

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, OCTOBER 1956

Total sales of retail stores in October were \$16.3 billion, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, showed no change from September, but was about 2 percent above October a year ago.

The October 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ percent.

The preliminary Census figures are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics commented that total sales in October held at the seasonally adjusted September rates. Noteworthy changes were increased sales of the automotive group and the decline in sales of general merchandise stores.

(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)		
	1956		October 1955
	October	September	
Retail stores, total ¹	16,321	15,730	15,824
Food group.....	3,851	3,896	3,705
Grocery stores.....	3,276	3,323	3,146
Eating and drinking places.....	1,240	1,240	1,204
General merchandise group.....	1,823	1,699	1,807
Department stores ²	1,020	944	993
Apparel group.....	1,000	981	974
Furniture and appliance group.....	954	860	910
Lumber, building, hardware group ³	1,302	1,253	1,281
Automotive group.....	2,806	2,676	2,964
Gasoline service stations.....	1,201	1,181	1,083
Drug and proprietary stores.....	485	465	437

See footnotes below table 2.

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	Sales (millions of dollars)			Percent change, Sept. 1956 from--	
	1956		Sept. 1955	Aug. 1956	Sept. 1955
	Sept.	Aug.			
Retail stores, total ¹	15,992	16,253	15,840	-2	+1
Durable goods stores, total ¹	5,330	5,512	5,840	-3	-9
Nondurable goods stores, total ¹ ..	10,662	10,741	10,000	-1	+7
Food group.....	3,918	3,890	3,696	+1	+6
Eating and drinking places.....	1,178	1,215	1,167	-3	+1
General merchandise group.....	1,773	1,781	1,711	0	+4
Apparel group.....	977	1,039	895	-6	+9
Furniture and appliance group.....	908	886	826	+2	+10
Lumber, building, hardware group ³ ..	1,205	1,167	1,204	+3	0
Automotive group.....	2,754	3,022	3,384	-9	-19
Gasoline service stations.....	1,165	1,164	1,033	0	+13
Drug and proprietary stores.....	492	487	449	+1	+10

Source: Office of Business Econon

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.