

Talk Time Topic: Mail

Let's get started...

There are many kinds of mail: letters, postcards, packages, invitations, bills, advertisements, magazines, newsletters, paychecks, voter's registration forms, coupon books, etc.

Think about the last time you got your mail. How many pieces of mail did you get? What kinds of mail did you get? How did you feel when you read your mail?

Background:

The United States Postal Service was created in 1775. Between 1860 and 1861 the Pony Express delivered mail from the East Coast to the West Coast by horse. Today, there are around 37,000 Post Offices in the United States. About 260,000 mail trucks travel around the United States delivering mail. While you probably get mail delivered to your house by mail truck, the United States Postal Service uses many ways to move mail, such as airplane, boat, trains, cars, boats, bicycles, and sometimes animals!

For more information, check out the United States Postal Service website: www.usps.com



In pairs for 5 minutes, ask and answer these questions:

Imagine you are writing a letter to a family member in your native country.

What will you write the letter on? Stationery? Paper? A postcard? Something else?

What will you write about?

How will you sign the letter?

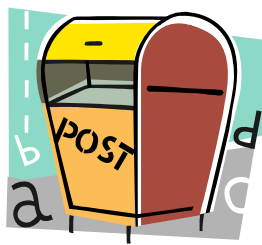
How will you mail the letter? Will you go to the post office?

How much will it cost to send the letter?

How will your family member feel when they receive the letter?

Will they write back to you?

Share your partner's answers with the group.



Discussion Questions:

What is the best thing you have received in the mail? What is the worst thing?

Do you prefer snail mail (mail brought by a mail person) or e-mail? Why?

How often is mail delivered in your native country? What time is it usually delivered? Is it delivered everyday?

Have you ever had a problem using the United States Postal Service?

In America, mail carriers wear uniforms. Do they wear uniforms in your native country?

How do you mail a letter in your native country?

Some people collect postage stamps. Do you know anyone who collects stamps? What kinds of things do people in your native country collect?

In America, a stamp costs 39 cents. How much is a stamp in your native country? Do you think the price of stamps is too expensive in America? In your native country?

What do you do if you receive someone else's mail in your mailbox? In your native country, if you open someone else's mail, what happens? What happens in America if you open someone else's mail?

Have you ever sent someone a letter or package and they didn't receive it? Was the letter or package returned to you? How did you feel? What did you do?

In your native country, do people send cash in the mail? Do they send checks or money orders? Do they send important and confidential information?

Talk about the differences between postal service in America and in your native country.

In your native country, if an address is written incorrectly what happens? Is the letter thrown away? Is it returned to the post office? Is it returned to the sender?

What do you think about direct mail ("junk mail"?) Do you like receiving advertisements and promotions by mail? What do you usually do with junk mail?

New words and Idioms:

Postcards, packages, invitations, advertisements, magazines, newsletters, voter's registration forms, coupons, deliver, stationary, sign, receive, snail mail, mail carriers, uniforms, stamps, mailbox, confidential, protect, incorrectly, sender, direct mail, junk mail, promotions