

An Introduction to Thematic Exhibiting

By Tom Fortunato

Once upon a time...

To the uninitiated, that might seem a curious way to start a chapter about one of the most interesting and fun areas of philately—thematic collecting and exhibiting. You'll understand what I mean by the time you finish this article.

What is Thematic Exhibiting?

Simply put, a thematic exhibit is a story told through a display of philatelic items known as “elements.” It incorporates aspects of other exhibiting disciplines found in this book, such as traditional and postal history, and uses a variety of elements regardless of their age or country of origin that relate to the story line.

It's that story part that differentiates a topical from a thematic collector. Let's use birds as an example. A topical collector would save only philatelic items depicting birds. A thematic collector expands that approach by telling a story about birds: their origins, physical differences, habitat, migratory routes, breeding, etc.

Elements

Everyone knows about stamps, but the world of philately deals with much more than just stamps! A “philatelic element” is best described as any item that has been designed, produced or issued for the purpose of moving the mail or other postal communications. A very detailed listing of philatelic elements can be found at the conclusion of this article. It is considered the most complete reference of its kind and is regularly used by exhibitors and judges alike.

The best thematic exhibits display a broad range of philatelic elements to explain the story. Here is a description of some of them.

Stamp-Related Elements

A stamp only becomes a stamp after a rigorous process. Artists first create drawings and sketches of proposed designs. From those submissions, one is chosen and miniaturized through an engraving or a photographic process. Trial prints are made, sometimes in different colors, to optimize the appearance of the design, before the final approval is given to print the stamps. These items are classified as pre-production elements. They can be elusive, if available at all, and are highly sought by advanced thematic exhibitors.

The stamps are then printed, sometimes in a number of formats—sheets, sheetlets, coils, booklets, etc.. These, too, are different elements, as are plate

and position blocks bearing unique salvage inscriptions or production information, and the booklet covers themselves. Paper, gum, and watermark variations may be due to stock or production differences. All reoccurring and/or intentional varieties are in this category of elements.

By the way, it's possible to interchange the word "stamp" with other philatelic items that follow the same creation and printing process, including souvenir sheets, postal stationery (postal cards, envelopes, aerogrammes, etc.), meters, Frama labels, and in some countries, telegrams if they were issued by the post office.

More esoteric items are also possible. Samples, usually overprinted "specimen" or defaced in some way, are occasionally sent to catalogers and the press to promote the issue, later becoming available in the marketplace. Watermarks are found with many different images on them. A few that come to mind are animals (turtles, lions, and elephants), fruit (pineapples), crowns, stars, and much, much more.

Errors, freaks and oddities (EFOs) add interest, like paper folds, misperfs, miscuts, missing colors, double prints, ink streaks, inverts, non-intentional imperforates and alike. These are non-reoccurring variety elements.

Stamps issued for various services are considered different elements, including semi-postals (stamps surcharged for a charitable purpose), airmails, officials, postage dues, registration stamps, revenues, etc.

Usages

A thematic exhibit also displays items used as they were intended. Stamps and souvenir sheets are found on "cover"—the technical term for an envelope or piece of postal stationery sent through the mails. Revenue/tax stamps are used on various documents. There is a wealth of possibilities when it comes to usages!

Stamps on Cover

It's oftentimes harder to find a desired stamp on a cover than in mint condition. Add to that you're probably more apt to find the stamp on a first day cover rather than a commercial cover—one sent through the mail by a non-collector at the correct postage rate in the manner it was meant to be used. Even harder is finding a commercial cover sent anywhere overseas, or better still, to a small, exotic country. Seasoned exhibitors (and judges) realize the challenge and difficulty factor in finding these.

When selecting covers, you'll sometimes find what are called "mixed-frankings." This is when more than one face-different stamp is used on a cover. An example

is a cover with two stamps on it, one depicting a president and the other a butterfly, with the story subject being presidents. While not the best of possible situations, this cover would still be acceptable if the majority of the postage was paid by the denomination depicting the subject. A better cover would be one showing a single use of the president's stamp, or multiples of that one stamp.

Postal stationery is prized in used compared to mint condition just as much as stamps used on cover are. These, too, are considered "covers."

Some covers don't have stamps on them at all. They include folded and stampless covers, free franks bearing signatures of postmasters or others receiving preferential treatment in postal matters, and some government and military mail, often sent free of charge. For these, you'll want to relate the town of origin, the postmark or other markings on the cover to your story line.

