

THE BRITISH
POSTAL
MUSEUM
& ARCHIVE

The Penny Black



*Changed the
World*



 Heritage
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Key Stage 2
education pack

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The Penny Black

The Penny Black stamp first went on sale in May 1840. It was the world's first ever postage stamp and is now an icon of the Victorian era. The Penny Black represents the beginning of the global communications revolution and the achievements of Victorian Britain. This pack illustrates how the postal reform connected to the introduction of the Penny Black was part of the wider picture of social change during the nineteenth century.

How to use this pack

This pack provides a range of historical sources and lesson ideas linked to the KS2 History curriculum on the Victorians. The materials have been developed from the documents and photographs contained within The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA).

This teachers' booklet is organised into themes relating to different topics. It also contains many cross-curricular lesson ideas for a more topic-based approach to the Victorians and photocopyable worksheets.

All of the pack, including the facsimiles and supplementary material, can be downloaded free from www.postalheritage.org.uk/learning offering additional opportunities for ICT work. The Online Gallery, containing images from the pack and other items from the collection, provides opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills and learn more about Victorian social history. These web-based materials are ideal for use with interactive whiteboards and overhead projectors. The Glossary can be used for Literacy work based around key words and explains the more specialised terms in this pack.

The Phillips Collection

In 1965 Sir Reginald Phillips donated to the nation his collection of Victorian stamps and documents relating to the Penny Black and subsequent postal developments. This pack is part of a larger project to digitise the entire Phillips collection, which was supported by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. The digitisation project was developed in response to demands for making this collection more accessible to the public as well as to help with its preservation by minimising the need for handling. The entire Phillips Collection can be seen online at: www.postalheritage.org.uk/collections

Key Stage 2 and 5-14 Curriculum Links

All the activities in this pack link to the KS2 and 5-14 curriculum, in particular with History and Literacy. It provides a stimulating way for children to explore British social history, through exploring the impact of postal reform on all aspects of Victorian life. The activities provide opportunities for children to link their everyday experience of the post with people in the past and learn about the changes that have occurred.

Key National Curriculum Links

11a) Victorian Britain: A study of significant individuals, events and changes in work and transport on the lives of men, women and children from different sections of society.

More detailed links can be found in the table on page 45 and table of activities on page 46.



Glossary

Adhesive — glue

Boy Messenger — a boy who delivered telegraphs

British Empire — territories under British control; was at its height during Queen Victoria's reign

Brunel, Isambard Kingdom (1806-1859) — famous engineer who developed tunnels, ships and railways during the Victorian era

Cancellation — the mark to show the stamp has been used for postage. Also known as a postmark.

Chromatography — a process used for the separation of different mixtures

Commemorative stamp — issued to honour or commemorate a person, place or event. Introduced in Britain in 1924.

Cross-written letter — letter written both horizontally and vertically in order to make the maximum use of the paper. This frequently happened before the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage, as postage was charged by the number of sheets of paper used.

Die — the original metal block with the stamp design engraved on it

Embossing — the creation of a raised mark on the surface of paper or other material through the use of special tools

Essay — a trial design printed at stamp size. Serves as a 'dry run' of the actual printing of the stamps to uncover design problems not detected in the artwork or problems in reproducing the designer's choice of colour.

Forgery — an illegal copy of something, such as a painting or money

Fugitive Inks — inks that run when combined with water or other substances

Hen and Chickens — a cycle with a large central driving wheel and four smaller wheels at the corner, invented in 1882

Hill, Rowland (1795-1879) — inventor of the first prepaid postage stamp, the Penny Black, introduced in 1840

Industrialisation — a process of social and economic change where society is transformed from agricultural to more machine driven

Jubilee — the celebration of the day on which an important event happened; Silver Jubilee celebrates an event 25 years before; Golden Jubilee celebrates an event 50 years before; Diamond Jubilee celebrates an event 60 years before

Lamp box — small post box designed to be fixed onto a lamp

Letter box — slit cut into a door for delivery of mail; also generic name for pillar, lamp and wall boxes

Line engraving — an engraving in which lines are cut by hand into a metal plate from which the print is made

Mail Coach — horse drawn coach used for the delivery of mail; discontinued with the arrival of the railways in the 1830s

Manufacturing — production of goods in large numbers, usually in a factory using machines

Morse Code — a system of representing letters, numbers and punctuation marks by means of a code system

Mulready envelope — pictorial stationery issued in 1840 named after William Mulready the artist. Attempted solution to the problem of prepayment of post. Rejected after much ridicule.

