

RSA Brief

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Background

Royal Mail's Special Stamp programme is developed with regard to a number of criteria that include the following:

- to commemorate important anniversaries
- to commemorate events of national importance, as well as significant contemporary UK successes on the international stage
- to reflect the contribution of the UK to world affairs in the broadest range of activities, from the arts and humanities to science and technology
- to explore 'the British way of life', celebrating the diversity of cultures and interests within the UK
- to contribute to the cultural life of the UK through the patronage of art and design, and thereby act as a showcase for the best of contemporary British creative talent.

The programme is also designed to include a variety of subjects, imagery and techniques in order to appeal to the interests and tastes of different groups over the year's programme.

The Brief

Today's sources of power are becoming a significant cause for concern, as many of these are either non-renewable or nuclear. A recent poll indicates that UK citizens are increasingly aware of the threat to the environment and climate caused by the ways in which energy is currently produced and used.

Alternative energy may provide the way forward. Alternative energy development focuses on increasing the proportion of energy obtained from renewable resources in an effort to ease the impact on climate change.

The brief is to explore and design stamps that will bring attention to this issue and promote awareness about alternatives. Examples of alternative energy sources to be considered in your research are solar, wind, tidal and water power, as well as geothermal energy and biomass.

Also consider the role of energy conservation in reducing the consumption of existing resources (e.g. triple glazing; wall and roof insulation); energy efficiency (e.g. efficient domestic boilers; using low power appliances; washing clothes at lower temperatures); utilising the heat that is generated in electricity rather than wasting it (Combined Heat and Power).

The target audience is broad, as the topic will strike a chord with young and old; stamp collectors and general public.

We encourage contributions from designers, illustrators, photographers, typographers, painters, etc as well as collaborative projects.

The set will feature six stamps, featuring the Queen's head and values 1st, 48p, 50p, 56p, 72p, 81p (note: do not include the 'p' in the designs). Any of the stamp template sizes supplied electronically may be used but students are invited to make new recommendations within these general size constraints. However, the design must work within a maximum depth of 37mm.

The images you create should work at stamp size, in isolation and as part of a set. The approach should engage as broad a range of the public as possible.

In researching the background, we ask that you do not contact associated parties (other than for the purposes of obtaining information packs that would be available to the general public) or lobby groups to discuss the project.

Market

- a stamp is a receipt for a service and is available to anyone within the UK wishing to use the postal service
- this service covers the globe and therefore the stamp is an ambassador for the UK when travelling to overseas destinations
- a new and younger generation of stamp collector

Aims

- to produce an innovative response that goes beyond conventional treatments and styles – look at recent examples of innovation in stamp design
- to demonstrate originality of thought and approach based on sound research

Guidelines

When considering the design of a stamp, it is important to remember the following points:

- think on a small scale from the outset
- the Queen's head must appear top right or left facing towards the design and must be in a correct relationship with the overall stamp size (this is shown in the PDFs on the resources page for this project – please see Postage Stamp web page). If using overlays, ensure they are easily lifted to reveal the original artwork
- once research is complete and decisions have been made on your overall approach, preliminary visuals should be reviewed at stamp size
- since a stamp on an envelope is evidence of the pre-payment for postage, and because the recipient is primarily interested in the content of the envelope, each stamp must convey an immediate message
- design should combine clarity with an attention to detail
- there should be a clear visual distinction between one stamp design and another to ensure that there is no confusion between the different values when the stamps are being sold at the post office counter.