Fiscal or tax stamps represent payment towards a service or purchase of some kind. Finding them intact on a document is often a challenge and can also be shown in an exhibit.

A cover's mode of transport is sometimes seen through docketing by private individuals or the post office, either through a manuscript marking, label, or rubber stamp (airmail, boat mail (paquetbot), balloon post, first flights, etc.) "Crash cover" is the general term for philatelic item that has been through a traumatic experience, like a train or plane crash, boat sinking, fire, water damage, etc. and marked indicating this (see Auxiliary Markings below). These, too, are elements.

Cancels, Postmarks and Other Markings

Do you know the difference between a postmark and a cancel? A postmark is an imprint that typically bears a date, whereas a cancel is just an obliterator to prevent re-use. Of course, there are many types of both.

It is perfectly acceptable to use a postmark or cancel in a thematic exhibit that relates to the story. This includes the town or city name itself, like "Blue Bell, Pennsylvania" in an exhibit about flowers; or "Accident, Maryland" to describe a particular unpleasant situation.

The design of the cancel or postmark is another consideration if it relates to the theme. Most famous (and expensive) are probably those from Waterbury, Connecticut, like the "Running Chicken." Fancy cancels from the 1880's in the U.S. showed letters, numbers, leaves, skulls, stars, and a wealth of geometric designs. Small town registry cancels of the U.S. from the 1930's show even more items along these lines. More modern first day and commemorative postmarks are possible, too, as long as the design (or part of the design) or wording of the mark relates to your story line.

Postmarks were used in service on land and at sea. Try to find these types of special post office markings to add to the more unusual items in your exhibit: railway, mobile posts, paquebots (used on ships), waterways (canals, rivers), and military mail. Yes, some covers were even postmarked in space!

Auxiliary marks are another category to look into. Everyone has probably seen the most common of these “pointing finger” marks on their mail that have been in use for well over 100 years. Service-inscribed markings (COD, airmail, special delivery, etc.) aid in identifying the mail. Markings made in transit, such as backstamps and receiving marks, and those explaining problems (postage due, forwarded, undeliverable, etc.) fall in this area, too.

Don't overlook more modern innovations to the postmark and inked auxiliary marks: sprayed-on markings. Some are successors to the postmark, displaying time, date, and city, while others use slogans to make their point.

Telling the Story

The heart of thematic exhibiting is the story line. That's why I started out this article with, “Once Upon a Time.” Pick a subject that is of interest to you, and use the elements described above to tell it. This beckons the question, “Should I pick a subject first and then look for items, or find better items first and then work them into an exhibit?” There is no one “right” approach, as it is totally up to the exhibitor.

Always bear in mind that there should always be a strong relationship (known as concordance) between the text and the stamp, cancel, or image found on the philatelic element used. For example, if writing about steam from a steam locomotive, make sure the element depicts the steam in some way!

Story and Exhibit Structure

The best advice to give to a novice thematic exhibitor is to get a couple of books on the subject and browse through their table of contents. The exhibit's eventual organization of story and material will probably look very much like them.

The “Plan Page” in thematic exhibiting is the roadmap to what the display is all about. In a logical way it shows the development of the story with a beginning, middle and an end, divided into chapters and sub-chapters.

To exemplify this, I'll use a plan from one of my own thematic exhibits dealing with ceramics and glass, titled, “The Diversity of Ceramics and Ceramic Materials.” It can be seen online at:

