



Southern Florida Wetland stamp sheet, designed by artist John Dawson

One challenge John Dawson faces is showing animals of vastly different sizes—say, a Florida panther and a sparrow—in the same scene without distorting their proportions. “I do it with a careful use of perspective,” Dawson says, “putting the big critters in the background and the small critters up front.”



Once the design is approved, Dawson renders the final painting. He manages to cram 27 different species into his scene. He paints on an illustration board roughly twice the size of the 5-by-7-inch stamp pane. The image is later reduced for printing.

The Nature of America stamp sheets—eight different ones so far—have been wildly popular, selling up to 10 million copies each and making Dawson a celebrity among stamp collectors. “In March 2005, the Northeast Deciduous Forest sheet was unveiled at a ceremony during a stamp show in New York City,” he recalls. “So many people were in line, I signed autographs for two whole days.”

Because the nature stamps have sold so well, the Postal Service has extended the life of the series, with plans to issue a new sheet each year for several more years. “I wish it would go on forever,” Dawson says. “I love painting these stamps.”

The Manufacturing Process

Once a design has been approved, an appropriate printing method is selected; then the stamps are printed; and finally, the stamps are “finished,” or processed into a particular format, such as sheets, books, or coils, using a particular type of separation.

Stamp Printing Methods

Stamps throughout the world are printed in three basic ways: with the design (1) above the surface of the printing plate, (2) level with the surface, or (3) below the surface.

Letterpress or Typography: In this printing method, the design is inked above the surface of the plate. In a rotary letterpress, the plate is a cylinder that revolves as the paper passes under it. In typography, the plate is flat, and the printing is done on a flatbed press. Most overprinted, surcharged, and precanceled stamps are typographed.



Letterpress

Each year, collectors spend up to \$200 million on U.S. stamps like Dawson's that may never be used for postage, but only for collecting and display. That added revenue helps the Postal Service offset costs in other areas.

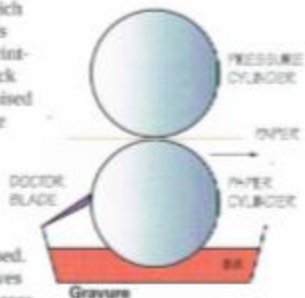


Intaglio

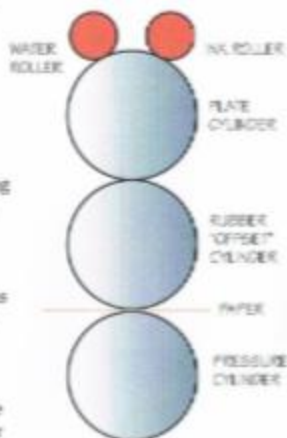
Engraving and Gravure. Both are intaglio processes, which means that the design stays below the surface of the printing plate. In engraving, thick ink that remains slightly raised is used, whereas in gravure printing, a thinner

ink that pours like water is used. When the plate is inked, the excess ink on top is wiped clean before the paper is impressed. The gravure cylinder revolves in a tray of ink, and the excess ink on the surface of the cylinder is scraped clean by a metal blade. The etched "wells" fill with ink, and the paper, pressed against the wiped cylinder, actually pulls the ink by suction from the plate.

Lithography or Offset Lithography. In this printing method, the design is level with the printing plate surface. Because the oil-based ink does not mix with the water that moistens the blank area of the plate, an impression of just the design results. In offset lithography, the design is printed from the metal plate to a rubber-covered cylinder and then to the paper.



Gravure



Lithography

Modern presses in all processes print several colors at the same time (except in engraving, where each color must be printed separately). Many stamps listed in catalogs as multicolored were made from four different color-process plates. By using screens of three basic colors—red, yellow, and blue—plus black, every color can be reproduced in printing.

Separations

Perforated Stamps. Perforations make it possible to separate stamps from one another with ease. Most stamps are perforated with small holes by machines that remove the paper from the holes.

Pane stamps are perforated on all four sides; booklet pane stamps are perforated on one, two, or three sides; and coil stamps are printed in strips and perforated on just two sides.

Imperforate Stamps. The early United States stamp issues had to be cut apart with scissors and are referred to as imperf stamps. Most imperf stamps today are issued by countries in the hope that collectors will buy the stamps, thereby generating revenue, but not use them except in their collections, thereby saving the cost of providing postal services.

Die-Cut Stamps. A cutter, or die, cuts the stamp paper into the desired shape. This form of separation is used for self-adhesive stamps. Die-cuts can give stamps straight edges, shapes, or imitation perforations.

Self-adhesive die-cut stamps make stamp-licking a thing of the past.



