint for this program.

Step Two: The District of Columbia and each territory determines its own concept selection process by which they provide to the United States Mint two or three different concepts or themes in narrative format. The narrative must explain why the concept is emblematic of the District or the territory and what the concept represents to its citizens.

Step Three: Based on the narratives, the United States Mint produces one or more original designs for each concept, focusing on aesthetic beauty, historical accuracy, appropriateness, and coinability.

Step Four: The United States Mint then contacts the District of Columbia and each territory to collaborate on the candidate designs with an appointed historian or other officials or experts, who ensure the designs' historical accuracy and accurate representation of the narratives. The United States Mint refines the candidate designs, as necessary, before presenting them to the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee (CCAC) and the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA).

Step Five: The CCAC and the CFA review the candidate designs and make recommendations, and the United States Mint consults the District of Columbia and each territory to consider making changes to address the recommendations.

Step Six: From among the final candidate designs, the District and territories each recommends its primary and secondary choices. The District and territories each determines the process by which the choices are made, within a time frame specified by the United States Mint.

Step Seven: The United States Mint presents the primary recommended designs to the Secretary of the Treasury for approval.

DEFINITION OF U.S. TERRITORY

When defining "US territory," the United States Mint recognizes and uses the Department of the Interior's definitions at www.doi.gov/oia/Islandpages/political_types.htm. This page defines the terms "territory," "Territory," "insular area," "possession," "organic act," and other related terms, including the difference between territories that are incorporated, unincorporated, organized, and unorganized.

Design Descriptions

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The first quarter in the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories Quarters Program honors the District of Columbia. This district was created in 1790 especially to serve as the nation's capital, and became the capital on December 1, 1800. President George Washington chose the 10-square-mile site from parts of Maryland and Virginia, though the Virginia portion was later returned to the state. As a federal district, it is not part of any state.

DC's mayor and residents chose to feature Duke Ellington in their quarter design. This world-famous composer and musician was born in the District and often visited to perform with his big band after he moved to New York. The District's motto, "Justice for All," is also featured in the design.

During his 50-year career in music, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington recorded with some of the greatest musicians of jazz. He performed in countries around the world, won several Grammy® awards, and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969 at the age of 70. Born in 1899, Ellington died in 1974, leaving behind hundreds of recordings, songs, and instrumental pieces and his unique and lasting mark on American music.
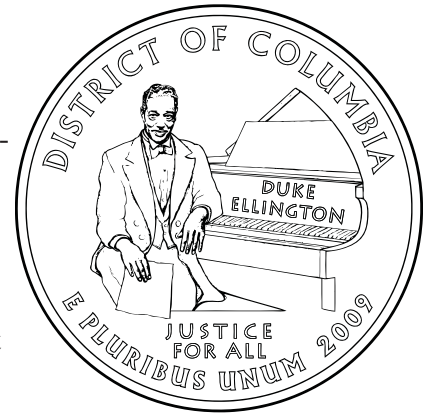
COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

The Puerto Rico quarter is the second in the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories Quarters Program. In 1493, explorer Christopher Columbus arrived at Puerto Rico (this Spanish name means "rich port"). The island soon became a Spanish colony and remained one for hundreds of years.

Although other nations tried to conquer Puerto Rico, Spain maintained its rule until the Spanish-American War. The island was ceded to the United States in 1898, and its residents became American citizens in 1917. This territory has had its own constitution since it became a commonwealth in 1952.

Puerto Rico's capital, San Juan, is well-fortified to protect it from attacks by sea. The city is surrounded by massive stone walls with sentry boxes built into the walls where guards stood watch. A major element in Puerto Rico's quarter design is a sentry box overlooking the sea. This box reminds us of Puerto Rico's rich history, defensive strength, and strategic location in the Caribbean Sea.

The other main image on the Puerto Rico quarter is the hibiscus flower. This symbol speaks of the island's natural history and tropical beauty. The island's motto, "Isla del Encanto," is also inscribed. This Spanish phrase means "Isle of Enchantment."

GUAM

The Western world first learned about Guam when explorer Ferdinand Magellan landed there in 1521. The Spanish ruled the island until the 20th century, using it as a port for ships traveling between Mexico and the Philippines. American troops took over during the Spanish-American War. Japan held it for two years during World War II, but the United States regained control. The people of Guam became American citizens in 1950 and set up their own government under the US Secretary of the Interior.