<http://www.fortunecity.com/olympia/tilden/186/aceramics.html>

The Plan

	Pages		Pages
<u>TITLE, INTRODUCTION, PLAN</u>	2	<u>7 HIGH TEMPERATURE CERAMICS</u>	
		7.1 Refractories	2
<u>1 THE BASICS</u>		7.2 Insulation	1
1.1 Definition and science	2		
1.2 Raw materials	3	<u>8 CARBON CERAMICS</u>	
1.3 Mining and processing	3	8.1 Graphite, SiC, cermets	2
1.4 Forming techniques	2		
1.5 Firing	2	<u>9 GLASS</u>	
1.6 Decorating	3	9.1 Flat glass	3
1.7 Hallmarks	1	9.2 Safety glass	1
		9.3 Light transmission	3
<u>2 HISTORY</u>		9.4 Optical glass	2
2.1 BC	2	9.5 Fiberglass	1
2.2 AD	2	9.6 Thermal resistant glass	2
2.3 Chinese influence	2	9.7 Enamels	1
2.4 18th Century	4		
2.5 14th-18th Century glass	1	<u>10 USES OF CLAYS</u>	
2.6 19th Century through today	3	10.1 Particulates	1
<u>3 BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION CERAMICS</u>		<u>11 ABRASIVES</u>	
3.1 Bricks	2	11.1 Alumina, silica, etc.	1
3.2 Tiles	1		
3.3 Pipes	1	<u>12 CERAMICS AND...</u>	
3.4 Cement and concrete	5	12.1 Music	1
		12.2 Philately	3
<u>4 DINNERWARE</u>		12.3 Religion	1
4.1 China and earthenware	1	12.4 Sports	2
		12.5 Toys and figurines	1
<u>5 ELECTRICAL CERAMICS</u>		12.6 War	1
5.1 Insulators	3	12.7 Writing and language	1
5.2 Resistors and capacitors	2		
		<u>CONCLUSION</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>6 MEDICAL CERAMICS</u>			
6.1 Bones and teeth	1	Total pages on exhibit	80
6.2 For good health	1		

You'll notice that it is organized like chapters in a book. As a new chapter is introduced, a new number is assigned to it. The same thing happens with each sub-chapter, and, if necessary, sub-sub-chapters. The numbering scheme is important, as it is used as a header on each exhibit page to tell the viewer exactly what part of the story line is being shown.

Think about how the subject would break out into logical divisions and come up with a plan. Don't panic if gaps appear between the story line and philatelic material on-hand, as this happens to everyone. Story lines can develop over years, as new material sparks new chapters or fills gaps in the current outline.

Putting it All Together

At this point a prospective exhibitor should have enough philatelic items to fulfill the plan and be ready to organize it more formally.

Laying Out Pages

Probably the best way to get started is to buy individual 8.5x11 inch three-hole stock book pages, or 16 or 32 page stock books. Each page has glassine or clear plastic strips running across them, allowing collectors to easily insert stamps, covers, etc. almost anywhere, mimicking what the final page will look like.

Using these allow exhibitors to experiment by laying out material and text and easily switch them around. Text written on slips of paper roughly the same size and orientation expected to appear on the page helps. Pages should look full but not crowded. There is nothing worse than the opposite— a sparse page with too little on it.

The ultimate goal is to use a minimum of three different elements on every page whenever possible, and to balance every frame with about the same mix of elements. A standard exhibit frame at regional, national and international exhibitions holds 16 pages, each 8.5x11 inches in size, arranged 4 across by 4 down. Think in terms of multiples of 16 pages (one frame of pages) so as not to end up with an incomplete frame.

Balancing pages and frames is much easier said than done and will eventually work itself out over time. As you can tell, a thematic exhibit is an ever-changing work.

Windowing

Windowing is a technique used by exhibitors to conserve page space and display only emphasized portion of a cover. There are three basic types: slits, corners, and full windows, as illustrated here.



The dashed lines represent cuts into the exhibit page, allowing material to be mounted from behind and slid through the opening. Thematic exhibits use this technique extensively.

Write-Up

Time to talk about the text in an exhibit. Keep all write-ups as brief as possible while explaining the important details of the story. The viewing audience will not spend time to read long paragraphs unless they are very interested in the

subject, so “telegraph” text by using the fewest words possible while explaining the point.

There are actually two types of text to consider: story line text (known as thematic text, not to be confused with thematic elements or items) and philatelic text. Thematic text tells the story. Philatelic text gives information about the philatelic material shown. Only philatelic information that may not be obvious needs to be described in the philatelic text, like detailing an improper postage rate on a cover, pointing out an unusual marking, or scarcity of a piece. It is typical to place thematic text above or to the side of philatelic items as an introduction to what will be shown, with philatelic text below if needed, using an italicized or different font from that telling the story.

Page headers were mentioned earlier in the section about exhibit structure. These need to be considered as one prepares a mock-up. Every page in the exhibit should have a header of some sort so viewers can review any page and know exactly where within the plan they are. Seeing a primary chapter and sub-chapter is typical. In the ceramic exhibit, for example, one page header would be:

3 BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION CERAMICS - 3.3 Pipes
OR
3 BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION CERAMICS **3.3 Pipes**

It is very clear to the viewer what to expect to find on any page using a format like this.