Perforated



Imperforate stamps and souvenir sheet

Types of Paper and Adhesive

Most stamps are printed on paper. Many are still printed with a gummed backing that you moisten for adhesion. Due to popular demand, however, more and more stamps are being made with a pressure-sensitive adhesive that requires no moistening. These stamps come with a protective backing that you peel off the stamp before affixing the stamp to an envelope.

In rare cases, paper is not used. Plastic sheets are sometimes used so that the stamps can be sold more easily in vending machines. Holographic and three-dimensional stamps also require a special printing surface.

Because gum reacts with high humidity (causing stamps to stick together), countries have experimented with different types of gums. Stamps issued without gum or pressure-sensitive adhesive must have an adhesive applied by the sender.

More than
90 percent of
today's U.S.
postage stamps
use pressure-
sensitive adhesive.

**Online Postage**

In recent years, the USPS has let people print their own postage and mailing labels at home, using personal computers and printers. The Postal Service has also licensed outside companies, or vendors, to provide online postage products. One such company, Stamps.com, allows you to upload a photograph of your own choosing that will be made into a sheet of postage stamps that you can use in the regular mail. So it is now possible to put your own picture, or that of, say, your dog, on a real postage stamp.





Catalogs, Equipment, and Procedures

As you learn more about collecting stamps, you will discover the resources that are most helpful to you for the type of collection you want to build.

Stamp Catalogs

The catalog published by Scott Publishing Company is used by most stamp collectors in the United States. Other catalogs are also useful, especially those covering special topics. The American Topical Association, for example, publishes several topical handbooks and checklists. Many public libraries have stamp catalogs or can borrow them from other libraries.



To look up a stamp in a catalog, first determine the country that issued the stamp. Then compare its design with the stamp illustrations in the catalog. Time to identify the stamp can be saved by looking at it for clues. For example, if you find a picture of President Kennedy on a stamp, it must have been printed after 1960, the year he was elected. If there are several stamps with the same design but different identifying numbers, you might have to check the perforations, color, paper, or watermark to identify the exact stamp.

The Scott catalog value is a retail price that reflects recent selling prices. The value of stamps also depends on supply and demand. Common stamps often sell for less than catalog value. Values also rise and fall as conditions in the stamp market change.

Because there are so many factors in the value of stamps, it is best to collect what you can afford and what you enjoy. If you buy stamps simply in the hope that their value will rise, you might be disappointed. You might also miss the pleasure of collecting other stamps that may be more fun to acquire and display.

Places to Visit

Visit a post office, stamp club, stamp store, or stamp show with an experienced collector, parent, or friend, or with your merit badge counselor. Your local library might have stamp newspapers, magazines, books, or other materials that will be helpful in your research.

Tip: Call in advance and make an appointment before you visit your local post office. Be sure you plan your visit during business hours when the post office is less likely to be very busy, such as midmorning or midafternoon.



Equipment and Procedures

An important part of any stamp collection is the album in which the stamps are stored. An album helps to organize the collection in a logical order and protects the stamps from damage. You can make your own or purchase one of the many types of albums for stamps and covers on the market. A printed album with spaces for specific stamps can serve as a stamp identifier and can make mounting your stamps easier.



Reference: Scott 2002 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, Volume 1

Although most printed albums are organized by country, topical albums are available for special interests.

However, as a beginning stamp collector, you might not know which topic or country you want to collect. To avoid spending a great deal of money on an album that could later be of little use, you might start with a three-ring binder and some graph paper (crab-weight). You can buy blank pages with or without borders and headings, or you can generate your own pages using a computer. This type of album makes the mixed mounting of stamps and covers easy and avoids empty spaces that make the collection look incomplete.

Tip: Do not use a "magnetic" type photograph album for your stamp collection. The adhesive used on the pages will ruin your stamps.



Another option for your three-ring binder is to use stock sheets, which are heavy pages with strips that form pockets to hold the stamps. They come with prepunched holes that fit your binder. Stock books are volumes with the stock pages bound in. In a stock book, the pages cannot be removed or rearranged.

Your albums, binders, or stock books should be stored in an upright position away from heat, moisture, and light. If stored in a damp basement or near a window, the stamps can collect moisture and be damaged. Also, avoid eating or drinking while working with your collection.

Tip: Store your stamps away from heat, moisture, light, food, drinks, and young brothers and sisters, too.