The Guam quarter is the third in the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories Quarters Program. In the Guam quarter's design, a relief map of Guam takes center stage. The southern part of the island is mountainous while the northern part is flatter, surrounded by cliffs dropping to the sea. Guam's motto, part of the quarter's design, translates to "Guam, land of the Chamorro."

The design also features a latte and a flying proa. A latte is a large goblet-shaped stone that has been used for centuries in Micronesia to hold important buildings up. The latte has come to symbolize the culture of Guam's native people, the Chamorro.

The flying proa is a type of canoe with a sail. Chamorro craftsmen used to build these swift but stable boats, able to change direction without turning around by shifting the sails. The proa speaks of Chamorro history, invention, and discovery.
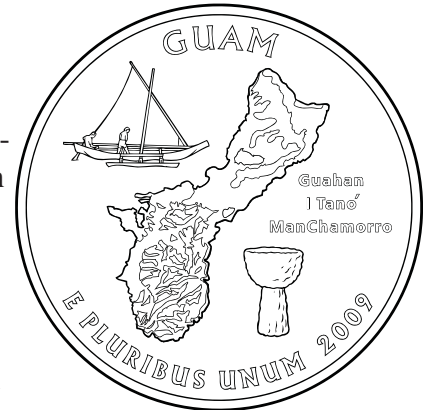
AMERICAN SAMOA

American Samoa is a group of five islands and two atolls in the South Pacific Ocean. (An atoll is an island made of coral surrounding a bay.) Europeans began to visit this area in the early 1700s. English missionaries and traders arrived in the 1830s.

The United Kingdom and Germany turned the islands over to the United States in 1899 and it officially became a United States territory in 1929, the only US territory south of the Equator. Today, the people elect their own governor and a representative to the United States Congress. West of these islands is Samoa, a separate nation.

The American Samoa quarter is the fourth in the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories Quarters Program. The design on this quarter includes an ava bowl (or "tanoa"), a fly whisk, and a staff. The ava bowl is used to make a special drink for island chiefs and guests during important events. The whisk and staff symbolize the rank of the speaker at these gatherings. The ava bowl, whisk, and staff also appear on American Samoa's official seal.

In the background of the design, a coconut tree stands on a tropical beach. The territory's motto is also shown, which translates as "Samoa, God is first."
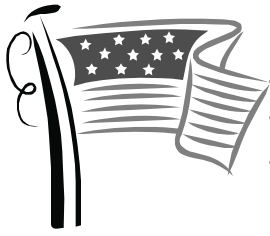
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Christopher Columbus explored the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1493. The islands were first inhabited by the Arawak, the Taino (taEEno), and then the Carib Indians. Denmark began to colonize the islands in 1666 and named them the Danish West Indies. Just west lies Puerto Rico; to the east, the British Virgin Islands.

The United States purchased the group of three main islands and about 50 islets from Denmark in 1917 for $25 million. In 1927, those who lived in the US Virgin Islands became American citizens. In 1954, a territorial government was set up there with three branches, much like the federal government.

The design on the US Virgin Islands quarter shows some of the territory's symbols: the yellow breast (also called the banana quit), the official bird of the US Virgin Islands; the yellow cedar (or yellow elder), the official flower; and the tyre palm, the official tree. All three symbols speak of the islands' beauty, a fact that helps to make tourism the islands' main industry. Most of the jobs in the US Virgin Islands are related to tourism.

Also on this quarter, fifth in the series, is an outline of the three major islands (St. Croix [CROY], St. Thomas, and St. John). The territory's motto, "United in Pride and Hope," completes the design.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

The Northern Mariana Islands quarter is the sixth and final quarter in the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories Quarters Program. The quarter's design uses images from the islands' wealth of history and natural resources.

