



Stamp Collecting Words and Definitions

Stamp collecting is easier and more fun when you have the right tools to help you organize, identify, and handle your stamps.

Tongs: Tongs look like tweezers, but have a smooth gripping surface designed to handle stamps. Professionals like to use tongs because oil from one's skin can damage stamps.



Magnifying Glass: Considering the size of a stamp, a magnifying glass is a great tool to help see the details of our stamps. Some stamps appear to be alike, but with close inspection you will see small differences that can help to identify a rare stamp. A magnification of at least 5x to 10x power helps collectors see important details on stamps.

Perforation Gauge: Here's another tool to help us find differences in stamps. The gauge has different scales showing the various sizes of perforations. You can simply place your stamp against each scale until its perforations match exactly those on the gauge. Perforation gauges (or perf gauges) are usually made of cardboard, plastic, or metal and make the measurement of perforations simple. It is used much like a ruler. Instead of measuring length or width, it measures the number of perforations (or holes) per two centimeters.



Glassine Envelopes and Cover

Sleeves: Glassines are light-weight, semi-transparent envelopes often used to store stamps. They come in a variety of sizes that will hold most philatelic materials. Some collectors prefer storing covers (envelopes) in special polybag sleeves called cover sleeves. Both glassines and sleeves should be stored in a sturdy container to prevent stamp and/or cover damage.