Title Page, Plan Page and Conclusion

All exhibits should start with a title page. Tradition holds that one places a show stopping philatelic piece there to grab the attention of viewers. However that decision is up to the exhibitor. In fact, the title page is the one place in a thematic exhibit where a non-philatelic item can appear.

Try to print the title in a bold type to make it stand out from the rest of the text, which should briefly explain the goals and objectives of the presentation.

The plan page comes next. In an exhibit with a brief plan, it is acceptable to condense the title page and plan page into one. Otherwise a stand-alone page is the norm.

The end of the exhibit should wrap up and summarize the entire work in some way. It needn't be a single page, or even necessarily entitled, “Conclusion,” but it should leave the viewer with a sense of finality to what was just seen.

Other Considerations

An exhibit can either be hand-written (neatly, of course), typed or computer generated. When judged by national or international standards, this has no bearing on judging it, but remember that first impressions may inadvertently influence later scoring.

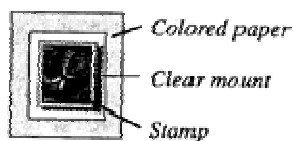
How will the material be mounted to a page? Clear or black mounts are available in a variety of millimeter sizes to fit almost every stamp and souvenir sheet. Black mounts leave an attractive border around each item, in essence “framing” it. But be aware that the size of the border (typically 1-2 mm) must be uniform around all sides, as deviation in border size will detract for its appearance. Using clear mounts is more forgiving in this regard, which is why most exhibitors prefer them. Clear corner mounts are available for covers and larger items and can be placed on two opposite corners or on all four corners if preferred.

What kind of paper should you use? White paper, preferably acid-free, is the standard, but lightly tinted colors have been used as well—cream, blue, etc. Paper also comes in different weights. Do not use photocopy paper (20-24 pound weight), as it is simply not stiff enough to support your philatelic items once mounted on the page and they will droop! I’ve used 80-120 pound “card stock” paper on several exhibits with success. Check out options with a local office supply company or related firm. Buy twice as much as you think you will need. Pages will change frequently over the years and new purchases may have slight dye lot differences that will be noticeable.

Clear page protectors are a must to protect your pages and material from getting dirty: the kind suitable for storing in three-ring binders work well. Buy the heavier grade of protector, if available, for better durability. Both the exhibit page and its protector will be mounted in the frames.

All exhibit pages should be numbered in some way to ensure they are placed in the frames in the correct order. Easiest is to place the number on the reverse of a page protector using a small sticker of some kind, rather than write it on the back of a page, as exhibit page numbers will change over time.

Think about ways to draw attention to the better philatelic items in the exhibit, those not to be missed by viewers. Some exhibitors place colored dots next to their better items. Others use a medium-colored paper cut just slightly larger than the philatelic piece by 3-5 millimeters that places a border around them when mounted. The decision is the exhibitor’s, but the method is to be explained to viewers somewhere on the title page.



Guidelines in Material Selection

The “Fédération Internationale de Philatélie,” otherwise known as the FIP, is the organization that sets international exhibiting standards for the many areas of philately, including thematics. The American Philatelic Society is its U.S. counterpart, which along with the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada uses FIP standards as the basic guidelines for thematic exhibiting at the national level, with some minor alterations.

When it comes to stamps, a thematic exhibit typically should contain either all mint stamps or all postally used stamps. Almost every exhibitor chooses the “mint” route, as a postmarked stamp could detract from the stamp’s design, which is really the focus of the exhibit. A mix of mint and used stamps is highly discouraged at the national and international level, but tolerated at local and regional exhibitions. Cancelled-to-order stamps, those postmarked as a way of defacing them but never to be used on mail, should be avoided.

Stamps from the same set typically should not be shown together except under special circumstances. A mix of stamps from different countries and designs is preferred that are directly related to the story line (thematic text) being mentioned.

When dealing with covers, the focus is always on the stamp (or indicia or other official printing on postal stationery), cancel, or special markings found on them.

To whom a cover is addressed, or the sender of the mail piece, has nothing to do with the moving of the mail, so items referenced in an exhibit solely for that purpose are discouraged. The same thing goes for cacheted or advertising covers, as the design on the envelope did not move the mail.