Near a tropical shore stands a large latte, a limestone column that supported the buildings of the Chamorro people in ancient times. A canoe of the native Carolinians speaks of the people's ability to travel vast distances by sea. Two white fairy terns fly overhead. A string of flowers worn around the head underlines the design. The Carolinians call this crown of flowers a "mwar." It symbolizes the virtues of honor and respect.
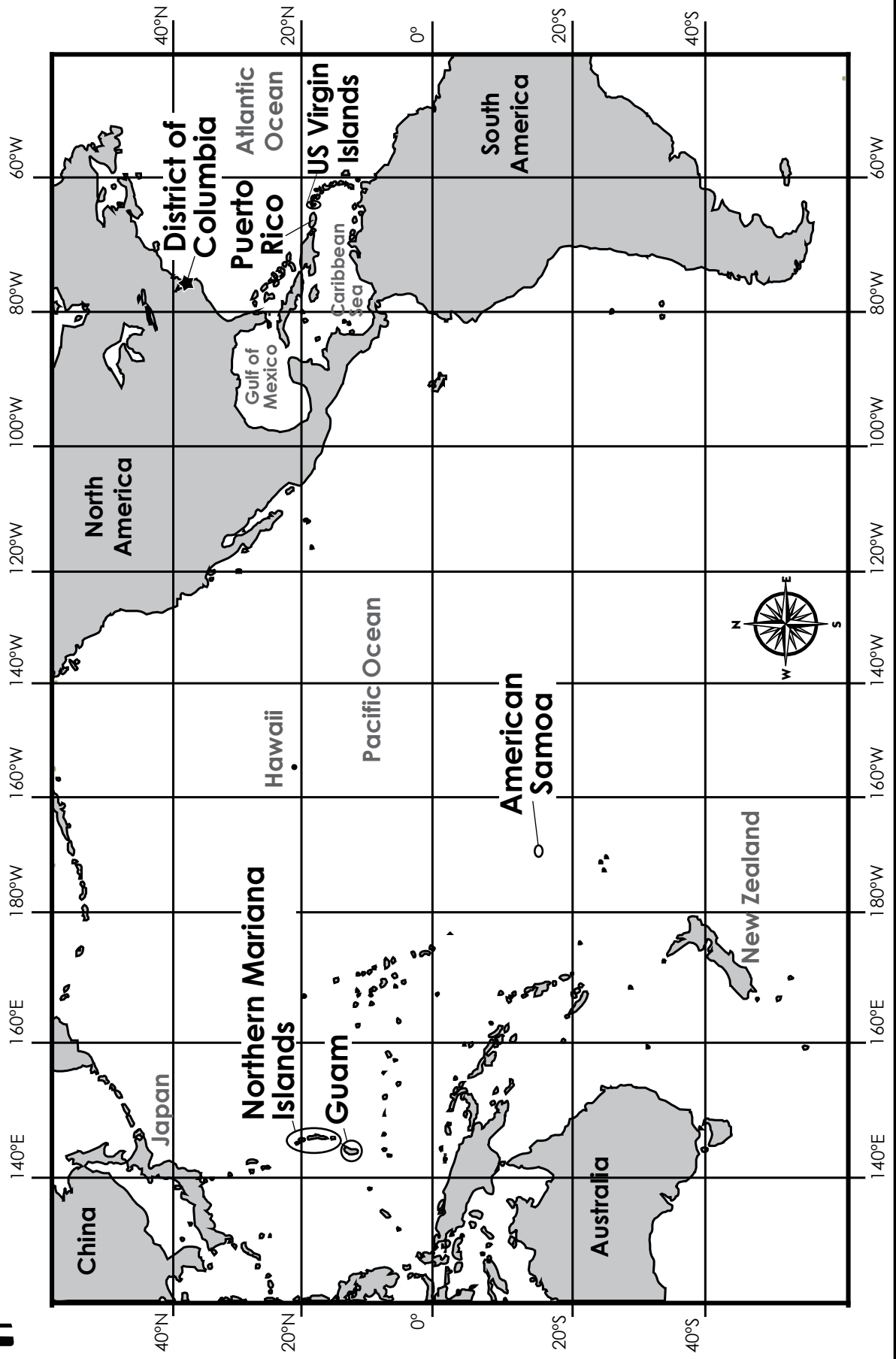
These islands were ruled by Spain for centuries until Spain sold them to Germany in 1899. Japan seized them in 1914 and American forces occupied them during World War II. After the war, the group was included in the US Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. This status ended in 1986.
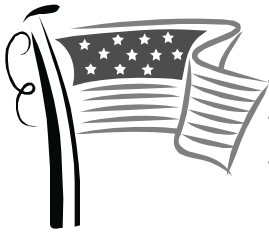
Residents chose to make the islands a commonwealth in 1975 and President Gerald Ford signed the covenant to establish the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands the next year. The southernmost island in the Mariana chain, Guam, had a separate path to its status as a US territory. Guam's quarter is third in this series.
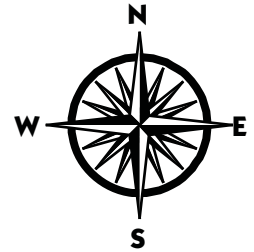
US Territories in the World

