

A CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

For Grades 3–6

Social Studies and  
Visual Arts

# Design it!

## Student Stamps for America





"Design It!" curriculum guide is a product of the National Postal Museum. Special thanks to the teachers that reviewed the curriculum and Jackie Moore and the rest of the Big Draw teachers at North Chevy Chase Elementary School who let us test the program with their students.

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# Design It!

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# Design It:

## Student Stamps for America Curriculum

### OVERVIEW

American history and culture continue to live vicariously through stamp imagery. This curriculum, geared towards students in grades 3–6, is designed to enhance students' understanding of U.S. stamp development through the context of Social Studies and Visual Arts Standards of Learning. Thinking Routines and Visual Learning, as suggested throughout the curriculum, will bridge the relationship between American History and Visual Arts and promote student understanding.<sup>1</sup> Over four lessons, students will have an opportunity to learn elements of art, principles of design, and social studies concepts. Students can show what they have learned by designing a stamp of their own.

After completing this curriculum, students will be able to:

- Name three characteristics of a stamp that help it communicate its idea.
- Identify one subject that is of significance to their nation
- Use and identify one element of art and one principle of design used in designing a stamp
- Complete a stamp design that meets United States Postal Service requirements

By integrating art and social studies content, this curriculum increases students' opportunity to make and build connections on existing knowledge and experiences with art and national identity. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between their nation and self after designing a stamp. They also will have the opportunity to improve their observation, identification, and drawing skills. The curriculum has built-in assessment activities that serve as an evaluation tool to see if students have met the stated objectives.

Although this curriculum is broken into four lessons, all four can be completed with limited discussion in one hour. Handouts and additional activities can extend the lessons into a multi-day activity. The curriculum guide is available on the National Postal Museum website ([http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b\\_DesignIt.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_DesignIt.html)).

1. Thinking Routines and Visual Learning are long-term and extensive research projects for the promotion of strong learning skills through the arts by Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. For more information on Thinking Routines and Visual Learning, please visit their websites: <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/index.cfm>; <http://pzweb.harvard.edu/tc/routines.cfm>; & [http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking\\_html\\_files/03\\_ThinkingRoutines/03a\\_ThinkingRoutines.html](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03a_ThinkingRoutines.html).

# 1

## Design It: What is a Stamp?



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### INTRODUCTION TO LESSON 1

#### Essential Questions

What is a stamp? What are the informative parts of a stamp? How and when did stamps come into use? Why are there pictures on postage stamps?

#### Desired Outcomes

Students will understand that stamps are proofs of payments and that the central focus of the stamp is the subject. Students will know the history of stamps and understand why stamp design is needed on stamps. Students will gain the skills to identify informative parts of a stamp.

#### In This Lesson

Students will learn the history of how stamps appeared in postal operations and the evolution of stamps. Students will also learn and identify parts of a stamp that communicate information.

#### National Standards of Learning

- NSS-USH.5-12.4 Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801–1861)
- NSS-WH.5-12.7 Era 7: An Age of Revolutions, 1750–1914
- NSS-EC.5-8.16 Role of Government
- NSS-EC.5-8.13 Role of Resources in Determining Income
- NSS-C.5-8.4 Other Nations and World Affairs



## LESSON 1: INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Use this lesson unit to guide a discussion of stamp purpose, history, and identification. This unit will build a foundation into the stamp design curriculum by giving a historical overview of how and why stamps are an important part of the postal operations, how designs are an integral part of stamps, and how stamps are used today.

### Materials and Resources

- Thinking Routines
- Supporting Materials for Teachers
- Handout: Informative Parts of a Stamp
- Handout: Sample of a Cancellation Mark
- Worksheet: History of Stamps and its Informative Parts

### SUGGESTED THINKING ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES<sup>2</sup>:

#1: Before starting the lesson, create a visual map or a type of visible documentation such as a diagram using information from the “Supporting Materials for Teachers” section so that students can get context for stamps definitions, history, and origins. An enlarged stamp template can be used to set the tone of the discussion.

Potential questions to ask:

- What do you know about stamps?
- What do you want to know about stamps?
- Who created stamps?
- What did they look like at first?
- Why was it necessary to have stamps?
- What would happen if there were no stamps?

#2: Hand out stamps to students. Ask them what do they see? What can they add to the visual map of what they want to know or already know? This activity will lead into the first part of the lesson plan.

#3 Have students complete “Worksheet: History of Stamps and Its Informative Parts” on pages 6 and 7 as an assessment. This could be done individually, in pairs or groups.

### Lesson Extension:

Let students imagine that they are Rowland Hill. What would they do with their stamps? Would they do something differently? Could they create another form of prepayment? What would it look like? They could design their ideas on a piece of paper.

## LESSON 1: SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS

What are stamps? People use them to mail letters, bills, and postcards. Without prepayment, like stamps, people would not be able to mail their letters. They are self-adhesive images found on the upper right corner on an envelope. Stamps can be bought from a post office or from vending machine at specific locations. As of 2012, first class stamps are valued at 45 cents. Once a stamp has been used, a cancellation mark is imprinted over the stamp to prevent re-use. A cancellation mark is often made of squiggly lines with the name of the post office, the state and zip code, and the date of cancellation.

Stamps always include three important pieces of information in their design: subject, stamp value, and country of origin. It is important that the value is placed on the stamp so that people know how much to pay for it. The country’s abbreviation is included so that people from other countries know where the letter came from. Subject designs are important because it makes the stamp interesting to look at as well as reflect the country’s national identity.

Stamps are proof of payment—prepaid to be used for mail delivery services. How did stamps come to be an important part of postal operations? During the mid-eighteenth century, delivering mail was important. However, stamps were not yet invented and the cost of delivering mail was dependent on the amount of pages in a letter and the distance traveled. In fact, the recipient of the letter was often expected to pay for the postal delivery. Sometimes, if the postal expense was unexpected and costly, the recipient would not pay. This caused problems especially for the messenger because he depended on postage fees for his income.

2. “Thinking Routines.” Visible Thinking. Project Zero at Harvard Graduate School of Education. 13 October 2009. [http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking\\_html\\_files/03\\_ThinkingRoutines/03a\\_ThinkingRoutines.html](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03a_ThinkingRoutines.html).



In 1837, Rowland Hill, a former school teacher in Great Britain proposed a form of prepayment of delivery fees with proof of payment that could be attached to a letter. The first stamp was released in 1840 and was called the Queen Victoria Penny Black or, a shorter version, The Penny Black. It was valued at one cent. Stamps reduced postage fees and increased the volume of letters, revenues, and efficiency.



Just like the British, the U.S. government realized that it would be useful to create stamps to encourage prepayment to simplify mail and make delivery cheaper. Before stamps, the postmaster's method of identifying proof of payment was to write the word PAID on a letter, but prepayment wasn't required.

The first two stamps to appear in the United States in 1847 were a five-cent stamp with the image of Benjamin Franklin, the first Postmaster General and a ten-cent stamp of George Washington. The government chose to add stamps with designs for two main reasons: one is because the quality of a finely engraved image hinders counterfeit. Secondly, stamps are a way to convey national identity. The United States Post Office Department started stamping cancellation



marks over stamps. This prevented stamps from being used again and from losing revenues.

Originally, individual stamps had to be cut from a large sheet, and this quickly proved to be tiring and time-consuming. Many post office employees sought ways to speed up the process and found perforating the sheets ensured safely tearing the stamps without damage. Soon after, machines were created to perforate automatically after printing. Today, with the use of self-stick die cut stamps, perforations have become obsolete, but many stamps still retain the frilly white borders to recall that familiar format.

The stamps designed today reflect the history of stamp development in many ways.



