

What Ingredients in Taco Sauce Can Clean Dull Pennies?

Objective:

Demonstrate the concept of a chemical reaction by cleaning dull, copper pennies with the ingredients found in taco sauce.

Materials:

- (5) dull pennies
- taco sauce
- tomato sauce
- salt
- vinegar
- paper towels
- spoon



Students should refrain from eating in the lab environment.

Procedure:

1. Place each of the five dull pennies onto paper towels and cover the top of each with a different substance. Cover the face of the first penny with a spoonful of taco sauce, the second with salt, the third with tomato sauce, the fourth with vinegar, and the fifth with a mixture of salt and vinegar.
2. Let the pennies sit for two minutes.
3. Create a data table in which you can write observations of all five groups.

4. After two minutes, wipe off the penny that was treated with the taco sauce, and record your observations.
5. Repeat step 4 for each of the remaining pennies, and record your findings.
6. Discuss the results with your lab partner.

Questions:

1. What did you observe in the penny that was cleaned with the taco sauce?
2. Did any of the other pennies yield a similar result? Which one(s)?
3. What do you believe was the cause of these results?