

In the year 1840 the 'Penny Post' was the first-time stamps like the ones we use today were introduced. The first stamp was created by a man named Sir Rowland Hill. It was known as the Penny Black and was first introduced on 1st May 1840. Although you could buy the new stamp on the 1st May it was not officially used until 6th May 1840.

Before the introduction of the Penny Black the British mail system was expensive and slow. It was common for the recipient of the letter to have to pay for the postage on delivery and letters were charged by the number of sheets and distance it was being sent. As the recipient was required to pay for the letter if they did not want it, or had no money, then it would have been a wasted journey.



Penny Black, 1840



Rowland Hill took an interest in postal reform whilst living at Bruce Castle and suggested an adhesive stamp be introduced that would allow letters of a certain weight to be delivered for one penny regardless of where it was being sent.

In the first year after introducing the Penny Black the number of letters sent in the UK doubled. However, the Penny Black lasted less than a year and in February 1841 it was replaced by the Penny Red.

The stamp design in the above image shows a portrait of the reigning sovereign of the time – Queen Victoria. The stamp had two words written on it – Postage at the top which signified it was used for postage and One Penny at the bottom showing the amount of the stamp.

Today (180 years after the introduction of the Penny Black) adhesive stamps are used all over the world, although they no longer cost One Penny. Modern British stamps still have a portrait or silhouette of the current reigning monarch. The stamp on the right shows our current monarch Queen Elizabeth II.

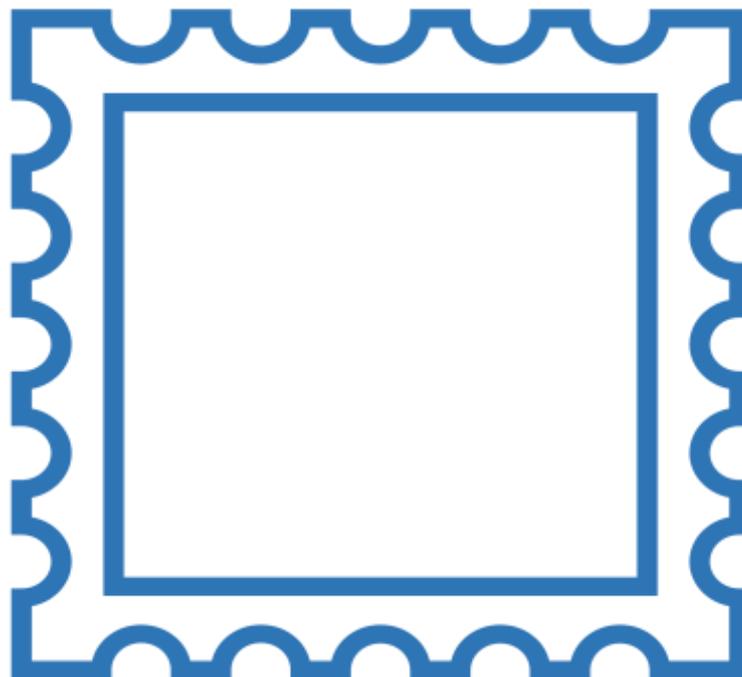


As well as the main stamps, you will sometimes see special stamps with different designs to commemorate important events. The stamp on the right was designed to celebrate the London Olympics in 2012. Although the design still contains a picture of the monarch in the top corner.



Activity: Why not have a go at designing your own stamp?

Try your own design for a special stamp to celebrate something special to you. The design should be clear and simple so that it looks good even though it is small.



Post Word Search

See if you can find all the words in our Post word search....

L	E	T	T	E	R	O	B	N	X
C	Q	S	U	P	Y	J	H	F	D
R	P	O	S	T	B	O	X	S	A
T	Y	E	C	T	V	W	E	O	H
N	E	D	S	N	A	R	L	H	I
T	G	W	H	K	L	M	A	E	L
S	E	D	F	T	Y	L	P	W	L
O	N	K	L	E	H	S	O	Z	N
P	E	N	N	Y	B	L	A	C	K

- LETTER
- POST
- STAMP
- PENNYBLACK
- HILL
- POSTBOX