## Lesson 1

### Informative Parts of a Stamp



- ← Country of Origin
- ← Stamp Value
- ← Subject Design

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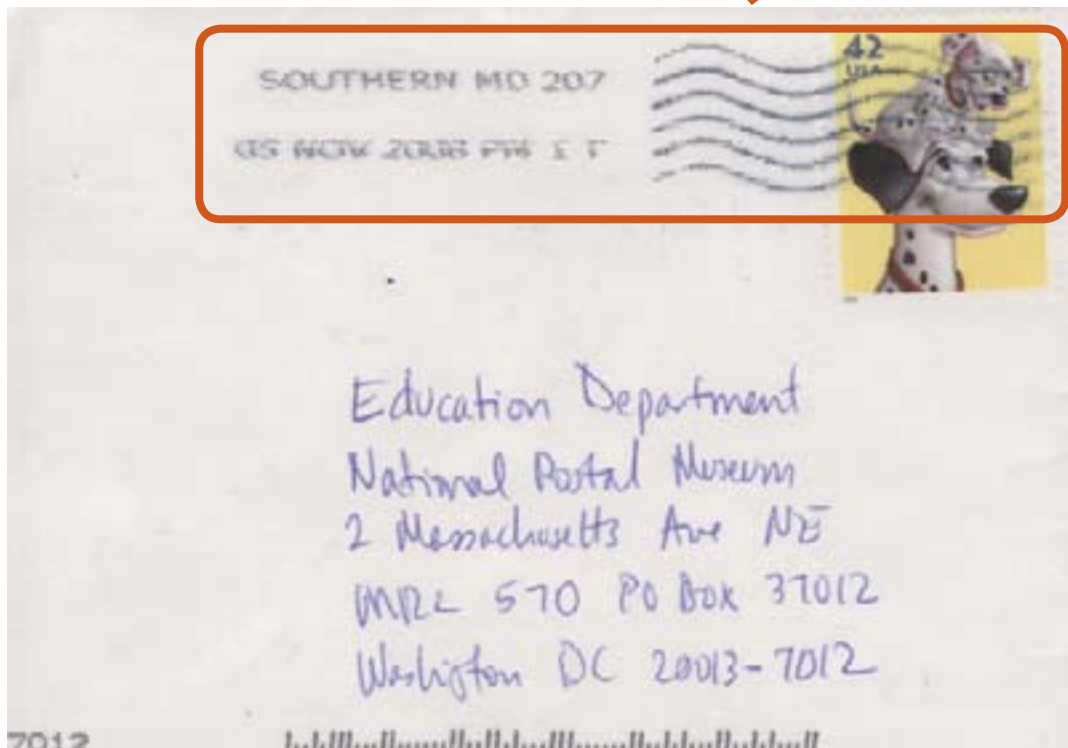
Printable Versions are available on-line at [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b\\_DesignIt\\_Materials.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_DesignIt_Materials.html)



# Lesson 1

## Sample of a Cancellation Mark

Cancellation Mark



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Printable Versions are available on-line at [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b\\_DesignIt\\_Materials.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_DesignIt_Materials.html)

# Lesson 1 Worksheet

## History of a Stamp and its Informative Parts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Match the vocabulary with the definition.

Stamp

Invented the idea of stamps

The Penny Black

Represents national identity and prevents counterfeit

Rowland Hill

Proof of payment for mail delivery

Stamp Design

Subject, Country of Origin, and Stamp Value

Perforations

Had Ben Franklin and George Washington on it

Cancellation marks

Tiny holes around a stamp

Informative Parts of a stamp

Prevents re-use of stamps

First U.S. Stamps

First stamp in the world

Printable Versions are available on-line at [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b\\_DesignIt\\_Materials.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_DesignIt_Materials.html)

# Lesson 1 Worksheet

## History of a Stamp and its Informative Parts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Look at the stamp on the right side and write your answers to the questions on the left.

What is the Subject on the stamp?

---

---

How much is the Stamp Value?

---

---

Where is the Country of Origin?

---

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Printable Versions are available on-line at [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b\\_DesignIt\\_Materials.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_DesignIt_Materials.html)

# 2

## Design It: Selecting a Subject



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### INTRODUCTION TO LESSON 2

#### Essential Questions

Who determines the selection of stamp designs? What subjects are acceptable in stamps? Are there rules for selecting a subject?

#### Desired Outcomes

Students will know that ideas for stamps come from the public and that the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) determines stamp subject selections. Students will learn some rules of stamp selections. Students will understand that U.S. stamps only portray images that are of national identity and significance. Students' national pride will increase as they learn what subjects are selected.

#### In This Lesson

By examining stamps, students will learn that stamp subjects reflect American History and Culture and that there are specific rules in what subjects can be included in a stamp.

#### National Standards of Learning

- NSS-C.5-8.5 Roles of the Citizen
- NSS-USH.5-12.3 through 12.10 Era 3 through 10: from the Revolution and the New Nation (1754–1820s) to Contemporary United States (1968 to the Present)

Note: For National Standards of Learning for Eras 3–10, those standards serve as a potential discussion of subject selection from that historical timeframe. You can make this activity unit topic-specific from a historical standpoint. (e.g. If you are studying the Civil War and Reconstruction, you can ask students what topics/themes from this unit are good stamp subjects.)

## LESSON 2: INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Lesson 2 will lead into the discussion of who determines stamp subjects and whether there are criteria for subject selection. This lesson unit serves as an excellent hands-on stamp activity for students. Through the stamps used in class, students will be able to see the various types of American-related subjects found on stamps. This unit will lead into selecting subjects as a part of their stamp design activity.

### Materials and Resources

- Thinking Routines
- Claim/Support/Question Reasoning Routine
- Supporting Materials for Teachers
- Handout: Acceptable and Unacceptable Subjects
- Worksheet: Stamp Selection
- Materials: Stamps (1–3 per student) acquired from one of the following sources:
  - Request a collection of U.S. stamps from your local stamp club, often available by donation or minimal cost (list of clubs can be accessed at [www.stamps.org](http://www.stamps.org)),
  - Purchase mint stamps at face value from the post office or from USPS.com,
  - Soak stamps off your and students' mail. You can look at [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/stamp/5a\\_introduction.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/stamp/5a_introduction.html) for detailed instructions on how to soak stamps.
- Resource: <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/leadership/stamp-advisory-committee.htm> for more information about the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee
- Resource: <http://www.beyondtheperf.com/stamp-releases> for 2012 stamps

## SUGGESTED THINKING ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES<sup>3</sup>:

#1: Before discussing CSAC, ask students to look at their stamps.

Potential questions to ask:

- Who or what are on the stamps?
- Why are they there?
- Who or what are not on stamps?
- How do the subjects represent American History and Culture?
- Could stamps include cultural heritage?
- How does cultural heritage represent American Culture?
- How do stamps represent pride for American identity?
- How would you reflect your pride for or identity with America through stamps?

#2: Have several images that students can group into stamp or no-stamp categories. Have students identify which subjects fit the CSAC criteria and which do not. Clip Art can easily provide visuals, but you may want to add images specific to your school or region that your students can identify as not-stamp appropriate (like your school's principal or the local mall). A handout of Acceptable and Unacceptable Subjects can be used as an example.

#3: Claim/Support/Question thinking routine can be used to explore subjects in stamps more intensively.

#4: Have your students do a group activity where they discuss the potential selection of their subjects. This helps to prepare students for the stamp design activity lesson 4.

### Lesson Extension:

Have students soak off stamps from their mail. This serves as a great activity for understanding stamp collecting.

3. "Thinking Routines." Visible Thinking. Project Zero at Harvard Graduate School of Education. 13 October 2009. [http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking\\_html\\_files/03\\_ThinkingRoutines/03a\\_ThinkingRoutines.html](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03a_ThinkingRoutines.html).

## CLAIM / SUPPORT / QUESTION<sup>4</sup> A REASONING ROUTINE

1. Make a claim about the artwork or topic.
2. Identify support for your claim.
3. Ask a question related to your claim.

### Why ?

To help students develop thoughtful interpretations of an artwork or topic by encouraging them to reason with evidence.

### When ?

Use Claim / Support / Question with works of art and with topics in the curriculum that invite explanation or are open to interpretation.

### How ?

Model the routine for the whole class, then work in small groups or individually. Take turns using the routine so that each member of the group makes a claim, identifies support and asks a question. Following each person's report, take a moment as a group to discuss the artwork or topic in relation to the claim before moving on to the next person. After everyone has had a turn, reflect on the activity. Ask students to discuss what new thoughts they have about the artwork or topic.

## LESSON 2: SUPPORTING MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS

The subject of stamps covers every topic you can imagine, many of which relate to your Social Studies curriculum: significant battles, presidents, contributions of artists and scientists, natural landmarks and resources, social revolutions, popular culture, and constitutional rights, to name a few. The wealth of subjects on U.S. stamps provides endless access points of discussion about American History and culture.

Each stamp subject idea starts as a suggestion from the public. People write in suggestions to the Postal Service by the thousands. Each suggestion is reviewed to see if it matches a list of requirements: does this subject have national significance or, if it's a person, have they made an extraordinary contribution to American culture? The suggestions are then given to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee. This group of 15 individuals with diverse areas of knowledge review all the suggestions and make recommendations to the Postmaster General on what stamp subjects to print in the coming years. Special attention is given to events, people, places that are approaching a significant anniversary.