Stamps are soaked in cool water to remove them from the paper they are attached to. Once the paper and stamps have separated, place the stamps into rinse water to remove any additional paper particles; remove the stamps from the rinse water; and place them facedown on an absorbent surface. If the stamps curl while drying, flatten them under a heavy weight. New self-adhesive stamps sometimes will not separate from the envelope using only water. A special chemical (found at stamp supply stores) may be needed to remove such stamps.

Tip: Use only cool—never hot—water to loosen a stamp from paper.



A stamp hinge is a piece of specially gummed, translucent paper that is usually horizontally prefolded to make a hinge. First affix the short portion of the hinge to the back of an inexpensive stamp just below the top. The bottom of the hinge (the longer side) is attached to the page of the album. Apply moisture to the short side by gently touching it with the tip of your tongue and blotting it lightly on your lower lip before placing it correctly on the back of the stamp.



Tip: Steam or hot water may cause colors to run; soak separately any stamps that have colored cancellations or are on colored paper.

Never attempt to remove a hinge from a freshly hinged stamp until it has dried thoroughly.

The amount of moisture you apply is important—the smallest amount will make the hinge stick to the stamp. Next, apply only a small amount of moisture to the bottom portion of the hinge to be attached to the page. You want to keep the stamp free to lift so you can view the backing.

To remove a hinged stamp from an album, carefully grip the stamp and the attached hinge with tongs and gently pull down to release both from the album. The hinged stamp then can be placed facedown and the hinge pulled away slowly from the stamp. If the hinge appears to tear or pull paper fibers from the stamp, stop and soak it off with water.

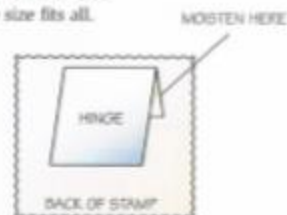
Stamp mounts are small, transparent pockets into which a stamp can be slipped and mounted on a page. Stamp mounts are usually preferred for mounting mint stamps, rare stamps, and fragile stamps. The back of the mount has a special gum that, when moistened at the top, can be placed on your album page. By using this type of mount, you do not disturb the gum of mint stamps.



Stamp mounts come in a variety of sizes to suit the collector's different needs.

Several different types of mounts are available. One type is a sleeve that covers the stamp; another consists of two pieces that form a "track" for the stamp to sit in. As you become more familiar with working with stamps, you can decide which type best suits you. Why not use stamp mounts for all of your stamps? Many collectors don't, because stamp mounts are more expensive than hinges and must be purchased in various sizes to fit stamps of different sizes. With hinges, one size fits all.

Envelopes can be attached to a page with corner mounts, triangular "pockets" with gummed backs. To protect covers, a transparent protective material such as polyester film can be put over the envelope first. Both the sheet protector and the cover can then be attached safely to the album page with the corner mounts.



Tip: Do not use any type of tape, rubber cement, or glue to affix your stamps or envelopes in an album. The chemicals in these materials can quickly migrate into your collection and cause permanent damage and staining.



Stamp tongs



All the special tools you will need as a stamp collector can be found at stamp shows or hobby shops that specialize in stamp collecting, through mail order, and on the Internet. Only with your parent's permission and assistance.

Sort excess stamps that you haven't had time to sort yet in semitransparent glassine envelopes, which come in various sizes, or polyethylene sleeves made for storing covers (envelopes and postcards). The polyethylene sleeves are clear, allowing you to see their contents at a glance.

In addition to mounts, hinged, and albums, there are other tools you will need.



Stamp tongs look like tweezers but have rounded tips for grasping. They are approximately 5 inches long and make handling stamps much easier. Tongs also help protect stamps from soil and damage. Even when your fingertips appear to be clean and dry, they can still contain body oils and perspiration that can damage stamps.



Magnifying glass

A magnifying glass is helpful for examining the fine details of a stamp's design, allowing you to recognize and enjoy the fine art of an engraved stamp.

Perforation gauges are used to measure the number of holes within a 2-centimeter length on a stamp. The perforation gauge was developed to allow a collector to identify stamps by distinguishing among the many types of perforations that have been used over the years.

One type of watermark detector is a shallow, black or dark-colored dish in which the stamp in question is exposed to a nonflammable watermark detector fluid that is used to detect a watermark design in the stamp's paper. When the paper is manufactured, raised areas on the rollers transfer a subtle design, called a watermark, to the paper pulp.

