What Can I Collect?

Read the information, fill in the blanks, and follow directions. Have fun learning!

The hobby of philately is exciting because YOU decide what you want to collect. Philately not only includes collecting stamps, but also anything that is part of postal history.

The following are examples of <u>some</u> basic postal items to collect:

Covers are envelopes that have gone through the mail. The cover pictured below is fairly old. Look at the postmark. Which city was it mailed in? _____ What year was it mailed?_____. The cancel on this cover is a "station flag cancel." In 1901, some post offices in New York City were identified by using letters. This one was station W. Station flag cancels aren't used anymore, making this cover especially interesting.

Postmark **Cancellation** **Stamp**



The ink of the cancel must touch the stamp to prevent someone from using the stamp again on another letter. That would be like cheating.

People collect covers for many reasons. Some people like old letters and pen and ink cursive handwriting. Some collect letters written to and from famous people in history. The cover above is a piece of postal history. Look at the postmark and figure out how old it is. The cover is _____ years old. The cancellation is a historical record of a specific station name that no longer exists. Someone will find this cover interesting and want to keep it.

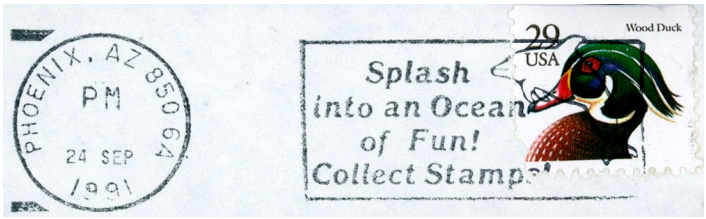
First Day Covers, or FDCs, are collectible envelopes sold on the first day a stamp is issued at a special unveiling ceremony. This envelope has the First Day of Issue **pictorial postmark**, the stamp, and the cachet (artwork) that connects with the stamp topic In what city was the ceremony?_____

cachet →

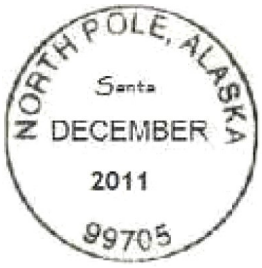


Pictorial postmarks include the date of cancellation and art.

Slogan cancellations have some sort of message or slogan printed on the cancellation. Read the words at right in the cancel. Can you see the little line drawing inside the cancellation? What do you think the picture is?_____.



Postmarks are collected by some people because they fit into a theme or topic. At right is a postmark from _____, Alaska. Sometimes postmarks are used to cancel stamps instead of lines. There are many towns in the United States with Christmas related names, which can be fun to collect. Some people collect postmarks from every city that has a professional football team. Some people like to collect every postmark from the state they live in.



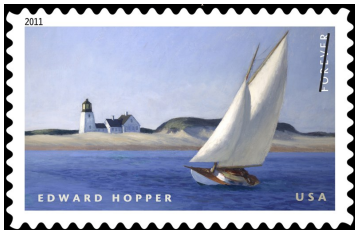
Philately is fun because there are so many different ways to collect. The ideas above are just a few examples.

As a beginner, we suggest that you start with collecting <u>used</u> stamps. But anytime you see a cool cover, postmark, or cancel, feel free to keep it for your collection.

Just about every topic in the world is on **stamps.** For example, if you are interested in trains or butterflies, you can collect them. You may already play a certain sport and want to collect those stamps. If you like to draw and paint, then you could collect art on stamps from around the world.







If you have already visited a country, you might want to collect those stamps. Or you may want to go to a country in the future. It's a great way to learn about it before you get there whether its next year or ten years from now. Wherever it is, it is so fun to learn about far away places and you can visit them through stamps. Every country in the world issues stamps. Where is the basketball stamp from?_____ (Hint: see the previous lesson for help.)



Have you ever heard of the countries that issued the stamps below? Try to pronounce the names. The stamps below could be used in individual country collections. The stamp with the tomato on it could be put in a collection of stamps from the country of _____. The stamps below could also be put in a topical collection. Match the topic by drawing lines from the words to the stamp.

Scouting **Insects** **Wild Animals** **Food** **Flowers**



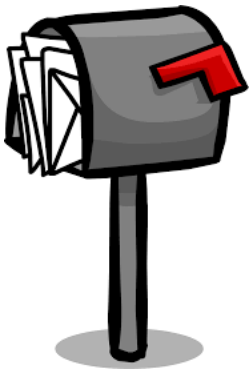








How do we get or find stamps to collect?



- Check your mail for stamps on the envelopes or boxes. These stamps are used and free to you. Also ask friends, relatives, and neighbors for their discarded envelopes.
- Your parents might work at an office that receives mail regularly. They may be allowed to cut the stamps off of those envelopes.
- You may know someone that receives mail from other countries. Those stamps would be fun to collect!
- Find a stamp club near you or go to a stamp show. Those organizations might be willing to provide you with stamps to start your collection.



- Find a pen pal. It can be fun to write letters to kids across the country or the world. They can send you stamps and their envelope will have a stamp or two on it. There are organizations on the internet that help with finding pen pals. Ask a grown up first.
- Contact non-profit organizations, like the Postal History Foundation, that provide stamps to youth for free.
- If you know a longtime collector, ask if they have any extra stamps they can give you to help get you started.
- Some stamp companies offer “free” stamps, but read the fine print with your parent or guardian before you fill out the forms and mail it.

If you are ready, take the review quiz on the next page!

What Can I Collect? Review Quiz

1) The envelope at right is best described as a

a) Cover

b) First Day Cover

c) Postcard



2) The envelope was postmarked in the town of

a) Los Angeles

b) Buffalo

c) Lake Placid

3) Circle the **cachet** on the cover above. It is an illustration of a _____.

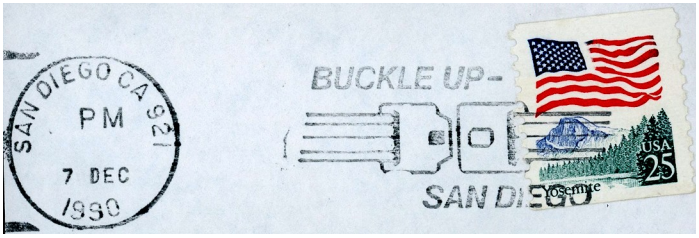
4) What year was the stamp on the envelope issued? _____

5) Below are three examples of postmarks, and or cancels. Draw a line from the words to the correct picture.

Pictorial Postmark **Slogan Cancel** **Postmark**







6) The easiest and least expensive way to collect stamps is to check your own mail because those stamps come to you and are free to you. Circle one. **True** or **False**

7) Stamps on mail are supposed to be _____ to prevent reuse.

a) cancelled b) left alone so they are clean c) destroyed

8) The stamp at right can be used for a topical or country collection, among other types. Write down what you think about the stamp at right.



Name of the country _____

Topic idea(s) (there can be more than one.)

_____

8a) Extra credit!!! On what continent can we visit this country? _____

QUIZ—ANSWER KEY

1.) b

2.) c

3.) skier

4.) 1984

5.) Pictorial Postmark—picture showing Owney on top of railroad car

Slogan Cancel—the cancel says "Buckle UP" and image of a seat belt

Postmark—Round postmark that says Summer Shake, KY

6.) True

7.) a

8.) Country name—Kenya

Possible topical categories: monkeys, wild animals, animals from Kenya, wild animals from Africa, animals with tails, etc. a student might come up with other ideas

9.) Africa