Mulready, William (1786-1863) — an Irish painter who lived in London. He was a member of the Royal Academy; designed the Mulready envelope.

Ocean Penny Postage — campaign for cheap overseas postage, led by American Elihu Burritt

Packet boat — a cargo and passenger boat that also carries mail, including packets of government documents

Penny Black — the world's first prepaid adhesive postage stamp, introduced in Britain in 1840

Perforation — holes between the stamps so that they can be easily separated

Glossary (continued)

Philately – the study of stamps

Phillips Collection – collection of Victorian stamps, donated to the nation by RM Phillips in 1965; the basis for the material in this education pack

Pillar box – freestanding box for people to post their letters, usually painted red

Population – the number of people who live in a place

Post Codes – a way of dividing areas into specific postal districts

Postmaster General – government appointed head of the Post Office

Post Office Savings Bank – opened in 1861 to encourage people to save

Proof – a trial impression taken from an original die or plate

Queen Victoria (1819-1901) – Britain's longest reigning monarch (1837-1901)

Rainbow Trials – series of trials designed to find inks that could not be removed by chemicals or water for use on postage stamps and cancellation marks

Royal Cipher – letters that show which monarch was on the throne: VR on a pillar box means Victoria Regina – Queen Victoria

Rural – relating to the countryside

Telegram – a message sent by telegraph

Telegraph – a system in which information is communicated over a wire with a series of electrical current pulses, usually in the form of Morse Code

Travelling Post Office – special train carriages that enable mail to be sorted on the way to its destination

Treasury Competition – competition set up by the Treasury for people to submit ideas about how prepaid postage should be developed

Trollope, Anthony (1815-1882) – Post Office surveyor who introduced pillar boxes to Britain in the 1850s; now more famous as an author

Urban – relating to a town or city

Watermark – security device or pattern, embodied in the paper to deter forgeries. Used in Penny Black but discontinued 1967.

Wax Seal – used to fasten letters and documents before the introduction of envelopes

Table of facsimiles

No.	Facsimile	Source	Link
1	First day cover from Newport Pagnell	Phillips Collection Vol. IV (POST 141/4) p.3	p.4
2	Cross-written letter	BPMA Philatelic Collection	p.11
3	Notice to Postmasters	Phillips Collection Vol. III (POST 141/3) p.5	p.14
4	Hand painted Mulready	Phillips Collection Vol. II (POST 141/2) p.20	p.20
5	Victorian and Albert Ball pictorial envelope	Phillips Collection Vol. IX (POST 141/9) p.34	p.23
6	Ocean Penny Postage envelope	Phillips Collection Vol. IX (POST 141/9) p.41	p.23
7	Telegram from Cornelius Murphy, c.1870	BPMA Inland Telegrams File 1870-90	p.25
8	Letter slits notice	BPMA Philatelic Collection	p.30
9	Victorian stamps	Phillips Collection	p.34
10	Jubilee Commemorative card	Phillips Collection Vol. IX (POST 141/9) p.49	p.42

Curriculum links

	Using Evidence	Rowland Hill	The Penny Black	Communication & Transportation	Victorian Innovations	Did the Penny Black Change the World?
1. Chronological understanding						
1a) Place events, people and changes into correct periods of time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1b) Use dates and vocabulary relating to the passing of time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past						
2a) About characteristic features of the periods and societies studied	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2c) To identify and describe reasons for, and results of, historical events, situations and changes in the period described	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Historical interpretation						
3) Pupils should be taught to recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways and to give reasons for this	✓				✓	✓
4. Historical enquiry						
4a) How to find out about the events, people and changes studied from an appropriate range of sources of information, including ICT-based sources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4b) To ask and answer questions, and to select and record information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Organisation and communication						
5a) Recall, select and organise historical information	✓		✓	✓		✓
5c) Communicate their knowledge and understanding of history in a variety of ways			✓	✓	✓	✓
11. Victorian Britain						
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table of activities with subject links

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Table of illustrations

All items are from The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA):
The Royal Mail Archive unless stated otherwise.