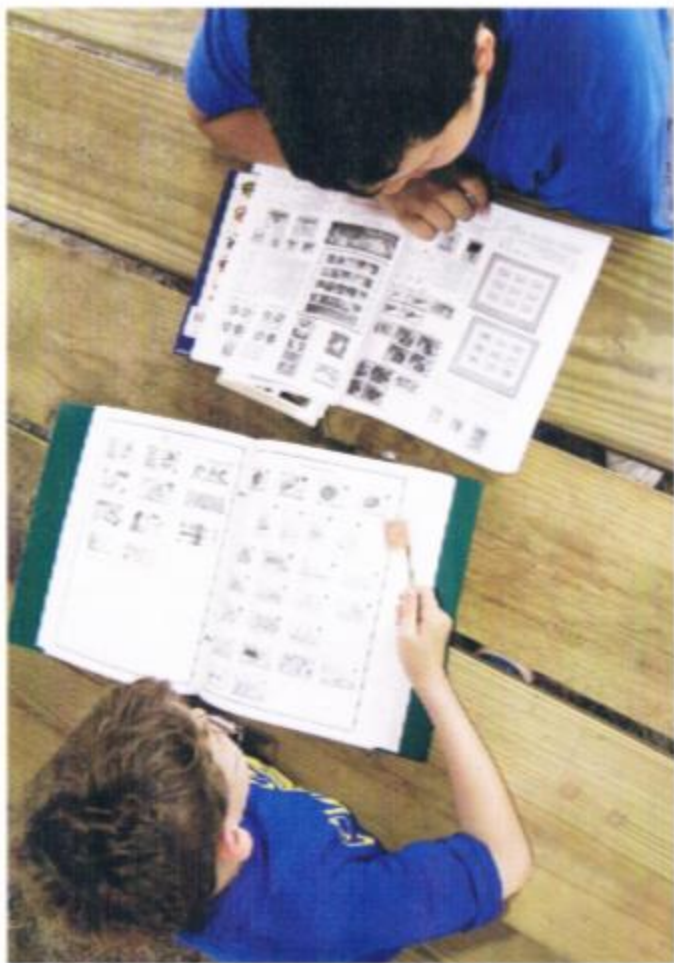
An ultraviolet (UV) light is a basic tool used by stamp collectors to detect and identify luminescent stamps, stamps coated with "invisible" fluorescent ink. A UV light also will help the collector determine whether or not repairs have been made to a stamp.



Perforation gauges

Tip: Ultraviolet lights are harmful to the eyes. Before using such a device, consult with your qualified merit badge counselor to learn how to take the necessary precautions.





Displaying Your Collection

Part of the fun of stamp collecting is sharing it with others, whether just family and friends or the general public, say, at a stamp show. You might just pull prepared album pages from your loose-leaf notebook to display part or all of your collection. Your display should have a theme, which can be broad—such as all foreign stamps—or narrower, such as stamps from a particular country. Topical collections also make for good displays. No matter what the theme, try to arrange your collection so that it tells a story. You may wish to add a title page that explains what will follow.

At stamp shows, specially prepared pages are displayed in frames that usually contain 16 pages each. Many shows have sections for exhibits by young collectors. Attend a stamp show to get ideas for how best to exhibit your own collection. Also contact your merit badge counselor or a member of a local stamp club for more information about putting together a good display.

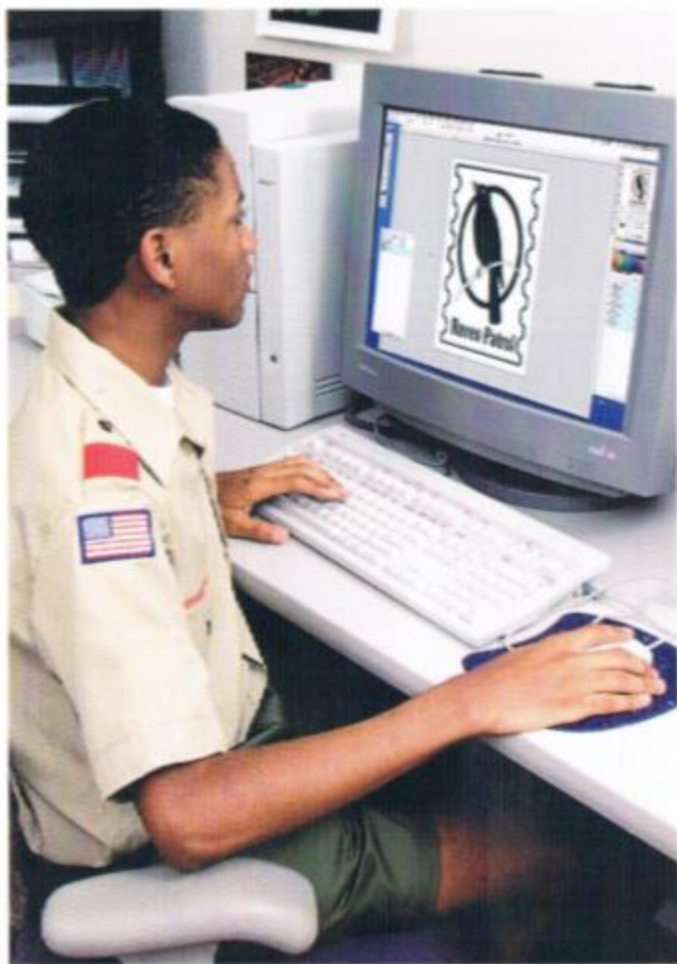
For many people who begin stamp collecting at a young age, the hobby develops into a lifelong pursuit.



