Stamp Collecting Fun: A Beginner’s Guide to Stamp Collecting
Who Is This Guy?

- Solon Resident
- Almost 40-year collector
- Professional Dealer
- Membership committee chair, American Philatelic Society
Why Collect Stamps?

- Colorful images
- Real-life stories
- Variety of topics: art, science, math, history, literature, geography...
- Treasure Hunt
- Academic Pursuit
- It’s the liberal arts college of hobbies!
Why Collect Stamps?
The Most Important Reason

Stamp Collecting (philately) Is FUN!
What to Collect?

- Countries
- Specific Issues
- Topics
- Types
- Everything
- Anything

Commemorative

Color

Scott # C11

Topical

Great Britain
It’s Dessert Night!
You Can Collect Whatever You Imagine

The American Topical Association - www.americantopicalassn.org - has hundreds of checklists for different topics
What is a postage stamp?

- Prepays a service AND
- Issued or approved by government or postal service
First Stamps

Penny Black and Mulready Envelope
First U.S. Stamps

1847: Washington and Franklin
What Came Before Stamps?
Later (U.S.) Firsts

1857

1918
Self Adhesives
Elements of Postage

1. Country name
2. Denomination
3. Topic
4. Perforations
5. Postmark
6. Cancellation
7. Color of stamp
Commemorative Stamps

- Important person, place, or event
- Limited quantity
- Available less than 1 year
Definitive Stamps

- “Postal workhorse”
- Printed in large quantities
- Remain on sale for indefinite time
Special Stamps

- Supplemental issues
- Love & Holidays
- Semipostals
- Other Special Purpose Stamps (airmail, express mail, etc)
Souvenir Sheets

- Mini-sheet
- One or more stamps
- Commemorative inscription or artwork
Cinderellas / Labels

- Fantasy: nonexistent authorities
- Bogus: entity exists but did not issue
- Facsimiles: imitations
- Exhibition seals, local revenues, poster stamps
Revenue Stamps

- Documentary
- Excise Tax
- Transfer Tax
- Hunting
- Savings
- Many More
Stamp Formats

- Booklet
- Coil
- Sheets
- Stationery
Postmarks and Cancellations

- Fancy
- Slogan
- Meter
- Pictorials
Types of Covers

- First day
- Event
- Flight
Postal History
Tools

- Magnifier
- Tongs
- Mounting
- Perf Gauge
- Literature
Magic Marks

- Watermarks
- Microprinting
- Hidden images
- Phosphorescent ink/Tagging
Stamp Catalogs

Scott
Michel
Stanley Gibbons
Zumstein
Yvert
Catalog Listing

- Scott no.
- Illustration no.
- Country
- Denomination
- Year of Issue
- Mint/Used values
Stamp Condition

- Fine – Very Fine
- Very Fine
- Extremely Fine
- Fine – Very Fine
- Very Fine
- Extremely Fine
# Gum Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gum Categories:</th>
<th>MINT N.H.</th>
<th>ORIGINAL GUM (O.G.)</th>
<th>NO GUM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td><img src="image1" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Image" /></td>
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- **Mint Never Hinged**: Free from any disturbance
- **Lightly Hinged**: Faint impression of a removed hinge over a small area
- **Hinge Mark or Remnant**: Prominent hinged spot with part or all of the hinge remaining
- **Large part o.g.**: Approximately half or more of the gum intact
- **Small part o.g.**: Approximately less than half of the gum intact
- **No gum**: Only if issued with gum

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commonly Used Symbol:</th>
<th>★★★</th>
<th>★</th>
<th>★</th>
<th>★</th>
<th>★</th>
<th>(★)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1900 issues</td>
<td>Very fine pre-1900 stamps in these categories trade at a premium over Scott value</td>
<td>Scott Value for “Unused”</td>
<td>Scott Value for “Unused” (Actual value will be affected by the degree of hinging of the full o.g.)</td>
<td>Scott “No Gum” listings for selected unused classic stamps</td>
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<tr>
<td>From 1900 to breakpoints for listings of never-hinged stamps</td>
<td>Scott “Never Hinged” listings for selected unused stamps</td>
<td>Scott Value for “Unused”</td>
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<tr>
<td>From breakpoints noted for many countries</td>
<td>Scott Value for “Unused”</td>
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These stamps have values of $.25, $1.75, $4.00, and $40,000. Can you tell the difference?
Where to Find Stamps

- Your mailbox
- Friends, businesses, institutions
- Stamp Shows and Local Clubs
- Post office and postal administrations,
- The Internet – Ebay
- APS
Organization

- Albums
- Stock books
- Stock sheets
- Envelopes
Hinges
Mounts
Soaking

- Water
- Paper towels
- Wax paper
- Pitcher
- Bowls
Storage

- Temperature
- Humidity
- Light
- Pressure
- Acidity
Collecting With Purpose

- Have a focus or a plan
- Stay organized
- Get the literature
- Assume the cheapest variety
- Keep a list
- …and let yourself be distracted!
Investing in Stamps

- In a word, DON’T
- retail v. wholesale
- specialized knowledge

Think of it as a hobby with some residual value
The Nation’s Stamp Club

100 Match Factory Place
Bellefonte, PA 16823
814-933-3803
www.stamps.org