There are a few exceptions when it comes to advertising. Some countries officially issued postal stationery with advertising on them that were sold at a discount to the public. These are encouraged in a thematic exhibit, even when exclusively referencing products or services in them. Examples include advertising Mulready letter sheets from Great Britain, BLP letter sheets from Italy, publibel postal cards from Belgium, and echo postal cards from Japan.

Postal cards are allowed in a thematic exhibit, but post cards are not when used exclusively for the design on the picture side. Make sure you know the difference: A postal card is officially issued by a postal authority, typically bearing an indicia indicating value or service.

Maxicards are post cards that have a stamp and postmark placed on the image side. These are desirable if the post card design, stamp, and cancel are all related to the theme, and only if the stamp design does not completely imitate the

image on the post card, as have been issued by postal authorities over the past few decades.

All postal stationery items (postal cards, envelopes, wrappers, etc.) are to be displayed in their entirety, and no part should be windowed, overlapped, or hidden in any way. They can be shown mint or used.

There are times that a postal authority overprints stamps or postal stationery with something other than a new denomination. In these cases, the subject referenced by the overprint becomes the new theme. For example, a space stamp overprinted with a congratulatory message to an Olympic winner could be used in a thematic exhibit related to sports, but not space.

Non-philatelic items should not be shown in a thematic exhibit. This would include things like photos, newspaper clippings, and assorted other ephemera that could be attached to a page. However they may be used judiciously on the title page.

What Judges Look For

There are many reasons why people exhibit. Perhaps they simply want to display their interest to the public, are seeking recognition for their knowledge and/or research in a particular area, or are in it to win awards. No matter the intent, in a judged exhibition there always criteria that dictate award levels.

Local and regional level exhibitions can create their own score sheets and set up whatever judging rules they wish. However, national and international shows have stricter guidelines in this regard to ensure judging uniformity and equity among exhibits. In the U.S. and Canada, the "Manual of Philatelic Judging" is the work referenced by judges and exhibitors alike that outline these guidelines.

Judging is done on a points basis, explained further here. Typical national exhibitions feature 200-300 frames of material, which works out to 3,200-4,800 pages. Judges receive title page and plan page copies of all exhibits a few months before the exhibition, and often spend hours per exhibit researching what they expect to see. While at the show, they again scrutinize the title page and plan, and scan the rest of the exhibit as necessary to draw their award conclusions. In reality, they can only spend 5-10 minutes per exhibit at the frames because of time restraints.

Point Categories

Presentation and General Impressions	10 points
Thematic Elements (The Story- 45 points)	
Plan	15 points
Originality	5 points
Development and Research	25 points

Medal Levels

Gold	85-100 points
Vermeil	75-84 points
Silver	65-75 points
Silver Bronze	60-64 points
Bronze	50-59 points

Philatelic Elements (Material shown- 45 points)	Certificate	<50 points
Items	10 points	
Condition	10 points	
Knowledge	10 points	
Difficulty of acquisition/Scarcity	<u>15 points</u>	
Total:100 points		

Above are the point categories and the corresponding medal levels for an adult multi-frame thematic exhibit in national competition. A different sliding points scale is used for exhibitors under age 21.

Presentation and General Impressions (10 pts): These deal with the over appearance of the exhibit, material arrangement on page and frame basis, and uniformity of text.

Plan (15 pts): The plan is one of the most important aspects of the exhibits to a judge. It details the scope of the exhibit. All major facets of the subject should be reflected in the plan, which is then carried through in the rest of the exhibit. A balance in the number of pages of each chapter is ideal.

Originality (5 pts): Points are awarded here if the subject is unusual and/or if the subject and story are handled in an unusual but effective way.

Development and Research (25 pts): Otherwise known as treatment of the subject, points are given based on the depth of knowledge of the topic the exhibitor has displayed throughout the entire work. Text must not dominate but convey the story in a clear, logical way.

Items (10 pts): The variety of philatelic elements used earns points here.

Knowledge (10 pts): Shown by both the type of philatelic material chosen to tell the story as well as the identification and text used describing those items correctly.

Condition (10 pts): Material should always be shown in the best possible condition for its age, circumstance and availability. Tattered and/or soiled material should be left out unless it is absolutely key to the story and only known available in that condition.