Ideas for Laying Out Pages

The following illustrations show some simple layouts for display pages. Remember that the layout of your collection is up to you—use your creativity.





Fun Projects

There are many fun and rewarding projects that you could do to fulfill requirement 7. Here are a few suggestions.

Designing a Stamp

First determine what you would like your stamp to depict. Will it commemorate a person, place, or thing? Are there printed stamps you could use as references? Here are some examples of different stamp designs.

As you design your stamp, keep in mind that it does not need to be an illustration.

Use a favorite photo along with your own design elements.



Designing a Cancellation

Special cancellations usually focus on a special event, cause, or theme. They can have simple designs or have complex and detailed ones that relate to a stamp, cachet, or special event. You will need to check the *Festschrift Mail Manual* at your local post office or on the Internet for requirements on designing a cancellation.

With your parent's permission, visit the U.S. Postal Service online at <http://www.usps.com>.

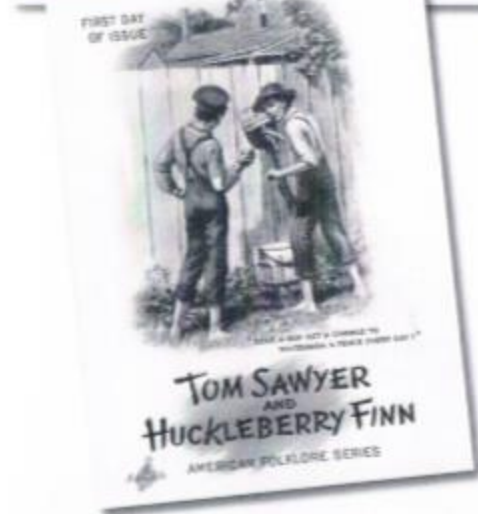
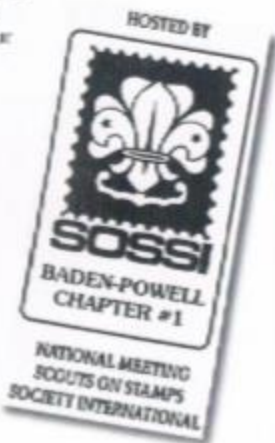


Designing a Cachet

A cachet is a design that is usually hand-drawn, rubber-stamped, or printed on the left side of an envelope. Cachets are usually created to draw attention to the stamp on the envelope or to an event you are promoting.

To make a cachet on a photocopier, open a 6 1/4-inch envelope completely. Using your imagination, draw your own design or select a picture to place on the open envelope. Make as many copies as desired. Cut each copy to envelope size, fold, and glue together to simulate an envelope (a filler card might be added before closing). Address the envelope, attach the correct postage, and have the envelope canceled by mailing it to yourself.

Your stamp design can be as simple or as complex as you desire.



Use cachets like these for inspiration as you design your own.

You can easily make a cachet using your computer and printer. Design the cachet using your own software, use the "page setup" to indicate the print specifications (size, format, and so on) of the envelope, and send it to print.



The U.S. Postal Service From Past to Present

The United States Postal Service is a descendant of the oldest department in the U.S. government. That department was formed by action of the Continental Congress in 1775, and Benjamin Franklin was named the first postmaster general. When the U.S. Constitution was adopted in 1789, all postal services came under the control of the federal government. The present system still reflects the many plans and methods devised by Franklin.

The means of transporting the mail progressed along with the country—from on foot, to horseback, stagecoaches, steamboats, railways, and eventually, aircraft. More recently, the USPS has been building up the world's largest fleet of alternative-fuel vehicles that use clean fuels such as ethanol and electricity.

One of the most significant changes in the postal system was the adoption of postage stamps as the method of payment for carrying the mail. The first stamps were issued on July 1, 1847. This new system required the sender to prepay the fee instead of the receiver paying it. Through the years, the system has been modified and the equipment improved to keep up with the increase in quantity of mail processed.

