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## PREVIEW

## RECREATION AND HOBBIES

LESSON 1: **Collecting Stamps**LESSON 2: **Fishing Guide**LESSON 3: **Community Centers**LESSON 4: **Cycling**

When you complete this unit, you will be able to answer questions like these:

- *How little could you spend for a stamp that is 125 years old?*
- *Where could you look for listings of upcoming recreational events in your community?*
- *What kind of lures are good for catching striped bass?*
- *What's the difference between a mountain bike and a hybrid bike?*

## PRETEST

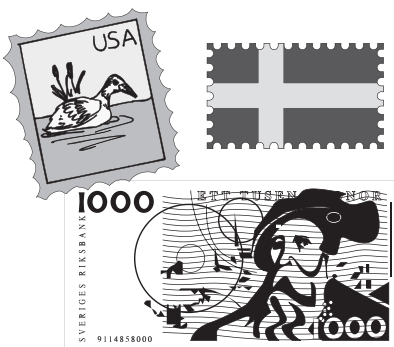
Write **T** or **F** to show whether you think each statement is *true* or *false*.

1. \_\_\_\_ Stamps with printing errors are worth more than stamps that are perfectly printed.
2. \_\_\_\_ Touring bikes are especially designed for commuters who carry heavy backpacks.
3. \_\_\_\_ Ticket prices may be high for events that are held to benefit a worthy cause.
4. \_\_\_\_ The first U.S. postage stamps went on sale more than 200 years ago.
5. \_\_\_\_ The “grandfather” of the modern bicycle was called a cyclotron.
6. \_\_\_\_ Local museums usually have reduced rates for children and senior citizens.

## COLLECTING STAMPS

**Before reading. . .**

Do you know a philatelist? Are *you* one, by any chance? Stamp collecting is one of the most popular collecting hobbies in the world. It has been called “the king of hobbies and the hobby of kings.” Students of stamps are called *philatelists*. The name comes from two Greek words—*philos*, meaning “love,” and *stelos*, meaning “paid.” Stamps are signs that the postage has been paid.



### THE HISTORY OF STAMP COLLECTING

No one knows exactly when stamp collecting started. It probably occurred right after the first stamp was issued. We do know that the first stamp catalog was published in 1864. Since then, stamp catalogs have been published in almost every country.

People soon discovered that some stamps were harder to find than others. Why? Because smaller quantities were printed. Finding these rarer stamps became a challenge to early collectors. They soon began to trade rare stamps and sell them to each other. Prices were low in the beginning. But as more and more people collected stamps, prices began to go up.

Then some stamps with printing errors first appeared. Perhaps the center illustration was printed upside down. Perhaps the wrong kind of paper or ink was used. Since such errors were usually very rare, these stamps became greatly valued. Soon, well-developed collections of rare stamps became important investments—as valuable as collections of fine art jewelry.

#### FAMOUS “FIRSTS”

*May 6, 1840:* Great Britain issues the first stamps to prepay postage on letters. The first stamp cost one penny and is now known as the “Penny Black.”

*July 1, 1847:* America’s first postage stamps go on sale. One stamp, which costs five cents, features a portrait of Benjamin Franklin, the first Postmaster General. The 10-cent stamp issued at the same time pictures George Washington, Revolutionary War hero and the first U.S. president.

## DIFFERENCES IN STAMPS

Many stamps look the same to a beginning collector. But to a philatelist, small differences in stamps mean a great deal. What do they look for? Things such as the paper and inks used, the way the stamps are separated, the printing process, and the postal history.

## THE VOCABULARY OF STAMPS

Stamps are available in *used* or *mint* condition. A used stamp has actually been used for postage. The stamp will bear a cancellation mark, and the gum will be missing from the back. A mint stamp is in good, uncanceled condition.

The first stamps weren't easy to separate. Post office clerks and stamp users had to cut them apart. These stamps are said to be *imperforate*. Modern stamps have rows of small holes that allow them to be separated quickly and easily. These holes, or *perforations*, were developed in 1847.

*Watermarks* are faint patterns impressed into paper when it is manufactured. To discourage counterfeiting, the U.S. once used a watermark consisting of the letters *USPS*. Today, watermarks are no longer used on U.S. stamps.

Stamps that honor important people, places, and events are called *commemoratives*. These special stamps are usually larger and more colorful than regular stamps. They are printed in limited quantities and sold only for a limited time.

Regular stamps—the kind most often used on everyday mail—are called *definitives*. These are the “workhorses” of the stamp world. They are often reprinted over a period of several years. This time span results in subtle differences between stamps that at first appear to be the same.

### FASCINATING FACTS

- The rarest stamp in the world is the British Guiana one-penny stamp of 1856. Only *one* of its kind has ever been found!
- America's rarest stamp, the one-cent Z grill of 1868, is currently valued at 2.5 million dollars.
- America's largest stamp, the Mars Pathfinder, was issued in 1997. Measuring three inches by one and a half inches, it also has hidden images that are detectable only with a decoder lens.
- The first triangle-shaped U.S. postage stamps were also issued in 1997. They picture a stagecoach and a clipper ship.



## WHY PEOPLE COLLECT STAMPS

Not all people collect stamps because they are rare or special. Many collectors simply enjoy the pictures of out-of-the-way places and things. Some people collect stamps from one country only. Others collect only stamps showing birds or ships or railroads. Still others collect stamps of only one color, such as purple stamps. Specialists may collect just one issue—or varieties of one issue. Your reasons for collecting stamps don't matter, as long as you are having fun!

- Stamps are history you can hold in your hand. They can take you wherever you want to go in the past—from the American Revolution to the Wild West and into outer space.
- “Armchair travelers” can satisfy their wanderlust by collecting stamps from all around the world.
- Getting started doesn't cost much. For about 75 cents, you can buy a canceled U.S. stamp that is more than 125 years old.

### COMPREHENSION

Write **T** or **F** if the statement is *true* or *false*. Write **NI** if there is *no information* in the reading to help you make a judgment.

1. \_\_\_\_ The British Guiana one-penny stamp of 1856 is the largest stamp in the world.
2. \_\_\_\_ Stamps are kept in glassine envelopes until they are mounted in an album.
3. \_\_\_\_ The word *philatelist*, meaning stamp collector, was formed by combining two Greek words.
4. \_\_\_\_ Very small differences in stamps can make a very big difference in how much they are worth.
5. \_\_\_\_ In the United States, stamps were sold for the first time in the middle of the 18th century.
6. \_\_\_\_ *Commemorative* stamps are sold only for a limited time period.
7. \_\_\_\_ A stamp in *mint* condition is worth more than a used stamp.
8. \_\_\_\_ London, England, is the stamp-collecting capital of the world.