Five out of the twelve CSAC Rules/Criteria are listed below. In order to become a stamp, a subject must feature one of the following:

1. American/American-related subjects with widespread appeal and significant impact including national symbols, holidays, and nature.
2. Living people that have made extraordinary and enduring contributions to American Society in their relative fields of expertise.
3. Memorial stamps created to honor United States Presidents after their death.
4. Positive events, persons, themes of national importance (regional themes are not allowed) with widespread appeal
5. An American States' 50 year anniversary of their statehood or other regional event will be considered.

Popular culture characters, materials, and media and heritage subjects are acceptable in stamp selections. When preparing samples for students by securing stamps or printing images from the web, take note of the diverse categories in history, culture, science, geography, biography, fun, and games. The greater diversity of examples you can provide your students, the more inspiration they will have in selecting their subjects.

For more information about the requirements for stamps, the people who make up the CSAC group, and all twelve rules, follow this link: <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/leadership/stamp-advisory-committee.htm>

4. "Claim/Support/Question." Artful Thinking. Traverse City Area Public Schools and Project Zero at Harvard Graduate School of Education. 13 October 2009. [http://pzweb.harvard.edu/tc/claim\\_support\\_question.cfm](http://pzweb.harvard.edu/tc/claim_support_question.cfm)  
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## Lesson 2

### Acceptable Subjects



Printable Versions are available on-line at [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b\\_DesignIt\\_Materials.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_DesignIt_Materials.html)

## Lesson 2

### Unacceptable Subjects



Printable Versions are available on-line at [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b\\_DesignIt\\_Materials.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_DesignIt_Materials.html)

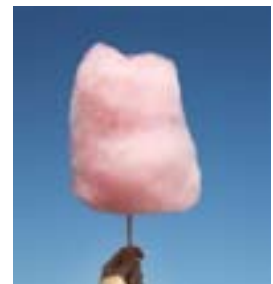
# Lesson 2 Worksheet

## Selecting a Subject

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the images that are acceptable subjects in a U.S. postage stamp.



Printable Versions are available on-line at [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b\\_DesignIt\\_Materials.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_DesignIt_Materials.html)

# 3

## Design It: Designing a Stamp



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### INTRODUCTION TO LESSON 3

#### Essential Questions

What are elements of art and principles of design? How are they used in designing stamps? What qualities should a designer consider when designing for a small-scale work versus a large-scale work?

#### Desired Outcomes

Students will understand and identify the difference between the elements of art and principles of design that are used for designing a stamp. Students will understand that designing for a stamp is very different from designing for a poster or a large-scale work. Students will understand that elements and principles help subjects convey a specific message.

#### In This Lesson

By examining specific samples of stamps, students will identify elements of art and principles of design used in the stamp. Students will identify how the artist scaled the design to fit a stamp.

#### National Standards of Learning

- NA-VA.5-8.1 Understanding and Applying Media, Techniques, and Processes
- NA-VA.5-8.2 Using Knowledge of Structures and Functions
- NA-VA.5-8.3 Choosing and Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, and Ideas
- NA-VA.5-8.4 Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Cultures
- NA-VA.5-8.6 Making Connections Between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines

## LESSON 3: INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Use this lesson to facilitate a discussion with your students about the elements of art and principles of design. Handouts of stamps can be used to observe subject selection and how the elements and principles are used to convey messages. Each image was selected to illustrate a component of the lesson and provoke discussion. Sample questions you can ask your students include:

- Why does each Olympic ring have its own color?
- How do you show a figure is moving?
- How does typography reveal the personality of the figure?
- How does typography convey a message about the stamp to the viewer?

This unit will prepare students for their stamp design activity as they consider which elements and principles to use to communicate a message about their subject.

## Materials and Resources

- Thinking Routines
- Colors, Shapes, Lines: A Routine for Exploring the Formal Qualities of Art
- Supporting Materials for Teachers
- Handouts: Elements of Art and Principles of Design
- Handout: Compare and Contrast Poster vs. Stamp (You can also use a poster and a stamp of your own choosing to illustrate this as well.)
- Handout: Art Vocabulary
- Worksheet: Designing a Stamp
- Appendices: Samples of Enlarged Stamps (images from Lesson 3 Supporting Materials)

5. "Thinking Routines." Visible Thinking. Project Zero at Harvard Graduate School of Education. 13 October 2009. [http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking\\_html\\_files/03\\_ThinkingRoutines/03a\\_ThinkingRoutines.html](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03a_ThinkingRoutines.html).

## SUGGESTED THINKING ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES<sup>5</sup>:

#1: Before starting the lesson, students can look at stamps, posters, and other works of art in the classroom.

Potential questions to ask:

- What do they know about designing a picture?
- What do they want to know?
- What are the basics of designing an image?
- How would you design an image that will be small? How would that differ from designing a large image?
- How does a design help convey a message, opinion, or impression?

#2: Gather several images with a noticeable design element and have students identify a primary design element used to convey meaning. Suggested images are included in the lesson. You can also use [www.arago.si.edu](http://www.arago.si.edu) to view other stamps for more examples. "Colors, Shapes, Lines" worksheet would make a great thinking routine.<sup>6</sup>

#3: Have students act out Josh White's frozen image (Figure 3 in Supporting Materials). Ask them what they think Josh White is going to do next. Play a sample of Josh White's music. This will help them understand the concept of emotion and rhythm in an image.

#4: Throughout the following examples of art elements found on stamps, have your students identify the stamp subject and how it relates to the criteria listed in "Selecting a Subject."

#5: For an intensive analysis of an artwork, choose a stamp with historical significance that students may have studied in a previous social studies unit. "Colors, Shapes, Lines" thinking routine would make a great visual thinking strategy.

Potential questions to ask:

- What is the subject?
- What is the message of the stamp?
- When was the stamp designed?
- Why was the stamp designed at the time?
- What is the historical significance?



COLORS, SHAPES, LINES<sup>6</sup>

A Routine for Exploring the Formal Qualities of Art

- 1. Take a minute to look at the artwork. Let your eyes wander over it freely. What do you see? Take a few observations from students and then move on to the next step.
- 2. Observe and describe the colors, shapes, and lines in detail. Make 3 columns. (See example below.)
- 3. Choose a kind of color, shape, or line that you listed. How does it contribute to the artwork overall? (How does it help the artwork “work?”) Consider:
  - How does it contribute to how the artwork feels?
  - How does it contribute to the mood of the artwork?
  - How does it contribute to how the artwork looks?
  - How does it contribute to the story the artwork tells?
  - How does it contribute to the ideas in the artwork?
- 4. What new ideas do you have about the artwork? What do you see now that you didn't see before?

6. “Color, Shapes, Lines.” Artful Thinking. Traverse City Area Public Schools and Project Zero at Harvard Graduate School of Education. 13 October 2009. [http://pzweb.harvard.edu/tc/colors\\_shapes\\_lines.cfm](http://pzweb.harvard.edu/tc/colors_shapes_lines.cfm). © Harvard Project Zero



Example

COLORS What colors do you see? Describe them.	SHAPES What kinds of shapes do you see? Describe them.	LINES What kinds of lines do you see? Describe them.

LESSON 3: SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS

Designing a stamp requires serious thought and planning because of its size or scale. A designer has to consider how to best portray the subject without losing its significance when it is scaled into a smaller size. Designers use elements of art and principles of design to create a composition of a subject. Elements of art are basic design methods such as color, line, and shape. Principles of design are repetitions or combinations of elements used to create a visual effect. Such an example is using a repetition of lines to create a sense of movement seen in Figure 1. Elements and principles create unique characteristics within a design.

The most important part of a stamp design is choosing the subject. As discussed in lesson two, the subject has to represent national identity or significance. Creating a design of the subject allows the stamp to relay a message and minimize the use of text. After picking a subject, the designer would first consider elements of art: color, line, shape, and value.

Elements of Art  
Color

Color helps the viewer to identify the subject because color combinations can communicate an idea. Such an example is the American flag. The colors red, white, and blue would help the American public recognize their country's flag. If the flag was black, yellow, and green, people would immediately know that it is not an American flag. Another example of color representation in Figure 1 is the Olympic rings. Each Olympic ring has its own color to represent a continent participating in the Olympics.



## Line

Lines help create structure in an image. Without lines, a design would be indistinguishable without any identifiable or recognizable images or shapes. There are several types of lines: straight, curvy, horizontal, vertical, diagonal, zigzag, and more. Look at Figure 1. The flag is made of a rectangle of curvy lines. These lines create stripes that are familiar to the American Flag. In addition, the curvy lines create a sensation that the flag is waving in the air.