In the early 1960s, it became obvious that there was a great need for a system that would process mail mechanically or electronically. A system using the now-familiar zip (zone improvement plan) code was installed on July 1, 1963. On September 13, 1978, the USPS announced a plan to assign an additional four-digit code to further assist in the sorting of mail.





Because of many difficulties, both financial and organizational, the U.S. Congress passed the Postal Reorganization Act, which was signed into law by President Richard Nixon on August 12, 1970. This act transformed the Post Office Department into the U.S. Postal Service, an independent agency dedicated to providing affordable and efficient mail service to everyone in the country, no matter where they live.



Handling the Mail Is a Big Job

We have all seen letter carriers delivering mail to houses. But few of us realize how big a job that really is. The USPS:

- Delivers more mail (212 billion pieces a year) to more addresses (144 million) over a larger geographic area than any other postal agency in the world
- Operates more than 37,000 post offices, 27,800 stamp vending machines, and 2,500 automated postal centers
- Takes in nearly \$70 billion a year in revenue
- Employs more than 700,000 people
- Is self-sufficient, getting by without any money from taxpayers

If we look at some of the major steps that must take place to get the letter from where it was mailed to the mailbox at your door, we can better understand and appreciate the United States Postal Service.

Let's suppose that someone places a letter to you in a mailbox in a city 200 miles from your house. Later that same day, all the letters that have accumulated in the mailbox are picked up by a letter carrier and taken to the local post office. Employees at the post office sort through the letters, separating mail designated for local delivery. The remaining mail is then sorted into two or three trays: one for the mail designated for delivery within 100 to 200 miles of the post office; one for the mail that must travel more than 200 miles; and one for the mail that will go overseas.

The trays are then carried by truck to an area processing station, where they are further sorted by zip code. In a process called *dispositioning*, the mail is faced, or arranged, so that the stamp is in the same position on each piece, allowing the letters to be canceled by a clerk or a machine. The trays of letters are then picked up by postal employees and loaded into trucks for distribution to local post offices or loaded onto airplanes for delivery to more distant places.

The destination post office must then sort the mail and distribute it to the proper mail carrier, who will make one final sort before delivering the mail to the appropriate address along his or her route.



This is a simplified description of the USPS's complex procedures. Many special machines have been developed to streamline and automate the process. Advancing technology continually improves the way we get our mail.



Interesting Stories About Stamps

Some stamps have interesting stories behind them. One such stamp is known as the First Scout stamp. During the Boer War in South Africa in the late 1800s, the British commander was Robert S. S. Baden-Powell. To help communications, Baden-Powell formed a cadet corps of boys, who served as uniformed messengers, carrying messages from the commander to his outposts.

During the long siege of Mafeking, the officers began producing postage stamps, mostly for their own amusement. When Baden-Powell discovered what they were doing, he suggested that his messenger, Cadet Sgt. Maj. Goodyear, be pictured on one of the stamps. These stamps were recognized as real postage stamps when the war ended in 1902.

In 1907, Baden-Powell formed the Scouting movement. In later years, he called young Goodyear his "first Scout," because Baden-Powell's ideas for Scouting had been forming during the siege of Mafeking.

The first stamp, known throughout the world as the Penny Black and depicting Queen Victoria, was introduced in England in May 1840. The stamp's use on an envelope indicated that postage had been paid. On July 1, 1847, the United States started issuing postage stamps featuring George Washington and Benjamin Franklin.





The stamp shown here is one of the world's most valuable stamps. In 1980, it was sold at auction for \$935,000, and its face value, or original value, was 1 cent. This stamp was printed in 1856 in the British colony of British Guiana, now the independent country of Guyana. British Guiana's stamps normally were printed in England. This one, however, was printed in the colony as part of a temporary stock, because supplies were slow in arriving from England.

Seventeen years after it was printed, the stamp was found by a 12-year-old boy, L. Vernon Vaughan, in the attic of his home in British Guiana. He soaked it off the envelope and put it in his album, but later sold it to a local collector. It was sold many times, each time for a higher price, until 1950, when it brought the then-world's record price for a single stamp. As you can see, the corners have been clipped and the surface has been badly rubbed. But it is the only known stamp from this rare issue, and so its poor condition does not detract from its value.

In 1918, a 24-cent airmail stamp was issued honoring the Curtiss JN-4 "Jenny," a World War I biplane that became an airmail plane. About 700 of the stamps were misprinted with the plane upside down. Postal authorities destroyed 500 of the mistakes, printed in sheets of 100 each, before they were circulated. The remaining sheet was inadvertently sold to a collector in Washington, D.C., and was later resold as single stamps and pages. In 2025, a block of four "inverted Jenny" stamps sold at auction for \$2.7 million.