North America

Gulf of Mexico

District of Columbia

Atlantic Ocean

Puerto Rico

US Virgin Islands

Caribbean Sea

South America

Pacific Ocean

Hawaii

American Samoa

New Zealand

China

Japan

Northern Mariana Islands

Guam

Australia

40°N 20°N 0° 20°S 40°S

60°W 80°W 100°W 120°W 140°W 160°W 180°W 160°E 140°E
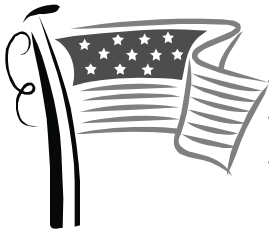
American Samoa

Swain's Island (atoll)

N
W — E
S

Southern
Pacific
Ocean

Tutuila
Au'a

Ofu Olosega
Tau

Rose Island
(atoll)

Guam

Philippine Sea

Plateau

★ Agana

Hills

▲ Mt. Lamlam

Northern
Pacific
Ocean

N
W E
S
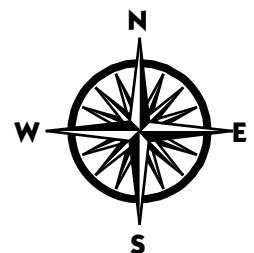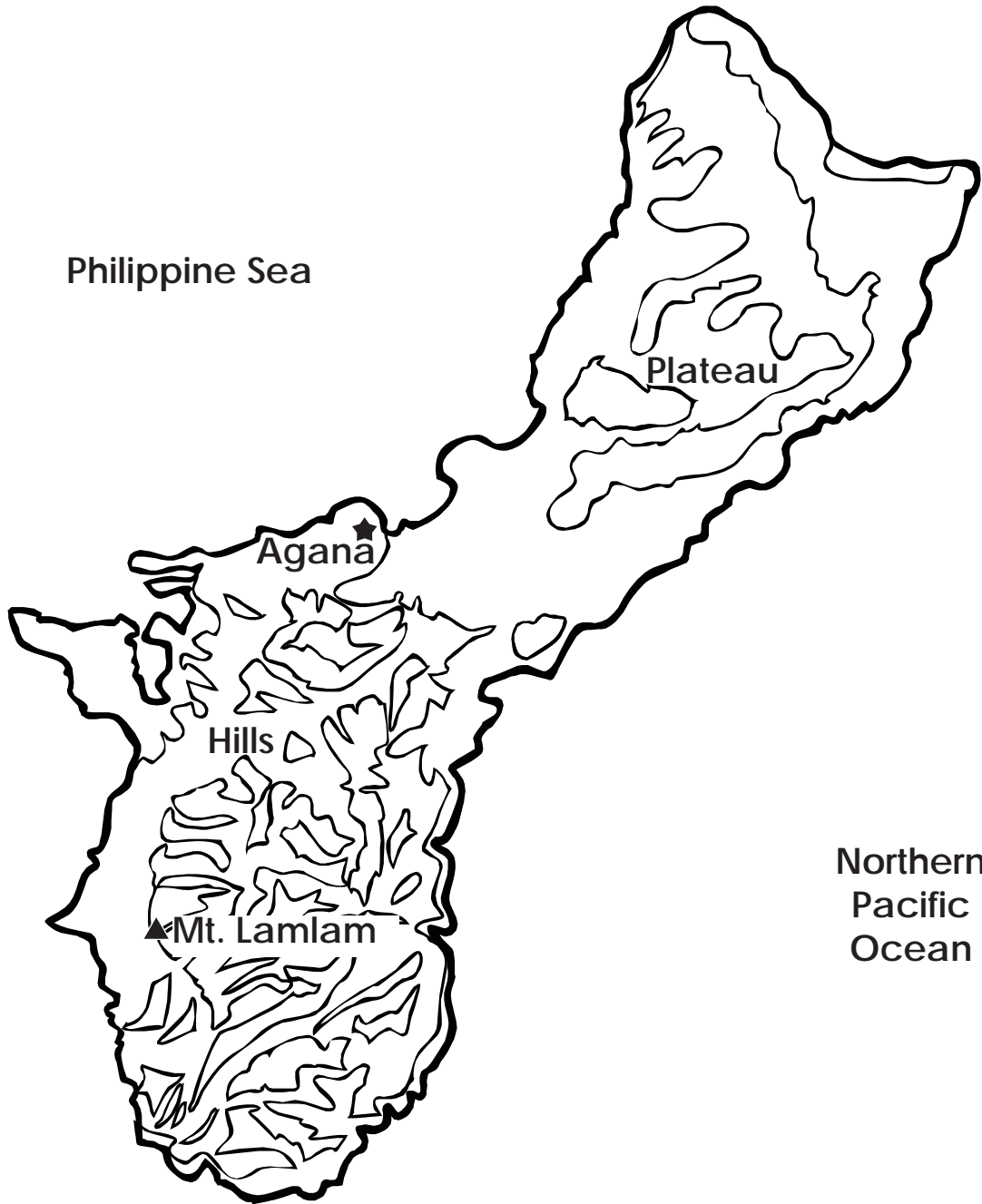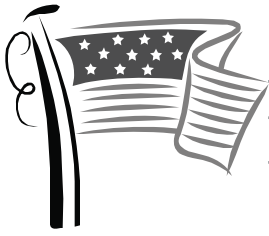
Northern Mariana Islands