Illustration	page	Location / Source
1987 Queen Victoria stamp	2	Philatelic Collection
Portrait of Queen Victoria	3	Images of Empire: The British Empire & Commonwealth Museum
Painting of Rowland Hill	6	BPMA: Museum Collection, 2004-0154
Photograph of Rowland Hill	7	BPMA: Museum Collection photograph, P5642
Painting of Rowland Hill	8	BPMA: Museum Collection, 2004-0154
Cartoon by Henry Cole	10	Philatelic Collection
Cross-written letter	11	Philatelic Collection
Wyon Medal	14	Phillips Collection (Post 141/52)
Letter with Penny Black	15	Phillips Collection Vol. IV (POST 141/4) p.3
Maltese Cross	16	Phillips Collection Vol. VIII (POST 141/8) p.25
Block of Penny Black stamps	16	Phillips Collection Vol. III (POST 141/3) p.22
'Rainbow trials'	17	Phillips Collection Vol. VIII (POST 141/8) p.31
Examples of engine turning	19	Phillips Collection Vol. I (POST 141/1) p.47
Penny Black detail	19	Phillips Collection Vol. III (POST 141/3) p.9
Mulready caricature	20	Phillips Collection Vol. IX (POST 141/9) p.25
Mulready envelope	21	Phillips Collection Vol. IX (POST 141/9) p.15
Map of the British Empire	22	Mary Evans Picture Library
Letter to Russia	22	Phillips Collection Vol. XII (POST 141/12) p.42
Letter to India	22	Phillips Collection Vol. XXX (POST 141/30) p.35
Letter to China	22	Phillips Collection Vol. XXX (POST 141/30) p.37
Letter to America	22	Phillips Collection Vol. XXX (POST 141/30) p.47
Letter to France	22	Phillips Collection Vol. XXIX (POST 141/29) p. 20
Example of an early postcard	24	Philatelic Collection
Telegram from Cornelius Murphy, c.1870	25	BPMA Inland Telegram File 1870-90
Blank telegram	26	Phillips Collection Vol. XLV (POST 141/45) p.17
Detail from a painting of a mail coach	27	BPMA: Mail coach File 26, Negative number: 39307
Exterior of a TPO	27	Illustrated London News
Great Western stamp	28	Proposed stamp artwork by David Gentleman for 1969 British Ships issue, BPMA Philatelic Collection
Photograph of hen and chickens cycle	28	BPMA, Cycles File 31, C274
Envelope folding machine	30	BPMA: Museum Collection
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Painting of a letter-carrier	32	BPMA: Museum Collection, 2004-0184
London's first pillar box	33	Illustrated London News
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4d 'jubilee issue' stamp	34	Phillips Collection Vol. XVII (POST 141/42) p.1
£5 Machin stamp	34	Philatelic Collection
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Illustrated London News masthead	39	Illustrated London News
Uniform Penny Postage Jubilee card	42	Phillips Collection Vol. IX (POST 141/9) p.48

Further information

If you are interested in discovering more about any of these themes you can visit our archive and use our reference material or look at the original documents.

The following books in our library are of particular relevance to this topic if you would like to find out more:

Muir, D.N.

Postal Reform & the Penny Black: A New Appreciation
National Postal Museum, 1990

Daunton, M.J.

Royal Mail: The Post Office since 1840
The Athlone Press, 1985

Details about our Archive opening hours can be found on our website: www.postalheritage.org.uk

The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) is located at:

Freeling House

Phoenix Place

LONDON

WC1X 0DL

Phone: 020 7239 2570

Fax: 020 7239 2576

Email: info@postalheritage.org.uk

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Our history through the post

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To you Mr Henry Cole,
an who has been appointed
to Chancellor of the Exchequer
I refer me to Mr Cole

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