

In 1066 an English penny was about the weight of a threepenny bit in 1600

This comparison is largely accurate, as both coins shared a nearly identical weight of approximately **1.3 to 1.5 grams**.

1. English Penny in 1066

- **Standard Weight:** In 1066, during the transition from Harold II to William the Conqueror, the silver penny was the primary unit of currency.
- **Mass:** It typically weighed between **1.3 grams and 1.6 grams** (roughly 20 to 24 grains).
- **Silver Content:** The coins were minted with high purity, often close to sterling standard (.925) even before it was formally standardized in the 12th century.

2. Threepenny Bit (Threepence) in 1600

- **Standard Weight:** By the late Elizabethan era (c. 1600), the English silver threepence was a established denomination.
- **Mass:** Elizabethan silver threepences were small, thin coins typically weighing approximately **1.5 grams** (around 24 grains).
- **Silver Content:** These were minted in **sterling silver** (.925 fineness).

Comparison Table

Feature	1066 Penny	1600 Threepenny Bit
Material	Silver	Silver (.925)
Average Weight	1.3g – 1.6g	~1.5g
Value (at time)	1 penny	3 pence

While the weight of the silver penny significantly decreased over centuries due to inflation and debasement, by 1600, a coin representing **three times** that original value (the threepence) had shrunk to nearly the same physical mass as the **single penny** from the time of the Norman Conquest.

When did the threepence increase its weight to about 6 grams

The threepence (or "threepenny bit") increased its weight to approximately 6.8 grams in **1937** with the introduction of the 12-sided **nickel-brass** version.

This change was driven by the need for a more practical coin: the traditional silver threepence was considered too small and easily lost, while three individual copper pennies were too heavy and cumbersome for transport companies to handle in bulk.

Key Specifications of the 1937 Nickel-Brass Threepence

- **Weight:** Increased from the silver version's ~1.41 grams to **6.8 grams**.

- **Shape:** Dodecagonal (**12-sided**) to make it easily distinguishable from other coins by touch, especially during wartime blackouts.
- **Composition:** An alloy consisting of 79% copper, 20% zinc, and 1% nickel.
- **History:** Although trial pieces were struck for Edward VIII in 1936, the coin first entered general circulation under [King George VI in 1937](#).

The silver threepence continued to be minted alongside the brass version until 1945, after which it was phased out for general use. Both versions were eventually demonetized in 1971 during decimalization.