A stamp collection sometimes becomes valuable not so much because of the stamps in it but because of who collected them. In 2005, the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C., paid \$53,000 for the boyhood stamp collection of John Lennon, a member of The Beatles, the most famous rock-and-roll band of all time.



John Lennon's album from childhood

To help build his collection, Lennon, who lived in Liverpool, England, saved stamps off of letters from relatives in New Zealand. His collection consists of 565 stamps in a single album. Pages of the album can be viewed at the museum's Web site (see the resources section).

John Lennon, who wasn't all that serious about his collection, sketched beards and mustaches on the likenesses of Queen Victoria and King George VI on his stamp album's title page.





Stamp Collecting Resources

Scouting Literature

Collectors merit badge pamphlet

Visit the Boy Scouts of America's official retail Web site at <http://www.scoutstuff.org> for a complete listing of all merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

Books

- Adams, Charles F. *Stamp Collecting: The Complete, Easy Guide to the World's Most Popular Hobby*. Dell Publishing, 1992.
- Badke, Michael. *Linn's Complete Stamp Collecting Basics*. Linn's Stamp News, 2004.
- Witzman, Stanley. *The World's Greatest Stamp Collectors*. Linn's Stamp News, 1990.
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- Klotz, James E., ed. *Scott 2006 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*. Scott Publishing Company, 2005.
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- O'Keefe, Donna, ed. *Linn's Stamp Month*. Linn's Stamp News, 2006.
- Sims, Richard L. *Stamp Collecting for Dummies*. For Dummies, 2006.
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- Williams, L. N. *Fundamentals of Philately*. American Philatelic Society, 1990.
- Youngblood, Wayne L. *All About Stamps: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Philatelic Terms*. Krause Publications, 2000.



Periodicals

- Global Stamp News*
P.O. Box 97
Sidney, OH 45365-0097
- Linn's Stamp News*
P.O. Box 29
Sidney, OH 45365-0029
Web site: <http://www.linn.com>
- Michel's and Stamp Magazine*
P.O. Box 5050
White Plains, NY 10621-5050
- Scott Stamp Monthly*
P.O. Box 526
Sidney, OH 45365-0026
Web site: http://scottsonline.com/cgi_AEM.asp

Organizations and Web Sites

- American Air Mail Society**
P.O. Box 110
Mizeola, NY 11501-0110
Web site:
<http://www.americanairmailociety.org>
- American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors**
Web site: <http://www.aape.org>
- American First Day Cover Society**
P.O. Box 16227
Tucson, AZ 85732-6227
Web site: <http://www.afdcs.org>
- American Philatelic Society**
American Philatelic Research Library
103 Match Factory Place
Belleville, PA 16823
Web site: <http://www.stamps.org>
- American Stamp Dealers Association**
3 School St.
Glen Cove, NY 11542-2517
Web site:
<http://www.asdaonline.com/asfree.htm>
- American Topical Association**
P.O. Box 57
Arlington, TX 76004-0057
Web site:
<http://www.americantopicalassn.org>
- Ebony Society of Philatelic Events and Reflections**
P.O. Box 1757
Lincolnton Station
New York, NY 10037-1757
Web site: <http://esperstamps.org>
- Hall of Stamps** (at the U.S. Postal Service headquarters)
475 L'Enfant Plaza
Washington, DC 20260-0001

- International Machine Cancel Society**
3097 Trobisher Ave.
Dublin, OH 43017-1652
Web site: <http://www.machinecancel.org>
- Junior Philatelists of America**
Central Office
P.O. Box 2625
Albany, OR 97321
- Museum of Postal History**
127/131 N. Main St.
P.O. Box 9998
Delphos, OH 45833-9998
- National Postal Museum**
2 Massachusetts Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002
Web site:
<http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu>
- Philatelic Foundation**
70 W. 40th St., 15th Floor
New York, NY 10018
Web site:
<http://www.philatelicfoundation.org>
- If you are requesting information from any of these organizations, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped (first class) envelope.
- Post Mark Collectors Club**
7014 Woodland Oaks Drive
Magnolia, TX 77354-4896
Web site: <http://www.postmarks.org>
- The Postal History Foundation**
920 N. First Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85719
Web site:
<http://www.postalhistoryfoundation.org>

Postal History Society

8207 Daren Court
Pikesville, MD 21208-2211

Precancel Stamp Society

P.O. Box 4072
Missoula, MT 59806-4072
Web site: <http://www.precancel.org>

Scott Publishing Company

P.O. Box 828
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Scouts on Stamps Society International Inc.

