

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Lewis L. Strauss, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, APRIL 1959

Total sales of retail stores in April were \$17.6 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences was virtually unchanged from March and about 9 percent above April 1958.

The April 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 1½ percent.

The preliminary Census figures for April are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics indicated that after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, total sales at durable goods stores in April rose 2 percent from March, due largely to sales gains at automotive and furniture and appliance stores. At nondurable goods stores, off-setting changes among the trades kept April sales almost unchanged from the high March figure. Final estimates for March indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were about 2 percent above February.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR APRIL 1959
 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 (million of dollars)		
	1959		1958
	April	March	April
Retail stores, total ¹	17,588	17,168	16,273
Durable-goods stores, total ¹	6,214	5,831	5,261
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹	11,374	11,337	11,012
Food group.....	4,201	4,108	4,048
Grocery stores.....	3,749	3,658	3,575
Eating and drinking places.....	1,187	1,157	1,171
General merchandise group.....	1,710	1,714	1,668
Department stores.....	² 1,003	972	962
Apparel group.....	991	1,101	1,056
Furniture and appliance group.....	871	808	761
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group...	1,296	1,134	1,194
Automotive group.....	3,592	3,464	2,934
Gasoline service stations.....	1,332	1,318	1,252
Drug and proprietary stores.....	563	577	521

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	Percentage change, Apr. 1959 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Mar. 1959 from--	
	Mar. 1959	Apr. 1958	1959		1958		Feb. 1959	Mar. 1958
			Apr.	Mar.	Feb.	Mar.		
Retail stores, total ¹	+0.5	+9.0	17,981	17,892	17,552	16,066	+2	+11
Durable-goods stores, total ¹	+2.2	+19.7	6,181	6,046	5,868	5,020	+3	+20
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹ ..	-0.4	+4.1	11,800	11,846	11,684	11,046	+1	+7
Food group.....				4,320	4,274	4,162	+1	+4
Eating and drinking places.....				1,240	1,242	1,199	0	+3
General merchandise group.....				1,863	1,835	1,729	+2	+8
Apparel group.....				1,107	1,082	988	+2	+12
Furniture and appliance group.....				902	890	868	+1	+4
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,290	1,250	1,047	+3	+23
Automotive group.....				3,340	3,248	2,665	+3	+25
Gasoline service stations.....				1,376	1,368	1,267	+1	+9
Drug and proprietary stores.....				589	568	540	+4	+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.