## Shape

Shapes create a construction of an object. For example, looking at Figure 2, you would see that the swans meet together to make a heart. There are two types of shapes: geometric and organic. Geometric shapes are basic and familiar shapes such as a circle, square, rectangle, and triangle and are often man-made. Organic shapes are mostly complex and unstructured shapes and often found in nature. Look at Figure 3 for an example. Josh White and his guitar are composed of organic shapes.

## Value

Value is the range of light and dark in colors. Value creates contrast and often draws your eyes to the central focus of the image—the subject. It also creates depth on a flat surface. Look at Figure 2. The values of red, orange, and yellow create depth in the swans' background. The values give a sense of warmth and love. Another example is Figure 3. Notice Josh White's clothes. You can see the light and dark values of the color white. The background is also composed of several values of colors, creating a sense of depth and bringing Josh White to the forefront.

## Principles of Design

To create more complexity, stamp designers combine basic elements to create powerful images. The combined or repeated elements of color, line, shape, and value work together to convey rhythm, unity, and proportion in a stamp design.

## Rhythm

Rhythm is a principle that creates a sense of motion within a static image or an emotional setting in an image. This can be done through a repetition of elements such as lines and shapes. Through the creation of motion, the image can look more exciting and dynamic. For example, if you were to look at Figure 5, you would know

that the figure is running. This is reflected through two repeated figures in the background. The shapes of the figures are geometric with one arm and leg up in the air, and the other arm and leg down. In addition, the figure is not upright, but rather slanted forward, creating a sense of movement.

Rhythm also helps to express energy, which shows the emotional context of the image. Look at Figure 6. The use of value and repeated squares create a sense of rhythm in the image. A sense of pulsating rhythm brings your eyes to the center of the red square. Through the overlapping squares, your eyes follow the constructed rhythm. Jagged and abrupt sense of rhythm can be created by a repetition of shapes or lines that are separate, forcing your eyes to jump around the page.

## Unity

Unity reflects the careful arrangement of elements and the quality of work. Designers want their image to be complete and done in the highest quality possible because it will be distributed to the public. The message in a stamp must be clearly understood. Encourage students to consider how colors should not go outside of borders or shapes and lines should be carefully composed together. See Figures 7 and 8 for a contrast between a work of unity and a work without unity. Figure 7 shows consideration of elements—the color palette and the arrangement of shapes. Figure 8, however, shows a contrasting image of scribbled lines, messy shapes, and careless coloring.

## Proportion

When an artist begins to design for a stamp, the artist has to consider the end result—what the image would look like when it is reduced to scale. This principle of design is called proportion. Stamp designers are careful with how they put the elements into a composition. Designing for a stamp is very different from designing for a larger work of art. When reducing an image, the picture may come out looking less sharp than the original image or it may look overcrowded. There may be a burst of color that is hard to look at if the original image used lots of color and values. When designing for a stamp, one must consider several keys to designing “small”:

Figure 9 serves as an excellent example of proportion. The designer created a central subject with the selection of three colors (red, black, and blue), and three words. People looking at the stamp are immediately drawn to the central character, which in itself is a very active character. Should the designer add any other objects, the image may be hard to look at.

### Also to be considered:

#### Typography

Typography (the way words are printed) is also an important component that needs to be considered in any stamp design. Typography communicates information that helps emphasize a subject's message and contributes to the design aesthetic. In addition, typography is used to communicate stamp value and country of origin.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

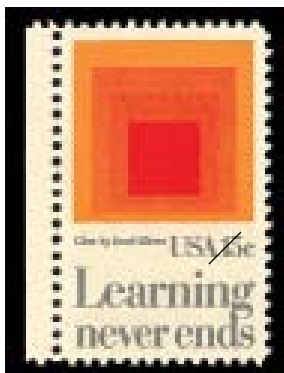


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

Typography can be simple, cursive, thin, or thick. If the name of a famous person is included in a stamp design, one should consider how the words look. In Figure 4, the designer included Judy Garland's autograph. Her signature gives personality to the overall stamp design and tells us her full name. Compare Judy Garland's cursive signature to Josh White's simple block letters. Two very different types of typography are used in the stamps.

When designing for a stamp, one must consider several keys to designing "small".

- A central image is used—usually at the very center of the design
- Keep intricate details to a minimum
- Use shape and line to direct the eye
- Simple use of color and value simply to help make a sharp image
- Limit the use of typography

The elements of art and principles of design referenced in this section may not be compatible with every state's standards of learning but teachers are encouraged to connect stamp design examples with the mandatory concepts outlined in the state curricula.

## Lesson 3

### Elements of Art



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## Lesson 3

### Principles of Design

#### Unity

Careful selection  
of colors and shapes

#### Rhythm



#### Typography

#### Proportion Central object

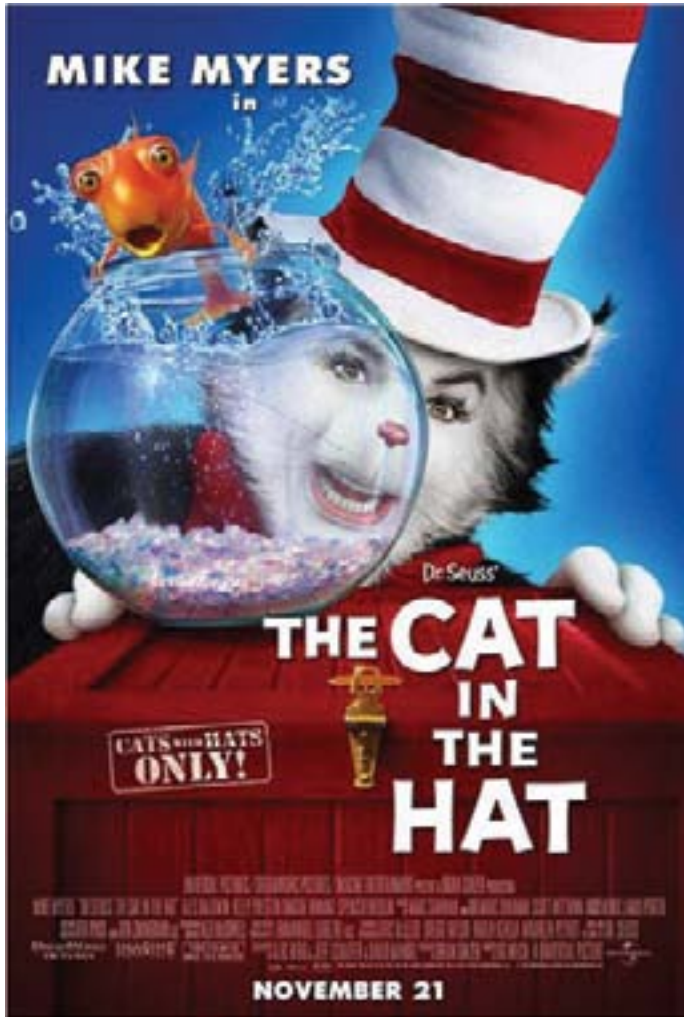
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## Lesson 3

### Compare and Contrast: Poster vs. Stamp



© www.impawards.com/2003/posters/cat\_in\_the\_hat\_verdvd.jpg

- ◀ Many colors and values
- ◀ Several focal points
- ◀ Layered images
- ◀ Many words
- ◀ Scale is large



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- Scale is small ▶
- One central subject ▶
- Minimal words ▶
- Limited focal points ▶
- Minimal colors ▶

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# Lesson 3

## Art Vocabulary

### Elements of Art Vocabulary

1. Color: The visual cue that defines a space or line in the design. Colors can be red, blue, yellow, green, purple, orange, brown, black, white.
2. Line: A mark that creates direction and structure in an image. Lines can be thin, thick, curvy, straight, or broken.
3. Shape: A form that creates a distinguishable image in a space. Shapes can be circles, squares, triangles, or organic shapes (shapes that are natural and non-geometric).
4. Value: The light and dark shades of a color.  
The values of blue can be robin blue, royal blue, teal, cornflower, or turquoise.

### Principles of Design Vocabulary

1. Rhythm: Showing a figure or object has energy or motion. This can be done using a repetition of colors, lines, shapes, or values.
2. Unity: The combination of elements to create a composition of a design that reflects the quality of a work. Elements must be carefully chosen to reinforce the main subject message.
3. Proportion: How a composition should look when reduced or enlarged in scale. Each design must use careful selection of elements when thinking about how big or small the final product will be.

