

Many stamp publications will offer a free sample issue if you request it, because they are always looking for potential new subscribers. Subscribing to such publications will keep you up to date on new issues, current philatelic events, stamp shows in your area, PLUS many, many advertisements to help you locate the sources for your collecting interest. The following are a few publications that will send you a sample copy of their magazine or newspaper upon request:

The American Philatelist  
100 Match Factory Place  
Bellefonte, PA 16823

Global Stamp News  
PO Box 97  
Sidney OH 45365

Linn's Stamp News  
PO Box 29  
Sidney OH 45365-0029

Mekeel's and Stamps Magazine  
175R Procter Hill Road  
Hollis NH 03049-6427

USA Philatelic  
(USPS mail-order catalog)  
United States Postal Service  
Stamp Fulfillment Services  
PO Box 219424  
Kansas City MO 64121-9424

There is a lot to learn about stamps as you get more and more of them. Organizations like the APS and their collectors, as well as philatelic publications, will help you grow in the hobby.

## About the YSCA

The Young Stamp Collectors of America, a division of the American Philatelic Society, is for stamp collectors under age 18. Members receive the YSCA e-newsletter four times a year.

Other services include special low prices on selected collecting supplies, an exciting website with online support via e-mail, a monthly e-meeting, a service to help find penpals throughout the world, and contests.

The YSCA also offers an Adult Supporting Membership for adult collectors who want to support and assist the collectors of the future.

To learn more about the Young Stamp Collectors of America, send a business-size, self-addressed stamped envelope to YSCA, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823; or e-mail [ysca@stamps.org](mailto:ysca@stamps.org).

## About the APS

The American Philatelic Society is the nation's largest and foremost organization of stamp collectors. Among the many services offered to members are a monthly 100-page stamp journal, *The American Philatelist*; by-mail use of the largest public-access philatelic library in the United States; online StampStore and by-mail stamp circuits, where members may buy and sell stamps among themselves (with APS serving as the agent); low-cost stamp insurance; and a variety of educational offerings.

Information about membership and services is available from:

**American Philatelic Society**  
**100 Match Factory Place**  
**Bellefonte, PA 16823**  
**[www.stamps.org](http://www.stamps.org)**  
**814-933-3803**



***Stamp collecting ... a hobby for a lifetime!***



**C**ollecting stamps is a fun hobby, and it need not be expensive. Thousands of stamps are issued every year, and while some of them cost many dollars, others cost just a few cents each.

Nobody expects you to try to save every stamp that exists. Remember the key to enjoying stamp collecting is to save whatever you enjoy the most! With stamps and a few inexpensive accessories, such as a 3-ring notebook, acid-free paper, and a package of stamp hinges, any collector with little money can have a great time.

As you consider what to collect, keep in mind not all collections consist of unused stamps that you buy in the post office. Used stamps are worth saving, too; they have value; and they may cost you nothing. Many stamp collectors save only canceled (used) stamps. Others save both used and unused ones. Some choose to save stamps only from one country or one part of the world. Other collectors save stamps by "topic," for example, stamps that depict sports, trains, or birds.

No matter what you decide, your collection should reflect your interests; it should be fun; and it need not require much money to get started. This guide to 10 low-cost ways shows you how!

**1** All postally used stamps started out being received in someone's mailbox, at no cost to the person receiving them. The first place to search for stamps, then, is your own mailbox.

Don't be discouraged when you notice that many senders use postage meters or imprints such as "Bulk Rate Postage Paid" on their envelopes to enjoy a better postal rate or to save the labor of affixing stamps. These meters and imprints can be collectibles, too!

You'll also find that when people do use real stamps, they often use the same common small ones. You can begin to change this by asking people who write to you to use *commemorative* stamps on their mail. These are normally the larger stamps issued to honor famous people, places, or events. These stamps are printed in lesser quantities than the common smaller (definitive) stamps and usually are of much more interest to collectors. Many people will remember to ask for commemorative stamps at the post office when mailing letters to you or your family if you let them know you are a stamp collector. Also, if you write for offers that require postage or a self-addressed, stamped envelope, you can put commemoratives on your return envelope, knowing that they will come back to you.

**2** Neighbors, friends, and relatives are another good source of stamps. The majority of people throw away envelopes when they receive them, and are only too happy to save the envelopes for someone who will appreciate them.

You may even know someone who gets letters from other countries who can save these, too. Always be on the lookout for potentially good stamp contacts. Don't be afraid to ask them to go through their mail for you before they throw away all the envelopes.

And if one of them is looking for a present for you, don't forget to mention that stamps, stamp albums, and hinges are at the top of your gift wish list before your next birthday!

**3** Office mail may be even better. You may know someone who works in an office that gets a lot of mail. Out of 100 letters a day, there may be 10 or 20 good stamps that are being thrown away. Many businesses get a lot of foreign mail and regularly throw away stamps or envelopes that may have interest or value to a collector.

**4** Ask your parents if they have any old letters, which may have stamps on the envelopes. When taking stamps off envelopes, always cut or tear so that there is paper all around the edges of the stamp, and the stamp and all its perforations are undamaged. Anyone who is saving stamps for you should be told that this is the way to do it; otherwise, he may try to peel the stamp off the envelope. This may cause thin spots or tears, both of which may affect a stamp's appearance and lessen its value. If you run across envelopes that are very old or have postal markings that may be of particular interest, it is best to save the entire envelope until you can find out if the stamp is worth more attached to the cover.

**5** Longtime collectors may be another source of stamps. Usually a person who has been a collector for a number of years has developed many sources for stamps. The collector may have thousands of duplicates, some of which may be very inexpensive while others may have more value. Often older collectors are willing to help new philatelists get started by giving them stamps, or at least providing packets of stamps much more cheaply than can be purchased in stores or by mail.

**6** Many stamp companies advertise free stamps. However, these ads must be read carefully before you send away for anything. Usually these ads offer "approvals," which means they will send you the free stamps

advertised, plus an assortment of other stamps which you may either buy or return. By sending for the free stamps, you have already agreed that you will pay for or return the other stamps within a reasonable period of time. Usually you must pay the return postage. This is a convenient way to buy stamps from your own home.

**7** Stamp clubs are another place to get stamps. A club may offer stamps as prizes, or have inexpensive stamps you can afford to buy. To find a club in your area, go to "Directories" at [www.stamps.org](http://www.stamps.org).

Some stamp clubs sponsor youth clubs that meet at schools or the local YMCA or community center. If you are fortunate enough to have one of these in your area, it can be a great source of both stamps and advice.

**8** One way to increase your sources for stamps and also have a lot of fun is to help start a local club, if one does not already exist. All it takes are four or five other stamp collectors who are interested in getting together to learn about and trade stamps and ideas.

**9** Obtaining a pen pal in another country is a very good way to get stamps from that country. His or her extra stamps may seem really common in that country, but over here they are much scarcer. Your own stamps may look fairly common to you, but he or she is sure to appreciate them.

**10** Trading off your duplicate stamps can be a lot of fun. Even if you don't know many collectors where you live, stamps are so lightweight that they can easily be traded by mail. Stamp newspapers and magazines often list classified ads that list stamp trades. You may find, for example, that another collector will send you 100 large foreign stamps if you send 100 U.S. commemoratives.