Scarcity/Rarity (10 pts): The difficulty of acquisition, rather than the price of the items selected for display, is factored in here.

Five judges score each exhibit as he or she sees fit and then convene to compare notes and average all scores. Discussion by a knowledgeable judge in the subject matter may sway colleague points higher or lower until a consensus is reached.

Other Resources

That concludes a brief look at thematic exhibiting. It should answer most of your basic questions about the field, but there are other references to assist you further.

American Topical Association (<http://www.americantopicalassn.org>)- The ATA, America's premier thematic collecting society, was organized in 1949 and has members in over 60 countries. Their web site offers a wealth of information on all aspects of topicals, including exhibiting.

American Philatelic Society (<http://www.stamps.org>)- One of the largest philatelic organizations in the world, the APS is over 100 years old and has 47,000 members in the U.S. and abroad. Membership includes access to the American Philatelic Reference Library. Purchase the latest 5th edition of the "Manual of Philatelic Judging" through them.

Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (<http://www.f-i-p.ch>)- The F.I.P. is the international philatelic organization that regulates exhibiting worldwide. See the "Special Regulations for the Evaluation of Thematic Exhibits at F.I.P. Exhibitions" (http://www.f-i-p.ch/regulation/pdf/Them_Srev.pdf)

American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (<http://www.aape.org>)- Founded in 1986, the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors is a worldwide organization of stamp collectors who exhibit their collections competitively and work together for the betterment of philatelic exhibiting and judging standards and practices. Their critique service is a free service for members, who submit their exhibits for review by knowledgeable experts.

APS/Chapter Activities Committee (http://www.stamps.org/cac/cac_exhi.htm)- Web link to a growing list of online philatelic exhibits encompassing all categories, including thematics.

PHILATELIC ELEMENTS FOR THEMATIC EXHIBITS

By Joan Bleakley in collaboration with Darrell R. Ertzberger and John M. Hotchner

Exhibits that reach the vermeil or gold award level contain a broad range of philatelic elements. This listing is intended as a handy reference for preparing or judging thematic exhibits. It is by no means complete, nor would it be possible to have every element listed here in any one exhibit.

All elements used in a thematic exhibit should have postal connotations. The item must have been used in a thematic exhibit should have postal connotations. The item must have been:

1. initiated by the postal service
2. introduced by the postal service (e.g., overprints, marginal markings, postal stationery cachets, etc.)
3. or approved by the postal service
4. if none of the above, their inclusion should be explained

ITEMS SHOULD BE SELECTED FOR:

1. the primary or secondary design
2. the purpose of issue or circumstance of issue
3. the relation of the design or issue to the theme

> Material should always be in the best possible condition given its source, age and general availability.

> Overprints can change the theme, overprints unrelated to the design should be used solely for the overprint.

> Postal stationery should not be windowed, the entire piece is the issued item.

> Underpaid or overpaid postage should be explained.

> First day and special event covers with privately printed cachets should be selected for the stamp and/or cancel, not the cachet.

ITEMS THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED:

1. Mixed subjects on covers (confuses the theme)
2. Postmarks, etc. without indication of postage paid
3. Private information such as addressee or addressor, except for those granted free franking privilege

PRE-PRODUCTION ELEMENTS:

1. ORIGINAL DRAWINGS: submitted by artists and ACCEPTED for consideration by the postal authority for stamp designs
2. ESSAY: proposed design, submitted to, and rejected by, Postal Authorities, or adopted after changes have been made
3. PHOTO ESSAY: photograph of design with measurements and notations
4. PROOFS: trial impressions from the die or printing plate before actual production
5. ENGRAVER'S PROOFS: impressions taken to check the progress of his work
6. DIE PROOFS: impressions from the completed die, submitted for final approval
7. PLATE PROOFS: impressions from the completed plate
8. COLOR TRIALS: proofs in selected colors to permit a final choice of color to be made
9. COLOR PROOFS: impressions of the approved colors taken prior to printing
10. RAINBOW PROOFS: trials, to test various colored inks, cancellations and paper

STAMPS AS ISSUED (most are catalogue listed)