### Other Important Vocabulary

Typography: Words added to an image to give additional information to the viewer. Fonts can be printed, cursive, neat, crazy, embedded in an image or distinct from an image.



# Lesson 3 Worksheet

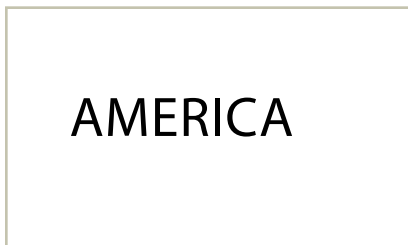
## Designing a Stamp



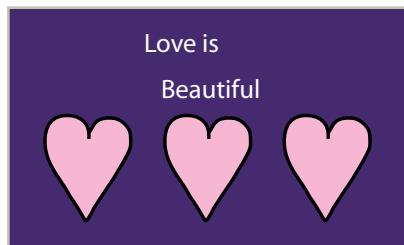
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate vocabulary for each image.



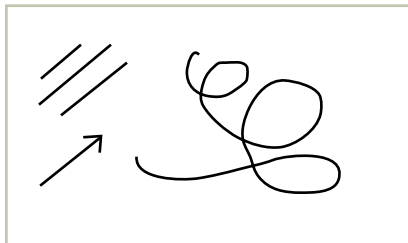
\_\_\_\_\_



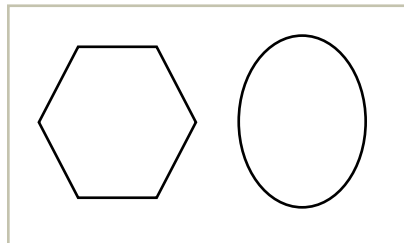
\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



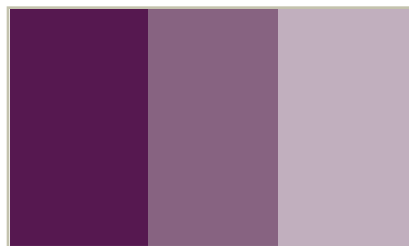
\_\_\_\_\_



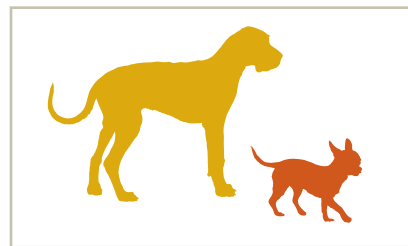
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\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

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# 4

## Design It: Stamp Design Review



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### INTRODUCTION TO LESSON 4

#### Desired Outcomes

Students will engage their skills, knowledge, and imagination with the creation and design of their stamps. Students will use their knowledge of American History to choose a subject for their stamp design. Students will use their artistic skills to communicate their message in small stamp form. Students will use their imagination to identify a subject and illustrate it.

#### In This Lesson

Students will have the opportunity to review and apply what they have learned from the curriculum in a fun and creative way. After students have made a stamp design, the class can role-play as the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee. Students will have the opportunity to assess each others' works and select one stamp design that students feel best represents American History and culture.

#### National Standards of Learning

- NSS-C.5-8.5 Roles of the Citizen
- NSS-US.5-12.3 through 12.10 Era 3 through 10: from the Revolution and the New Nation (1754–1820s) to Contemporary United States (1968 to the Present)

Note: For National Standards of Learning for Eras 3–10, those standards serve as a potential discussion of subject selection from that historical timeframe. You can make this activity unit topic-specific from a historical standpoint. (e.g. If you are studying the Civil War and Reconstruction, you can ask students what topics/themes from this unit are good stamp subjects.)



## LESSON 4: INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Through this activity, students will be challenged to consider the subject of the stamp as a bridge between personal preference and national identity. The biggest goal is to ensure they have the right concept of what subjects can be used in a stamp. Seeing their artwork will help you to know that the curriculum is on the right track in its educational goals. It can branch from or to a discussion about national identity.

Dependent on their subjects, you should challenge students to incorporate the elements of art and principles of design in their stamp design. They should also include informative parts to make their project complete. Rubrics listed at the end of the page can be used to assess students' works.

At the end of the activity, have a discussion with your students. Examples for discussion: Identify what subjects they used and why, which element was strongly used in their work, how they used design to accommodate the small scale. Encourage them to use their art vocabulary!

Through this culminating activity, students will have an opportunity to invest in the quality of their work as well as in their understanding of the overall stamp design curriculum. This activity will serve as an assessment tool for the teacher to see if the curriculum is effective as a teaching model.

### Materials and Resources

- Thinking Routines
- Teaching Materials
- Handouts for Students: Elements of Art, Principles of Design, Acceptable Subjects, Art Vocabulary, Design a Stamp Instructions
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- 8 1/2 x 11 paper, blank or with stamp template
- Optional: rulers, stencils, standard pencils
- Resource: Rules for what can be put on a stamp can be found at <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/leadership/stamp-advisory-committee.htm>. For the sake of this lesson, draw attention to Rules #1, 2, 3, 5, 8.
- Resource: Every U.S. stamp ever designed and issued is online at [www.Arago.si.edu](http://www.Arago.si.edu).

## SUGGESTED THINKING ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES<sup>8</sup>:

#1: At the end of the activity, students can pretend to be part of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee. Divide students into groups of four or six, depending on the size of the class. Have each group evaluate and choose one design that they feel fits CSAC rules as well as meet design aesthetics. Once decided, have the students and their chosen designs to go to the front of the class and discuss their designs. Then, collectively, have the class vote for one artwork that they feel best represents American History and culture.

#2: Have students develop their own evaluation forms. It can be in any form they want. What would they want to evaluate from their stamps? Students can also work in groups, as a committee and develop their own criteria.

Possible questions:

- Did the subject fit the criteria of CSAC?
- Did the stamp represent personal pride?
- What would they want to look for in stamps?
- What about design aesthetics?

### Lesson Extension:

International stamps serve as a great resource to inspire a world cultures discussion. Through this discussion, students could examine the subjects countries use to represent their own culture from a global perspective on national identity. Use "I See, I Think, I Wonder" thinking routine to encourage inquiry.

8. "Thinking Routines." Visible Thinking. Project Zero at Harvard Graduate School of Education. 13 October 2009. [http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking\\_html\\_files/03\\_ThinkingRoutines/03a\\_ThinkingRoutines.html](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03a_ThinkingRoutines.html).

## I SEE / I THINK / I WONDER<sup>9</sup> AN EXPLORING ROUTINE

1. What do you see?
2. What do you think about that?
3. What does it make you wonder?

### Why ?

To help student make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations; to stimulate curiosity and set the stage for inquiry

### When ?

Use this routine when you want students to think carefully about why something looks the way it does or is the way it is.

### How ?

Ask students to make an observation about the artwork or topic and follow up with what they think might be going on or what they think this observation might be. Encourage students to back up their interpretation with reasons. Ask the students to think about what this makes them wonder about the artwork or topic.

The routine works best when a student responds by using the three stems together at the same time, i.e., "I see..., I think..., I wonder..." However,

you may find that students begin by using one stem at a time, and that you need to scaffold each response with a follow up question for the next stem.

The routine works well in a group discussion but in some cases you may want to have students carry out the routine individually on paper or in their heads before sharing them out as a class. Student responses to the routine can be written down and recorded so that a class chart of observations, interpretations and wonderings are listed for all to see and return to during the course of study.

## LESSON 4: RUBRICS

See example below. The top row is for identification of informative parts. Students should have three distinctive components in their stamp design: Subject, Country of Origin, and Stamp Value.

The first column is for determination in quality of work. Use the application of elements and principles for assessment.

Choose which box best fits the student's work. Six is the total possible points for the work evaluated. If the student meets more than half of the six points, then the student has met the stated objectives in this curriculum.

9. "I See, I Think, I Wonder." Artful Thinking. Traverse City Area Public Schools and Project Zero at Harvard Graduate School of Education. 13 October 2009. [http://pzweb.harvard.edu/tc/see\\_think\\_wonder.cfm](http://pzweb.harvard.edu/tc/see_think_wonder.cfm)  
© Harvard Project Zero

### Example

RUBRICS	1 One informative part is identified	2 Two informative parts are identified	3 Three informative parts are identified
1 Poor quality. Does not apply elements or principles			
2 Average quality. Applies one element/principle			
3 High quality. Applies two or more elements/principles			

## Lesson 4 Instructions

### Design a Stamp

- ◀ Choose a subject of national importance that is also meaningful to you.
- ◀ Use a Stamp Frame Template for your design.
- ◀ Review your handouts on Elements of Art, Principles of Design, Art Vocabulary, and Acceptable subjects. Use several design elements to make your subject stand out.
- ◀ Your subject should be center of the image.
- ◀ Choose one to three words to include in your stamp. Keep the words legible and neat but also interesting.
- ◀ Include stamp value and country of origin.

