

ASSCO INFO-SHEET NO. 3

PHILATELIC TERMS

Adhesive — A gummed stamp, as compared to an imprinted stamp (see Postal Stationery).

Block (of stamps) — A number of unseparated stamps, less than a whole sheet or pane, but not in a single strip. Usually refers to block of four.

Cancellation — A mark of defacement applied to a stamp to prevent its use or re-use. Includes postmarks, pen marks, holes punched out; and printed, written, or perforated words such as "cancelled", "sample", "specimen".

Cancelled to order — Stamps defaced by postmarking but with original gum, and not used postally.

Centred — When a stamp is evenly balanced between its perforated edges it is said to be "well centred". If stamp is not so balanced it is "off centre".

C.D.S. — Circular date stamp, as opposed to bar cancellation.

Coil Stamps — Stamps printed in long strips for special use such as in a stamp vending machine (usually recognised by two imperforate sides).

Column — The vertical line on stamps in a sheet (as distinguished from horizontal row).

Commemorative issues — Stamps issued to celebrate some event in honour of some person. Usually in circulation for a limited period only and do not supersede ordinary issues.

Condition of stamps — A stamp in good condition should be well centred, clean, and uncreased. If used, it should be clearly and lightly cancelled. No perforations should be missing or short. Unused stamps should be perfect—as when they were printed. Comparative terms used to describe conditions are:— mint, unused, used, fine used, heavily or lightly cancelled, creased, torn, etc.

Cover — The envelope or wrapper in which correspondence has been sent.

Definitive issues — Stamps in use for a long period, as compared to commemorative or special issues.

Error — A stamp which has a mistake. Examples are: wrong paper; incorrect design; missing colours; etc.

Essays — Proposed designs for new stamp issues.

First day cover — A cover bearing a stamp used and postmarked on the first day of issue.

Gutter pair/strip — At least two stamps, one either side of the selvedge between two panes of stamps.

Fiscal — Stamp used to collect Government duties or taxation (also called "Revenue").

Hinge — The specially gummed device used to mount stamps in albums (not normally used for mint items).

Imperforate — Not perforated and not provided with other means of separation.

Imprint — An inscription on the margins of some sheets of some countries, giving the name, initials, etc., of the printer or publisher of the stamps.

Inscription — The name of the country, description, value, etc. which is inscribed on the stamp, as distinct from the design.

Inverted — The frame or border has been printed upside down in relation to the central design.

Issue — The stamps of a particular design or date sent out for public use. (It excludes "remainders", which are stocks of stamps left after the stamps have been withdrawn from sale.) The term is often used also for a particular group or series.

Mint — Term applied to a stamp in original condition, exactly as issued, with original gum.

Official — Stamps issued for Government use. Usually have "O.S." overprinted or perforated on the stamp.

Overprint — Something printed on a stamp after the original printing (see also "surcharge").

Pack — A special sheet or folder issued by the post office which includes full details of an issue, plus selected copies of the issue, protected in a mount.

Pane — A block of stamps surrounded by a margin and comprising part of a sheet.

Perforation — Holes or similar enabling stamps to be separated readily.

Philately — The study of postage stamps. (Philatelist — a serious collector.)

Postal stationery — Post office items which bear a printed stamp instead of using an adhesive stamp, e.g. Aerogrammes, letter cards, should be collected intact — do not cut out the "stamp".

Postmark — Any official mark struck on letters, etc., passing through the post.

Provisionals — Stamps put temporarily into circulation, usually when the supply of a certain denomination has been exhausted. Usually created by overprinting or surcharging.

Remainders — See "issue".

Revenue — See "fiscal".

Selvedge — The strip of plain or marked paper surrounding a pane of stamps to make handling easier.

Se-tenant — (*French* "joined together"). Two or more unseparated stamps differing from each other, e.g. in value or design.

Set — A complete collection of single stamps in an issue.

Sheet of stamps — Entire sheet of stamps containing the maximum number of stamps printed on one piece of paper. Usually then divided into two or more portions for post office use (panes).

Surcharge — An overprint which alters or confirms the face value of the stamp.

Tete-beche — Two adjacent unseparated stamps of identical design, except that one is upside-down.

Unhinged mint — As for "mint" but with no disturbances to gum from being previously hinged in a collection.

Unused — A stamp which has not been obliterated or defaced, but not necessarily with gum or in mint condition.

Used — A stamp which has been used for the purpose for which it was issued. (Various conditions are called average used, fine used, very fine used.)

Variety — Any stamp showing differences from the normal is termed a variety.

Watermark — A design included in paper during manufacture.