

The PhilateliKid

The newsletter for Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids (SCCFK)

Collect Stamps (The Most Educational Hobby)

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Catalogs

For a stamp collector, sooner or later questions arise like the following:

1. I have a stamp that says RSA on it. What country is that?
2. I have a 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, and 4¢ stamp that appear to be part of a series. Are there more stamps in this series?
3. I have a stamp that is identical with another I have, except that the perforations are different. Are these the same stamp? If not, how many different perforations (or lack of any perforations) exist for this same stamp?
4. I have a stamp that is identical with another stamp, except one is red and another is green. These appear to be two different stamps. Are they?
5. I have a stamp that says **Air Mail** on it. What does that mean? Can I buy an Air Mail stamp today at the Post Office?
6. I have a stamp that says Internal Revenue on it, and also Stock Transfer. It is not cancelled. Can I use it to mail a letter?
7. I have a stamp that says \$10,000 on it. Is this stamp worth \$10,000?
8. I have a stamp that appears to have its perforations cut off on all four sides. It has wide margins though on all four sides. I can even see a portion of an adjacent stamp on one of the sides. Is this a damaged stamp?
9. I want to buy a stamp, but I have no idea what a fair price is. How do I find out?
10. I have a stamp with what appears to be an overprint on it saying GUAM. Is this official, or did somebody just decide to print that on it?
11. I have a coil stamp with a tiny number at the bottom. Is this something collectible? If so, how many different numbers are there?

If you have questions like these, what you need is a catalog. In the United States, a company named Scott Publishing Co., which is a division of Amos Press, Inc., publishes catalogs that answer these questions, and a lot more. The name of the catalog that is just for United States Stamps is **2022 Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers**. There are catalogs for foreign countries also, issued by Scott. These catalogs

are commonly called “Scott Catalogs.” When using one, it is important to note the year. Prices change (usually higher) over a period of time, so a catalog that has an old date, say 2000, **SHOULD NOT BE USED IN DETERMINING CURRENT VALUE**. Every year a new edition is published, containing not only new stamps, but also new prices for older stamps. This catalog is now well over 1,000 pages long, is in full color, and is very reasonably priced at less than \$200. It is the “bible” for collectors of US stamps.

btw Scott uses the spelling “Catalogue” for its catalogs. I do not know why, My guess its that the longer spelling uses up a little more ink and space, so it gives the illusion to the buyer that he is getting more for his money. (lol)

In order to be able to use any catalog, the most important thing to do is to read the introduction. The Scott Catalogue for the United States has about one hundred (100) pages of introduction. Few, if any people, have read the whole thing, but some parts of it are very important to understand, such as how the catalog values the stamps it lists, and what criteria are required t be met in order for a stamp to be listed in the catalog.

Some countries issue stamps that are never used in that country for postage, and in quantities that far exceed the needs of that country. These stamps are printed to be sold to stamp collectors, and can be quite a bit of fun to collect. The catalog may not list these stamps, which helps the collector to be on the alert that they may not be worth the face value – even if unused! So far the United States Postal Service has not been guilty of that practice, although there are some stamps that have been issued imperforate, without gum, (that are available perforated with gum) that were obviously printed and sold primarily to collectors. It is an Editorial decision what to include, and what to exclude. The mere fact that a stamp is included does NOT mean that you want to collect it, and the fact that a stamp is excluded does NOT mean that you should not collect it. Those types of decisions are totally up to you as a collector. However, be aware that if a stamp is NOT listed in the catalog, you will most likely find it difficult to sell, because, for starts, how do you identify it?

Scott Catalogues begin with number 1 for the earliest stamp issued by a country, and then list additional stamps issued (mostly) chronologically. This is helpful, but also can be quite confusing. For example: Scott 2463, a 20¢ green stamp featuring a cog railway locomotive and tender, was issued on June 9, 1995, yet the very next stamp listed, Scott 2464, a 23¢ stamp featuring a lunch wagon, was issued April 12, 1991 – over 4 years earlier. Another challenge is different CATEGORIES of stamps. In 1983 the USPS issued a set of stamps featuring different sports categories at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic games. A complete set of these stamps is Scott 2048 through 2051, featuring discus, high jump, archery, and boxing. They were issued on July 28, 1983. But that is