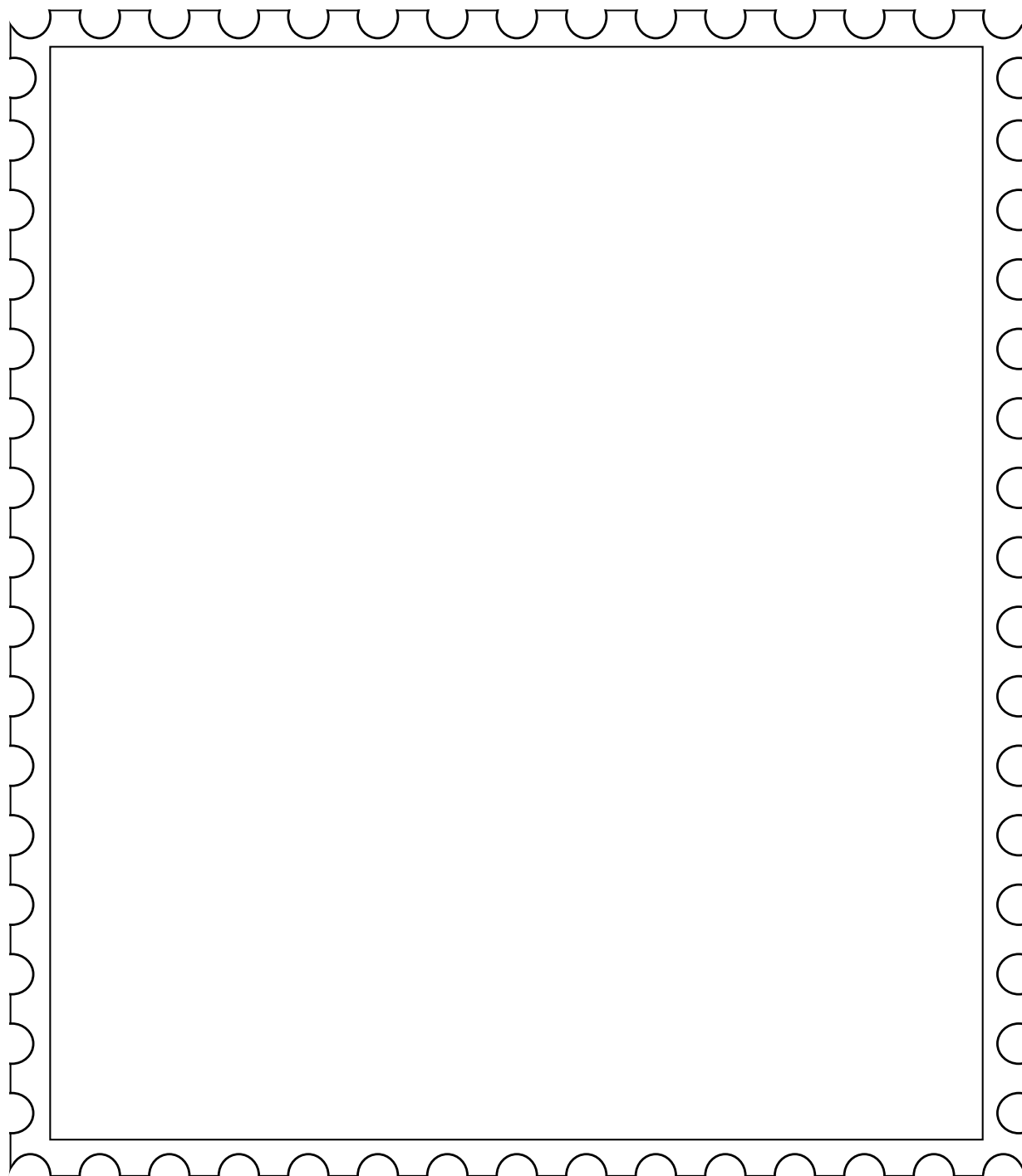


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## Lesson 4

### Stamp Template



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# Appendix A

## SAMPLES OF ENLARGED STAMPS



SAMPLE 1

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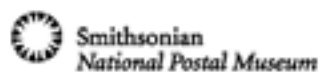


SAMPLE 2

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A-2





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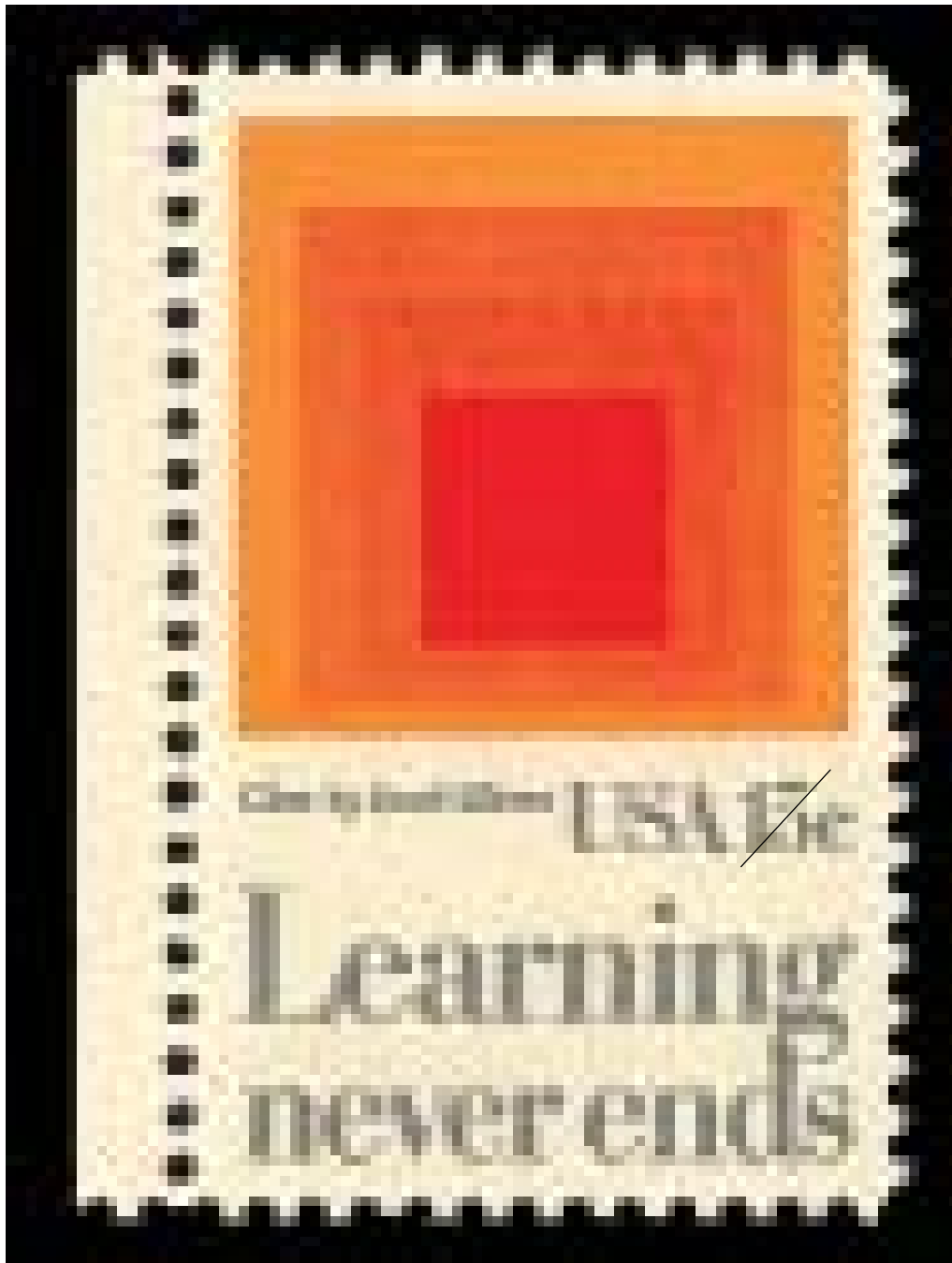


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SAMPLE 7

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SAMPLE 8

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# Appendix B

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

### TOM ENGEMAN



#### What inspired you to design for stamps? Or how did you end up designing your first stamp?

My uncle gave me his stamp collection book when I was in sixth grade. I was fascinated by all the different places in the world and the particular ideas and images they were using to represent themselves. I daydreamed of dense jungle forests and exotic animals and geography. Stamps awakened me to the ideas of the world rather than just my local environment. I never dreamed that there were so many others unlike and at the same time, like me.

