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History of the U.S. Postal Service

1775-1993

Stamps

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee



Young postal customers, Washington, DC, 1890s

The Postal Service is proud of its role in portraying the American experience to a world audience through postage stamps and postal stationery.

Almost all subjects chosen to appear on United States stamps and postal stationery are suggested by the public, which submits proposals on thousands of different topics. Established in 1957 to provide the Postal Service with a "breadth of judgment and depth of experience in various areas that influence subject matter, character, and

beauty of postage stamps," the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee has the imposing task of evaluating the merits of each proposal.

The Committee's primary goal is to select subjects that are both interesting and educational for recommendation to the Postmaster General, who decides which stamps will be issued. Besides recommending 25 to 40 new subjects for commemorative stamps each year, the Committee also recommends subjects for the extensive line of regular stamps. When recommending subjects, the Committee thinks of stamp collectors as well as all citizens and looks for stamp subjects that will stand the test of time, be consistent with public sentiment, and have broad national appeal.

Committee members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Postmaster General. Committee membership ranges from 12 to 15 members, who have a wide range of educational, artistic, historical, and professional expertise. Proposals are submitted at least three years before the proposed date of issue to allow sufficient time for consideration and design production, if approved. The members also review and provide guidance on artwork and designs for stamps.

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