only part of the set. About 200 pages later on the Scott Catalogue is the rest of the set. Scott C101 through C104 stamps featuring women's gymnastics, hurdles, women's basketball, and soccer were issued on June 17, 1983. Scott C105 through C108 were issued over 2 months *earlier* on April 8, 1983 featuring shot put, men's gymnastics, women's swimming, and weight lifting. Finally, Scott C109 through C112 were issued much later, November 4, 1983 featuring women's fencing, cycling, women's volleyball, and pole vaulting. The two categories of stamps, separated by over 200 pages, are regular issues and Air Mail issues. These can be told apart by the fact that Scott Catalogues identify certain stamps as "air mail" stamps and lists them later in the catalog as a separate category, with the numbers beginning with the capital letter "C."

To complicate matters even more, there is a stamp identified as Scott 1341, that the Post Office issued and stated that it was to be used to pay postage and fees for airmailed articles. That Scott number for that stamp, clearly to be used for airmailed letters and packages, does not start with a capital "C" and is to be found hundreds of pages before the other stamps in Scott identified as airmail.

A phrase used among stamp collectors is **BOB**. No... that is not a nickname for "Robert," but an abbreviation, of sorts, for **BACK OF THE BOOK**. The book referred to is the Scott Catalogue, and the "back" of it refers to all stamps listed after the main section in the beginning of the book that lists definitive stamps (issued for long periods of time) and commemorative stamps (issued for short periods of time.)

BOB includes a huge variety of stamps, and stamp-like objects such as printed envelopes and postcards that contain a pre-printed value on them, and non-stamp items such as Christmas Seals. Also, the US Specialized Scott Catalogue has in its BOB stamps from US Territories, and other countries related to the United States such as the Kingdom of Hawaii, the Republic of Hawaii, the Confederate States of America, Ryuku, and the United Nations.

This month we will begin a series of discussions about BOB stamps, and (mostly) follow the Scott Catalogue in our discussions.

Stamps beginning with the prefix "B."

Stamps in Scott that begin with the prefix "B" are **SEMI-POSTAL** stamps. That means that they are valid for postage on letters and packages, but the cost of the stamp is higher than the face value, and the additional amount is collected by the USPS and given to a worthy cause identified on the stamp. Although semi-postal stamps have been used in many countries around the world for about 100 years, the very first semi-postal stamp in the United States did not get issued until July 29, 1998.

The first semi-postal stamp by the USPS is identified in Scott as stamp B1. It originally sold for 40¢, which paid the 32¢ postage for a one-ounce letter, and the additional 8¢ for each stamp went to Cancer research. The wording on the stamp says “Breast Cancer. Fund the Fight. Find the Cure.” There is a tiny date in the lower left margin. The stamp features a line drawing of the upper half of a woman with hair flowing straight out and with her right arm raised and her left arm by her side. In the background is a line drawing of what appears to be a building on fire. Other than the words, there is little to connect the picture with the cause. This stamp is still for sale today, and has raised millions of dollars for breast cancer research.



B1

There are only 5 other semi-postal stamps that the United States has ever issued.

B2 was issued on June 2, 2002 to raise funds for the families of firefighters and other emergency relief personnel who were disabled or dies as a result of their efforts to rescue people in the 9-11-2001 attack on the World Trade Center.

B3 was issued October 8, 2003 to raise funds for efforts to reduce domestic violence.

B4 is a stamp featuring the face of a tiger, raising money to Save Vanishing Species.

B5 is a reissue of B1 with a tiny date at the bottom (beneath “USA”) different from the original. It is still available for purchase at Post Offices for 75¢.

B6 is a drawing, apparently in a haze, of a person’s head. I am unable to tell if it is a man or a woman. Probably that was intentional. It raises money for Alzheimer awareness.

B7 is the last semi-postal ever issued by the USPS. It features a green plant on a black background and says “Healing PTSD.” PTSD is the initials of **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**, a disorder often found among military personnel who have seen and experienced death and trauma during their time in the Armed Forces. There are more than 3 million cases of PTSD diagnosed every year in the United States. **B5**



Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are greatly appreciated and if \$10 or more you will be sent a written receipt. You also can donate via PayPal on our website - www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org or www.yummystampcollecting.org which redirects you to the same website.