I already thought of myself as an artist just like my dad. My first stamp design for the United States Postal Service was the Uncle Sam Hat stamp or "H" stamp.

Some stamps are designed and then held in storage where they are saved for future use. That might be for a stamp that is needed for immediate release for a stamp price increase. These kinds of stamps are usually printed with a

letter of the alphabet instead of a price, like the "H" stamp. I liked the way they turned out and especially when there is a whole sheet of them.



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#### What design methods do you use, especially when you have to consider the final scale of your work will be quite small?

Designing stamps for the Post Office with such a small final size has forced me to keep all my artwork very SIMPLE. They only let us create the art four sizes up from the final size and this prevents you from including everything in the world plus the kitchen sink. This automatically keeps it simple. This idea has carried over into all my art and has greatly improved it. I work on the computer now in the Vector application Adobe Illustrator that allows you to enlarge the art up as big as the Pentagon without showing any digital stair steps as you would in Photoshop.



digital stair steps

#### How do you determine your subject or, if the subject is assigned by USPS, how do you determine how to design for that subject?

I have no voice in the subject matter, which is assigned to me as part of the project. I usually produce three (3) rough layouts suggesting viewpoint, color, composition, arrangement, lighting, and hopefully, an unusual and beautiful view of that subject.

#### How does your style affect your final design, or how is your style reflected in the final design?

My art illustration style is one called Flat Pattern which is solid colors butting up to each other with no shading. I was heavily influenced by antique Japanese art, which uses flat pattern as a prevalent standard style.





## What advice would you give to young designers?

1. Everyone is an artist by birth. Part of being human. A lot of people do not believe this and so do not attempt to make any art. Professional artists spend a lot of time practicing this skill because they feel that they just HAVE TO. They wouldn't be happy if they didn't. Practice is the difference between the two.

2. Every artist faces the same exact dreaded question...

"Why would anyone else like, want, need or buy my work? What is so special about mine?"

That question is a lie. An awful falsehood. A numbing and defeating idea.

The Universe is set up so that every wish has an answer. Every artist has an audience that loves and appreciates their work. It is guaranteed. Now, that audience might not be as big as the Beatles, or American Idol or whatever. But it WILL be big enough for you to be delighted. It is guaranteed if you don't give up and give in to the LIE!

## Why do you love designing stamps? What's the best part about designing stamps?

The variety and design challenges in stamp design make it the best of all assignments. And besides I'm one of the luckiest people in the world. I get to design U.S. Stamps! WOW!

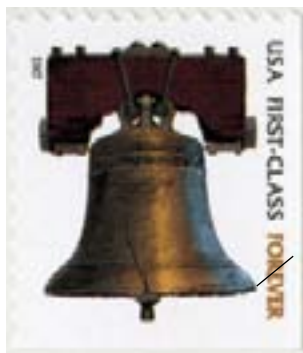
## What is the most difficult thing about illustrating/designing stamps?

Most of the time I wake up in the morning with the idea supplied by the Muse while I'm asleep, or sometimes while out for a walk, or sometimes when I'm doing something altogether different than designing stamps. I find it useful to first ask for a great idea and then....Wait patiently for the answer. Trusting that the answer WILL come if I get off worrying about it.

## TOM ENGEMAN BIO

Tom Engeman is nationally acclaimed artist living in Bethany Beach, Delaware. His previous projects for the Postal Service include The Forever stamp, the National World War II Memorial stamp, four Natural Scenes Non-Profit stamps and sixty Flags of Our Nation stamps. His work also includes stamped cards for Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Ohio University, Miami university, Northeastern University, The Holocaust museum, Columbia University and many other stamps and envelopes.

## TOM ENGEMAN'S STAMP ILLUSTRATIONS



## KAM MAK



### What inspired you to design for stamps? Or how did you end up designing your first stamp?

It was one of my professors from my art school who had just illustrated the Marilyn Monroe commemorative stamp. I was in awe at what he had done. It was he and his painting that inspired me that maybe one day I would be given a chance to illustrate a stamp for the USPS. But at that time it was just a dream.

My first commissioned stamp for the USPS came around the Spring of 2005. I received a call from one of the USPS contracted art director Ethel Kessler, who asked me to illustrate a set of stamps to celebrate the fish koi. I did two paintings on the subject of koi, but the koi stamp was never realized. Instead, the USPS released the koi paintings on April 17, 2009 as a pair of post card stamps.

### What design methods do you use, especially when you have to consider the final scale of your work will be quite small?

In the koi and the Lunar New Year stamp series, I used my favorite medium of choice, oil painting on traditional gesso panel. I enjoyed adding all those details of the koi into the painting. But I discovered that many of these details disappeared and filled in when reduced to the size of a stamp. With the advice and experience from Ethel Kessler, I corrected the painting so that the details were not lost when it was scaled down. I gained a lot of knowledge from



this first painting, but I ran into a similar problem with the Lunar New Year stamp series. In this painting, my subject was a bunch of red lanterns hanging next to each

other. Again, when it was scaled down, people at the USPS felt that the definition of the red lanterns got lost. One response was that it looked like a bunch of "tomatoes". I was willing to redo the painting, but luckily Ethel Kessler was able to crop close into my red lantern paintings and allow the red lanterns to be read clearly when scaled down.

### How do you determine your subject or, if the subject is assigned by USPS, how do you determine how to design for that subject?

With the koi post card stamp, the USPS came up with the subject of the koi. I had to do a lot of research on the koi. I manage to find two Chinese businesses in Chinatown that kept a 200-gallon tank with beautiful large koi and I based my two-koi paintings from the koi on these two from the tank.

I learned that there are two ways to view and admire the beauty of these fish. One is to view them from the top or from the side. I chose my composition of the koi by viewing them from the side.

The idea for the Lunar New Year stamp also came from the USPS. In fact, I am not the first artist illustrating this series. I am the second artist to be invited to illustrate the second series of Lunar New Year stamps. I had to come up with a concept for the new series; of course, I followed the previous series and utilized the animals from the Chinese Zodiac to adorn the stamp. Since the Rat is the first animal in the series, I did many sketches of the Rat. But I never felt it worked for me. The lunar New Year is so much more than an animal from the Chinese Zodiac. So, with the encouragement from Ethel Kessler, I decided to go with my heart and incorporate many of the Lunar New Year elements that I grew up with during this festive holiday as my concept for the second series of the Lunar New Year stamp.

### How does your style affect your final design, or how is your style reflected in the final design?

Because I love putting a lot of details into my paintings, I constantly



have to remind myself to hold back from adding too much. I also try to put more contrast into my painting so that the final design will be so much more effective when scaled down.

### What advice would you give to young designers?

My advice to young illustrators is that you have to have the passion to do what you are doing. In my case it took many sacrifices and hard work for me to be a good illustrator. Being lucky helps as well!

### Why do you love designing stamps? What's the best part about designing stamps?

I love illustrating stamps because I love painting. The stamp gives me a platform to express that and more. In the case of the Lunar New Year stamp, the illustration allowed me to share my beautiful Chinese culture with others and that was great. I have also met so many wonderful and interesting people through illustrating these stamps.

### What is the most difficult thing about illustrating/designing stamps?

In the case of the Lunar New Year series, I find the most difficult part is how to come up with an idea that is universally accepted by all the people involved in the process of creating the stamp and the intended audiences. I am always very nervous when Ethel Kessler shows my sketches or the final paintings to the stamp committee. I never know what the response will be.

I was also very nervous about the Asian community's acceptance of my concept for the Lunar New Year series. I felt I have to at least live up to the first series of Lunar New Year Stamp. I want the Lunar New Year stamp to be enjoyed by every one and that is a huge and difficult task.

### KAM MAK'S BIO

Kam Mak was born in Hong Kong. His family moved to the United States in 1971 and settled in New York City. His interest in painting was awakened through involvement with City Art

Workshop, an organization which enables inner-city youths to explore the arts. Mr. Mak continued to pursue his interest in painting while attending the School of Visual Arts on a full scholarship, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1984.