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Spellman Museum of Stamps and Postal History

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Weston, MA 02453
Web site: <http://www.spellman.org>

United Postal Stationery Society Central Office

P.O. Box 3982
Chester, VA 23831
Web site: <http://www.usps.org>

Universal Ship Cancellation Society

747 Shand Court
Fremont, CA 94539-7419
Web site: <http://www.uscs.org>

The Washington Press

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Web site: <http://www.washpress.com>

Wineburgh Philatelic

Research Library
The University of Texas at Dallas
F.O. Box 638643
Richardson, TX 75083-0643
Web site: <http://www.utdallas.edu/~library/special/wprl.html>

Foreign Postal Administrations**Australia Post**

Web site: <http://www.auspost.com.au>

Austrian Post

Web site: <http://www.post.at/english/index.html>

La Poste

Web site: <http://www.philately.post.be>

Bulgarian Post

Web site: <http://www.bgpost.bg/index.htm#Eng/index.htm>

Canada Post

Web site: <http://www.canadapost.ca>

China Philatelic Information Network

Web site: <http://www.cpi.com.cn/cpi-e/cpi-e.htm>

Czech Post

Web site: http://archiv.radio.cz/postfil/index_c.html

Post Danmark (Denmark)

Web site: <http://www.stamps.postdanmark.dk>

La Poste (France)

Web site: <http://www.laposte.fr>

An Post (Ireland)

Web site: <http://www.anpost.ie>

Israel Postal Company Ltd.

Web site: <http://www.postil.com>

Poste Italiane (Italy)

Web site: <http://www.poste.it/en>

Japan Post

Web site: <http://www.post.japanpost.jp/english>

Latvijas Pasts (Latvia)

Web site: <http://www.pasts.lv/en>

P & T Luxembourg

Web site: <http://www.philately.lu>

New Zealand Post

Web site: <http://www.nzpost.co.nz>

Norway Post

Web site: <http://www.posten.no/Portal/English>

Poczta Polska (Poland)

Web site: <http://www.poczta-polska.pl/znaczk/en/index.php>

Philatelic Center of French Polynesia

Web site: <http://www.tahitiophilatelic.com>

CTT Correios (Portugal)

Web site: <http://www.ctt.pt>

Singapore Post

Web site: <http://www.singpost.com>

Posta Slovenije (Slovenia)

Web site: <http://www.posta.si/indexen.aspx?lang=EN>

South Africa Post Office

Web site: <http://www.sapo.co.za/comm/postofficeframe.html>

Swiss Post (Switzerland)

Web site: <http://www.swisspost.ch/en>

Chunghwa Post (Taiwan)

Web site: http://www.post.gov.tw/post/internet/ta_english/index.htm

United Kingdom Royal Mail

Web site: <http://www.royalmail.com>

United Nations Postal Administration

Web site: <http://www.un.org/Depts/UNPA>

Young collectors should also know that the United States Postal Service makes available a free "Introduction to Stamp Collecting" (publication 225). Visit your local post office or write to the U.S. Postal Service, Philatelic Sales Division, Box 449997, Kansas City, MO 64144-9997.

In addition, the U.S. Postal Service has a special program for first day covers. The USPS gives postal customers 30 days to obtain a first day of issue postmark by mail. Purchase the new stamp at a local post office, affix the stamp to an envelope addressed to yourself (or someone else you designate), and send it in a larger envelope to the USPS. (The address appears at the bottom of each stamp release; check with your local post office.) Individual first day covers can be ordered by writing to the USPS, Philatelic Sales Division, First Day Covers, P.O. Box 219424, Kansas City, MO 64121-9424; or call toll-free 800-STAMP-24; or visit the USPS Web site at <http://shopusps.com>.

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If a Scout has already started working on a merit badge when a new edition for that pamphlet is introduced, he should continue to use the same merit badge pamphlet to earn the badge. He should fulfill the requirements listed in the pamphlet he was using when he began. In other words, the Scout need not start all over again with the new pamphlet and possibly revised requirements.

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American Business	2002	Engineering	2000	Photography	2000
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Artillery	2004	Fire Safety	2004	Public Speaking	2002
Architecture	2004	First Aid	2007	Pulp and Paper	2006
Art	2006	Fish and Wildlife		Radio	2001
Astronomy	2004	Management	2004	Reinforcing	2003
Athletics	2006	Fishing	2002	Reading	2003
Auto Mechanics	2000	Fly-Fishing	2002	Reptile and	
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