

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE

Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, MAY 1957

Total sales of retail stores in May were \$16.9 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences was 1 percent above April of this year and 4 percent above May a year ago.

The May sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,700 retail firms which, in total, operate some 35,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds 1 ½ percent.

The preliminary Census figures are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics noted that after seasonal adjustment, increases occurred primarily at durable goods stores. Sales of nondurable goods stores changed little from the record rate of the first quarter of this year.

(more)

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1957		May 1956
	May ^p	Apr. ^p	
Retail stores, total ¹	16,925	16,260	16,109
Food group.....	3,972	3,670	3,638
Grocery stores.....	3,572	3,268	3,220
Eating and drinking places.....	1,216	1,123	1,209
General merchandise group.....	1,708	1,703	1,702
Department stores ²	932	923	941
Apparel group.....	970	1,117	963
Furniture and appliance group.....	880	817	874
Lumber, building, hardware group ³	1,290	1,153	1,282
Automotive group.....	3,494	3,347	3,239
Gasoline service stations.....	1,255	1,192	1,153
Drug and proprietary stores.....	498	492	477

See footnotes below table 2.
p Preliminary

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change May 1957 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change April 1957 from--	
	Apr. 1957	May 1956	1957		1956		Mar. 1957	Apr. 1956
			May ^p	Apr. ^p	Mar.	Apr.		
Retail stores, total ¹	+1	+4	16,367	16,258	16,298	15,407	0	+6
Durable goods stores, total ¹ ...	+1	+5	5,666	5,606	5,685	5,303	-1	+6
Nondurable goods stores, total ¹	0	+3	10,701	10,652	10,613	10,104	0	+5
Food group.....				3,822	3,816	3,568	0	+7
Eating and drinking places.....				1,186	1,216	1,200	-2	-1
General merchandise group.....				1,716	1,741	1,702	-1	+1
Apparel group.....				1,008	956	921	+5	+9
Furniture and appliance group.....				889	905	895	-2	-1
Lumber, building, hardware group ³				1,101	1,136	1,155	-3	-5
Automotive group.....				3,152	3,165	2,867	0	+10
Gasoline service stations.....				1,234	1,246	1,130	-1	+9
Drug and proprietary stores.....				509	511	467	0	+9

Source: Office of Business Economics

- ¹ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.
- ² Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.
- ³ Includes farm equipment dealers.
- ^p Preliminary.