Mr. Mak's works has been exhibited at the Society of Illustrators Annual Exhibition, The Original Art show (dedicated to the best of children's picture books) and in a one-person show at the Brooklyn Public Library. He has illustrated over 200 paintings for book covers, magazine and editorial pieces for such client as, HarperCollins, St. Martins Press, Random House, National Geographic, Time magazine, Newsweek, and the New York Times. Mr. Mak's most recent art has graced the second series of the USPS lunar New Year stamps and also a new postcard stamp for the USPS adored with the fish Koi will be released in spring 2009.

### KAM MAK STAMP ILLUSTRATIONS



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Kam Mak Illustrator

## MICHAEL BARTALOS



### What inspired you to design for stamps? Or how did you end up designing your first stamp?

I've been inspired to design stamps ever since I collected them as a kid. But even as an illustrator I couldn't quite figure out how to go about offering the U.S. Postal Service my services. Incredibly, the Postal Service came to me. It happened when USPS art director Richard Sheaff saw some posters I'd designed for Barneys New York department store and thought the style might be suitable for a stamp. He contacted me to contribute ideas for a Marathon stamp, and it was truly a dream come true to have my design chosen. So I have Barney's art director Simon Doonan to thank for that, as well as Richard.

### What design methods do you use, especially when you have to consider the final scale of your work will be quite small?

I start out by sketching ideas at the actual size of the stamp to remind myself of the scale that the final art will be reproduced at. Then I take my favorite pencil drawings and refine them in the computer. I work on a Mac and render my final artwork in Adobe Illustrator. This vector program creates the kind of bold clean graphics that reproduce well at small sizes.

### How do you determine your subject or, if the subject is assigned by USPS, how do you determine how to design for that subject?

I start by researching the assigned subject, even if the topic is fairly familiar to me as in the case of

the Latin Jazz stamp. There's always something new to learn and to possibly incorporate into the imagery. At the very least, it helps me capture the spirit of the subject and achieve accuracy. Then I'll play up a descriptive aspect of the image in order to communicate the stamp's theme more effectively and iconically. For example, I emphasized the runner's legs and winged feet in the Marathon stamp, and exaggerated the conga player's hands for Latin Jazz.

### How does your style affect your final design, or how is your style reflected in the final design?

My style usually brings an element of playfulness and movement to the design. Conversely, the stamp's subject matter affects my approach. The topic may suggest a color palette or determine my lettering style (which is hand-rendered). Ultimately, I aim for an engaging graphic style that communicates effectively with a degree of sophistication.



### What advice would you give to young designers?

Cultivate a passion for your work. Immerse yourself in the art and design community and let your heroes inspire you and your colleagues motivate you.

### Why do you love designing stamps? What's the best part about designing stamps?

I enjoy offering audiences a unique take on familiar subjects. If I can create a fresh, memorable angle to the topic, I'll know I've succeeded. It's gratifying to educate and entertain through stamp design because it's a significant communications medium that reaches broad audiences around the world. And of course, it's an honor to join the echelon



of artists whose work has appeared on stamps. I'm specifically thinking of my art hero Stuart Davis whose "To the Fine Arts" stamp appeared in 1964.



### What is the most difficult thing about illustrating/designing stamps?

The most difficult thing is deciding which of my ideas to show the USPS Advisory Committee. I usually create dozens of concepts (over a hundred in the case of the Latin Jazz stamp) which need to be narrowed down to a reasonable quantity (6 or so) for presentation. I've come to depend on my wife Lili, a graphic designer, for a second (and expert!) opinion in the editing process.

### MICHAEL BARTALOS' BIO

Michael Bartalos attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Pratt Institute. He works extensively in the graphic arts in the U.S., Europe and Japan. His design commissions include the Marathon and Latin Jazz commemorative stamps for the USPS, Swatch watches, and display graphics for the Singapore Science Centre and Wimbledon 2009.

Bartalos also produces limited print editions and sculptural assemblages, and has created artist's book editions with New York's Purgatory Pie Press, Xerox Palo Alto Research Center, and Dolphin Press & Print at the Maryland Institute College of Art. His editions are in private and public collections including those of the Getty Research Center, MoMA, the Walker Art Center, and Yale and Stanford University.

In 2008 he was designated the California Academy of Science's first Affiliate Artist, and

he is currently a National Science Foundation grantee with the NSF Antarctic Artist's and Writer's Program.

Bartalos lives and works in San Francisco and serves on the board of the San Francisco Center for the Book. His work can be seen online at [www.bartalos.com](http://www.bartalos.com) and [www.bartalosillustration.com](http://www.bartalosillustration.com)

### MICHAEL BARTALOS' STAMP ILLUSTRATIONS





## NANCY STAHL



### What inspired you to design for stamps? Or how did you end up designing your first stamp?

I got a call from the designer, Carl Herrman and another from the head of stamp development in Washington, D.C., Terry McCaffery. They asked me if I was interested in doing illustrations for US Postal Service stamps. It was very exciting to be considered.

### What design methods do you use, especially when you have to consider the final scale of your work will be quite small?

One of the reasons they asked me to draw for them was that I work on the computer and draw using simple, graphic shapes, mostly dealing with flat color in a fairly bold way. They also knew that since I work digitally, I would be able to see my work stamp size to see how well the image would hold up once reduced.

### How do you determine your subject or, if the subject is assigned by USPS, how do you determine how to design for that subject?

It varies. When I was asked to do American animals, I started by researching photographs of animals that I thought would be fun to draw and lend themselves to the series, which I ended up drawing in tones of blue. The committee



chose the animals that I would work up into finished art.

For the 2007 Christmas stamps, I was told only to do something non-religious that would be warm and cozy. I began drawing angels, elves, ribbons and kept sketching various holiday items. At one point, I thought of mittens and then cropped in closer and closer until it became just the knitted motifs. Knitting is a passion so I was excited to knit my final art in that case.



### How does your style affect your final design, or how is your style reflected in the final design?

My style is simple and graphic. I try to stick to that for the stamp images.

### What advice would you give to young designers?

Persist..! If this is what you want to do, put your heart into it.

### Why do you love designing stamps? What's the best part about designing stamps?

The best part is receiving your own images on your mail. Everyone sees them. Everyone is familiar with postage stamps. So, if someone asks what I do for a living, I can tell them something that they recall having used. It's great.

### What is the most difficult thing about illustrating/designing stamps?

The process can sometimes take years. I am used to quick deadlines for newspapers and magazines with the art appearing the next

day or next week. When working on stamps, I have had them come back for changes up to two years later because of the long approval process. It's only truly done when it's printed and that can take a long, long time.

## NANCY STAHL'S BIO

Nancy Stahl studied illustration at Art Center College of Design for two years. She moved to New York City to begin her freelance career in 1971 and continued to study by taking classes at The School of Visual Arts and Parsons School of Design.

During her three decades of illustrating, Nancy Stahl's work has become woven into our culture. Assignments that have ranged from editorial to packaging, postage stamps, corporate identity, and television commercials have brought her work into the mainstream of everyday visuals.

## NANCY STAHL'S STAMP ILLUSTRATIONS



# Appendix C

## ANSWER KEYS

### Answers Shown in Green

#### PAGE 6

#### LESSON 1 WORKSHEET: HISTORY OF A STAMP AND ITS INFORMATIVE PARTS

Stamp .....	Proof of payment for mail delivery
The Penny Black .....	First stamp in the world
Rowland Hill .....	Invented the idea of stamps
Stamp Design .....	Represents national identity and prevents counterfeit
Perforations .....	Tiny holes around a stamp
Cancellation marks .....	Prevents re-use of stamps
Informative Parts of a stamp .....	Subject, Country of Origin, and Stamp Value
First U.S. Stamps.....	Had Ben Franklin and George Washington on it

#### PAGE 7

#### LESSON 1 WORKSHEET: HISTORY OF A STAMP AND ITS INFORMATIVE PARTS

What is the Subject on the stamp?
Answer: The Very Hungry Caterpillar
How much is the Stamp Value?
Answer: 39 cents
Where is the Country of Origin?
Answer: USA

#### PAGE 13

#### LESSON 2 WORKSHEET: SELECTING A SUBJECT

U.S. Flag
Cotton Candy
Abraham Lincoln
Fireworks
U.S. Capitol Building

#### PAGE 23

#### LESSON 3 WORKSHEET: DESIGNING A STAMP

Typography	Unity	Rhythm
Line	Shape	Color
Value	Proportion	



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