

Postage Stamps

celebrating biodiversity or country definitives

Background: Special Stamp Programme

Royal Mail's Special Stamp programme is developed with regard to a number of criteria that include the following:

- to commemorate important anniversaries
- to commemorate events of national importance, as well as significant contemporary UK successes on the international stage
- to reflect the contribution of the UK to world affairs in the broadest range of activities, from the arts and humanities to science and technology
- to explore 'the British way of life', celebrating the diversity of cultures and interests within the UK
- to contribute to the cultural life of the UK through the patronage of art and design, and thereby act as a showcase for the best of contemporary British creative talent

The programme is also designed to include a variety of subjects, imagery and techniques in order to appeal to the interests and tastes of different groups over the year's programme.

Students should choose one from the following two briefs (or submit concepts for both if desired):

Option one: Celebrating biodiversity

Biodiversity is the term used to describe the variety of life on earth. It is extremely broad in its scope as it spans the diversity of all living things, from human beings to micro-organisms, as well as the diversity of the habitats in which they live and the genetic variety within species. It touches every aspect of life personally, locally and globally, so it is of vital importance that biodiversity is conserved and protected to ensure our future quality of life.

The purpose of this brief is to explore the significance and importance of biodiversity and then translate this into designs for postage stamps in order to create and heighten awareness around the subject. This is a rich and multi-faceted subject, and an opportunity to inspire, educate or surprise.

The set will feature six stamps, featuring the Queen's head and values 1st, 52p, 56p, 62p, 81p, 90p (note: do not include the 'p' in the designs). Any of the stamp template sizes supplied electronically may be used but students are invited to make new recommendations within these general size

constraints. However, the design must work within a maximum depth of 37mm.

Option two: Country definitives

Each country in the UK has its own defined history and heritage and, in 1999, Royal Mail introduced a set of Country Definitive stamps to represent England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in this unique way. For each country a set of four stamps was developed: one of the stamps featuring the particular national emblem of each country, the other three featuring iconic images from that country.

The brief here is to explore a fresh take on these definitives, capturing the cultural essence, rich history and national identity of each country in a visually exciting way that would be a delight to use on post. The design solution should cover four stamps from each country: a total of 16 stamps.

Each country definitive set will feature four stamps, featuring the Queen's head and the values 2nd, 1st, 56p, and 90p (again, do not include the 'p' in the designs). The size of 20.3 mm x 24.1 mm (standard definitive), must be used.

General information pertaining to both briefs:

The target audience for each brief is broad, as the topics will strike a chord with young and old; stamp collectors and general public.

We encourage contributions from designers, illustrators, photographers, typographers, painters, etc as well as collaborative projects.

The images created should work at stamp size, in isolation and as part of a set. The approach should engage as broad a range of the public as possible.

In undertaking your background research, please only contact related organisations for the purposes of obtaining information packs that would be available to the general public; please do not discuss the project with them.

Those choosing option one should note that 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity, so there is plenty of information available on the Internet and an excellent resource is the WWF website.

RSA

Some recent similar issues are Royal Mail Action for Species series which include: Endangered Birds 2007, Endangered Insects 2008 and Endangered Plants 2009.

For option two, examples of existing Country Definitives can be found at: http://www.royalmail.com/portal/rm/shop?catId=9300091&pageType=Others&pageId=shp_prddetails&product=prod36310071&parentCategoryId=cat45990010&categoryId=cat45990011. (Please note these visuals are shown as stamps within postcards – reference stamps only)

Market

- a stamp is a receipt for a service and is available to anyone within the UK wishing to use the postal service
- this service covers the globe and therefore the stamp is an ambassador for the UK when posted to overseas destinations
- a new and younger generation of stamp collector

Aims

- to produce an innovative response that goes beyond conventional treatments and styles – look at recent examples of innovation in stamp design
- to demonstrate originality of thought and approach based on sound research

Guidelines

When considering the design of a stamp, it is important to remember the following points:

- think on a small scale from the outset
- the Queen's head must appear top right or left facing towards the design and must be in a correct relationship with the overall stamp size. This is shown on the digital templates available from the Resources link on the Postage Stamps web page. If using overlays, ensure they are easily lifted to reveal the original artwork
- once research is complete and decisions have been made on your overall approach, preliminary visuals should be reviewed at stamp size
- since a stamp on an envelope is evidence of the pre-payment for postage, and because the recipient is primarily interested in the content of the envelope, each stamp must convey an immediate message
- design should combine clarity with an attention to detail
- there should be a clear visual distinction between one stamp design and another to ensure that there is no confusion between the different values when the stamps are being sold at the post office counter

Submission details

State clearly on your boards and labels which option you have entered. Entries must comply with the following:

- A3 boards showing the six designs (Celebrating biodiversity) or 16 designs (Country definitives), ideally rendered four times larger than actual size
- A3 board/s showing reductions of the stamps at actual size
- two A3 boards demonstrating the development of the thought process from the original research to final concept
- a short, typewritten text (max. 50-100 words only, sans serif, 14pt) expressing your 'big idea', to help position your proposal
- one sketchbook only, related to the brief (optional: to be submitted only if the applicant wishes)
- the price may appear anywhere provided it is legible; it should not appear over an intricately textured area
- overall, the design of the stamps should produce a consistent and cohesive visual impression within a set
- all work, except sketchbook, should be submitted on A3 lightweight card and carry an RSA label on the back; do not submit work in plastic sleeves or on foam board, metal, wood or Perspex, or in boxes; these requirements are in the interests of students to ensure the safety of their work whilst in storage and transit, and to ensure that it can be displayed for judging