. Farallon de Pajaros

. Maug Islands

Asuncion Island

Agrihan

Philippine Sea

Northern
Pacific
Ocean

Pagan

Alamagan

Guguan

Sarigan

Anatahan

Farallon de
Medinilla

Isleta
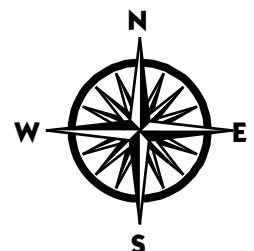Mañagaha Saipan

Tinian

Aguijan

Rota

(Guam)

N
W   E
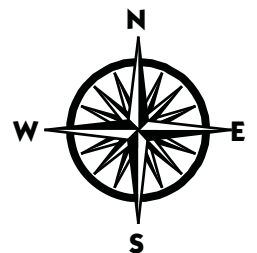S

District of Columbia and US Territories Quarters Program Resource Guide

Puerto Rico

Atlantic Ocean

San Juan

Isla de
Culebra

El Yunque
National Forest

▲Cerro la
Punta

Isla de
Vieques

Caribbean Sea

N

W   E

S

US Virgin Islands

Atlantic
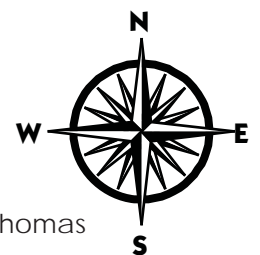Ocean

St.
Thomas

St. John

Charlotte
Amalie

Caribbean
Sea

St. Croix

N

W   E
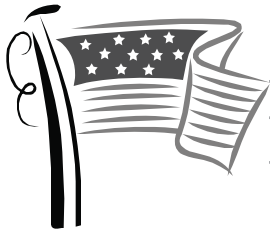
S

Distance between St. Croix and St. Thomas
(40 miles) is not shown to scale.

The United States of America

Maine
New Hampshire
Massachusetts
Rhode Island
Connecticut
New Jersey
Delaware
Maryland
Vermont
New York
Pennsylvania
W. Va.
Virginia
North Carolina
South Carolina
Georgia
Florida
Michigan
Ohio
Indiana
Kentucky
Tennessee
Alabama
Wisconsin
Illinois
Missouri
Arkansas
Mississippi
Louisiana
Minnesota
Iowa
Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Nebraska
Kansas
Oklahoma
Texas
Wyoming
Colorado
New Mexico
Utah
Arizona
Washington
Oregon
Idaho
Nevada
California

Hawaii

Alaska

N E S W

District of Columbia and US Territories Quarters Program Resource Guide

Reproducible Coin Sheet
Obverses

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TO MAKE DOUBLE-SIDED "COINS"

1. Print this page and the following page (reverses).
2. Put the pages back-to-back and hold them up to a strong light to line up the dotted lines on all the coins.
3. Clip the pages together to keep them in position with two paper clips at the top.
4. Apply glue to the backs, especially where the coins are printed. After pressing the pages together, check the alignment by holding them up to the light again, adjusting the alignment if possible.
5. When the glue dries, cut out the "coins."

Reproducible Coin Sheet
Reverses

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