1. Booklet stamps (preferably full pane if all one motif or related se-tenants)
 - a. booklet covers and labels (shown with pane or booklet)
 - b. plate numbers (or other marginal markings)
2. Coil stamps (should be shown in pairs)
 - a. line pairs
 - b. plate numbers (best shown in strips of three or five for US)
3. Sheet stamps perforate, rouletted, or imperforate when issued as such
 - a. plate, zip, arrow, mail early, and copyright blocks
 - b. other marginal markings (printed, handstamped)

- c. se-tenant pairs and blocks, tabbed issues
- d. triptych (three joined stamps of different but related designs)
- e. tete-beche pairs
- f. bisects, trisects, quadrisects
- g. watermarks
- 4. Discount postage (stamps issued at reduced price, chiefly for publicity)
- 5. Encased postage and other monetary usages
- 6. Expedition stamps
 - a. Scientific (e.g. Shackleton Antarctic Expedition, 1908)
 - b. Military (e.g. Liberian Field Force, IEF of India)
- 7. Express or Special Delivery
- 8. Geometric shapes (triangles, diamonds, etc.)
- 9. Local issues (valid within a limited area or postal administration)
- 10. Occupation issues (for use in territory occupied by a foreign power)
- 11. Revenue issues: government, departmental
- 12. Special fees, late fees, railway letter fees
- 13. Miniature and souvenir sheets
- 14. Newspaper stamps
- 15. Official stamps
- 16. Parcel post stamps
- 17. Postage Due stamps
- 18. Telegraph stamps
- 19. War tax stamps
- 20. Joint issues
- 21. Provisional issues
- 22. Plebiscite issues
- 23. Military franks
- 24. Military telegraph stamps
- 25. Marine insurance issues
- 26. value inserted issues

MACHINE GENERATED POSTAGE: Framas, Postal Buddy Cards, Meter Imprints

OFFICIAL VARIETIES (Official Government issued)

- 1. Perforations (different measurements, methods)
- 2. Experimental perforations and roulettes
- 3. Perfins (e.g. O.H.M.S.)
- 4. Precancels (different types and styles)
- 5. Tagged or otherwise treated for use in automation equipment
- 6. Printed information on reverse, attached label, or selvage
- 7. Specimens, black prints and other publicity items
- 8. Surcharges (revalued issues)
- 9. Overprints (geographic, commemorative, etc.)
- 10. Mirror prints
- 11. Gum, watermark, or paper varieties
- 12. Test stamps (for testing of dispensing machines)
- 13. Post office training stamps
- 14. Carrier stamps (charge for conveying mail to or from local post offices)
- 15. Shipping company stamps (prepaying mail carried on mail-ships or packet boats)
- 16. Obliterated stamps (e.g., portraits of deposed or deceased rulers)

UNOFFICIAL VARIETIES

Perfins, business, charity, (preferably on cover with corner card)

UNPLANNED VARIETIES (EFOs)

- 1. ERRORS (as a result of the production process, but not "favor" made)

- a. Imperforate in one direction
 - b. Fully imperforate
 - c. Imperforate between
 - d. Perforations of the wrong gauge on one or more sides
 - e. Perforations inverted on souvenir sheets
 - f. Perforations fully doubled or tripled
 - g. Complete color missing
 - h. Tagging missing
 - i. Inverted tagging
 - j. Inverted design
 - k. Inverted design
 - l. Inverted embossing
 - m. Design error
 - n. Inverted or multiple surcharge
 - o. Inverted or multiple overprint
 - p. Overprint or surcharge on back of stamp
 - q. Lettering errors (misspelled country, name, etc.)
 - r. Double print
 - s. Wrong value stamp
 - t. Colors reversed
 - u. Missing overprint, surcharge, or precancel
 - v. Offset (printed on reverse)
 - w. Paper errors
 - i. Printed on wrong color paper
 - ii. Wrong, incomplete or changed watermark
 - x. Other constant errors (worthy of catalogue listing)
2. FREAKS: minor production varieties, usually not repeated, rarely catalogue listed
- y. Gutter snipes
 - z. Ink smears, flaws and blots
 - aa. Set-offs (from flatplate printed sheet laid atop another)
 - bb. Misperfs (one direction, two directions, diagonal)
 - cc. Partially perforated
 - dd. Color shifts (misregistration of color)
 - ee. Miscuts
 - ff. Over or under inked
 - gg. Color partially missing
 - hh. Foldovers, foldunders
 - ii. Creases (pre-perforating or pre-printing)
 - jj. Minor shade/color differences
 - kk. Partial stamp printed on reverse
 - ll. Partially doubled overprint or surcharge
 - mm. Rejection markings (indicating printers' waste to be destroyed)
3. ODDITIES
- a. Plate varieties (double transfers, layout lines, position dots)
 - b. Design errors and ghosts
 - c. Intentionally created varieties
 - i. Color changelings
 - ii. Altered stamps (attempts to create higher value stamps)
 - iii. Rotary coil end strips
 - iv. Flatplate coil paste-ups
 - v. Private perms
 - d. Local overprints
 - e. Cancels that change the design
 - f. Intentionally created errors

