



Mailing a Holiday Card

OBJECTIVE: Read to learn how a holiday card travels from Emily Elizabeth's mailbox to Clifford's doghouse.

STANDARDS: Social Studies (NCSS): Individuals, groups, and institutions; power, authority, and governance; production, distribution, and consumption

“There was once a post office under the ocean!”

BEFORE READING

Personal Connections

Invite children to talk about times when they've sent or received mail.

Show children a posted envelope. Ask, “Have you ever sent or gotten one of these? Whom was it to or from?” Have children share their experiences. Then ask, “How do you think letters get where they're supposed to go?” Tell children they will learn the answer by reading the issue.

DURING READING

Infer

Help children figure out the reasons behind the sorting system at the post office.

After reading step 3, ask, “What do letters with the same ZIP code have in common?” (*They are going to the same town.*) “Why does it help to have a different tray for each ZIP code?” (*All the letters going to the same place can travel together.*) Lead children to see that sorting by ZIP code helps mail get delivered faster. If letters with different ZIP codes traveled together, our mail would be zigzagging all over the country!

AFTER READING

Sequence

Invite children to put the steps of the holiday card's journey in order.

On separate sheets of paper, write a simple description of each step without writing the step number. For instance: *A truck picks up the mail. Little letters and cards are sorted from big ones. Cards get sorted by ZIP code. The mail carrier gets the mail and delivers it.* (Alternatively, you can cut an extra copy of the issue into four pieces and cover up the step numbers.) Post the steps in random order on a bulletin board or wall and challenge children to put them back in order.

READ-ALoud BACKGROUND

On the Mail Trail

- The post office uses planes, trains, trucks, cars, boats, ferries, helicopters, subways, bicycles, and even mules to carry mail! Of course, there's one more kind of transportation: Many mail carriers just walk to deliver their letters.
- The money you pay for stamps helps keep the post office running. That's why you can use each stamp only once. A machine puts lines over the stamp to show it has been used. So if you want to send a letter, you will have to buy a new stamp.
- Today, stamps have sticky backs, which makes them easy to put on an envelope. But the very first stamps had to be pasted on. People who didn't have paste would sometimes pin or sew the stamp to their letter.
- Mail gets sent to many different addresses, but the most common street names in our country are Main, Maple, Second, Oak, and Park.
- Have you ever seen a mail carrier driving a mail truck? They sit on the right side to drive. (In regular cars, drivers sit on the left side.) This makes it easier for mail carriers to drop mail into mailboxes.

Mail Believe It or Not ...

- There's a post office in Corrales, New Mexico, that's made of 875 **bales**, or bunches, of straw!
- The smallest post office is in Ochopee, Florida. Each wall of the post office building is only about as long as two kids lying end to end!
- People can collect all kinds of stamps from the post office. There are stamps of insects, polar bears, and even Disney characters!
- There was once a post office under the ocean! Scientists were working under the sea near the Bahamas. Their post office used a special address: Seafloor/Bahamas.