



Mailing a Holiday Card

OBJECTIVE: Read to learn how a holiday card travels from one family member to another.

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

“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 and ask, “What am I holding?” (*a letter*) “Have you ever sent a card or a letter in the mail? Have you ever received one? Whom was it to or from? What did it say?” Encourage children to 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

Draw Conclusions

Encourage children to consider the different methods of transportation used to carry mail.

After reading step 4, remind children that Ben and his grandma live far from each other. Then ask: “Do you think all mail travels on a plane? Why or why not?” Elicit that mail travels in different ways depending on the distance it needs to go. For instance, if Ben’s grandma lived right across town, it would be very silly to put the card on a plane! Instead, it would probably travel by van or truck.

AFTER READING

Sequence

Ask children to put the steps of the card’s trip in the correct order.

On separate sheets of paper, write a description of each step without writing the step number. For instance: *A truck picks up the mail. Workers separate the packages from the cards and letters, etc.* (Or you can cut an extra copy of the issue into five pieces and cover up the step numbers.) Post the steps out of order on a bulletin board or wall and ask 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 have to buy a new one.
- 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.