

# Stamp

A postage stamp is a small piece of paper issued by a post office, postal administration, or other authorized vendors to customers who pay postage (the cost involved in moving, insuring, or registering mail), who then affix the stamp to the face or address-side of any item of mail—an envelope or other postal cover (e.g., packet, box, mailing cylinder)—that they wish to send. The item is then processed by the postal system, where a postmark or cancellation mark—in modern usage indicating date and point of origin of mailing—is applied to the stamp and its left and right sides to prevent its reuse. The item is then delivered to its addressee.

Always featuring the name of the issuing nation (with the exception of the United Kingdom), a denomination of its value, and often an illustration of persons, events, institutions, or natural realities that symbolize the nation's traditions and values, every stamp is printed on a piece of usually rectangular, but sometimes triangular or otherwise shaped special custom-made paper whose back is either glazed with an adhesive gum or self-adhesive.