- g. Intentionally produced gutter pairs
- h. Provisional overprints
- i. Stolen printers' waste
- j. Unauthorized bisects

COVERS:

- 1. folded letters
- 2. stampless covers
- 3. air mail
- 4. balloon post
- 5. camp mail (concentration camp, POW camp, displaced persons, etc)
- 6. catapult mail
- 7. censored mail
- 8. combination franking (stamps of more than one country)
- 9. crash covers
- 10. cross-border mail
- 11. fieldpost
- 12. first day or special event covers
- 13. first flights
- 14. free franks
- 15. glider mail
- 16. international organizations (U.N., Red Cross, etc.)
- 17. military (APO, FPO)
- 18. naval ships mail
- 19. official government mail
- 20. official cachets
- 21. packet letters
- 22. paquebot
- 23. parachute mail
- 24. pigeon post
- 25. pneumatic post
- 26. rocket post
- 27. ship letters
- 28. zeppelin mail

POSTAL STATIONERY:

- 1. imprinted envelopes and postal cards
- 2. letter cards
- 3. reply paid cards
- 4. aerogrammes, airgraphs, air letter sheets
- 5. V mail
- 6. wrappers for newspapers and periodicals
- 7. printed-to-order envelopes, cards; produced/authorized by postal authorities
- 8. folded advertising letters (e.g., France, Germany)
- 9. formula cards (France, etc.)
- 10. echo cards (Japan)
- 11. postal telegrams (e.g. Germany, Great Britain)

MAXIMUM CARD: a picture postcard with a stamp depicting the exact same subject affixed to the picture side of the card, and the cancellation having a direct relationship to the subject pictured on the stamp.

LABELS:

- 1. air mail etiquettes
- 2. charity (Christmas seals)
- 3. fiscals

4. official seals
5. postal fiscals
6. registration
7. special delivery
8. telegraph

CANCELLATIONS (should be tied to a piece or on cover, if possible)

1. postmarks
2. town circles
3. fancy cancels
4. pictorial
5. slogan
6. traveling post office (TPO)
7. highway post office (HPO)
8. mobile post office (MPO)
9. railway post office (RPO)
10. military (fieldpost, APO, etc.)

AUXILIARY MARKINGS:

1. air mail
2. registered
3. certified or insured
4. special delivery
5. night delivery
6. COD
7. censored
8. postage due
9. postage not valid
10. transit
11. backstamps
12. receiving marks
13. forwarding comments
14. refused
15. undeliverable
16. unmailable
17. carrier comments
18. directory markings
19. weight markings
20. return to sender: better address, proper postage, service suspended, etc.

OTHER ELEMENTS – THESE MUST BE IDENTIFIED WHEN USED IN AN EXHIBIT

1. **BOGUS STAMP** – a completely fictitious “stamp” created solely for sale to collectors, or an actual stamp with an unauthorized surcharge or overprint (these are not forgeries as the stamp never officially existed).
2. **CINDERELLAS**
 - a. Christmas seals (when tied to the cover)
 - b. Propaganda stamps
3. **FACSIMILE** – reproduction of a genuine stamp with no intent to deceive collectors or postal officials (e.g. illustrations)
4. **FAKE** – a genuine stamp that has been altered to make it more attractive to collectors (e.g. altered color, added or changed postmark, repaired, reperfed, regummed, etc. to make a more valuable variety)
5. **FORGERY** – completely fraudulent reproduction of a genuine stamp intended to defraud. They are generally classified into two types:
 - a. Philatelic forgeries made to defraud collectors

- b. Postal forgeries made to defraud the postal service
- 6. POSTAL DOCUMENTS
 - a. Official receipts
 - b. Orders and bulletins
 - c. Stamp shipment wrappings and labels