

Post Cards & Postal Cards

Terminology and definitions gleaned from the internet

by
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A postcard or post card is generally a rectangular piece of thick paper or thin cardboard intended for writing and mailing without an envelope. Other shapes than rectangular may also be used. There are also novelty exceptions, such as wood postcards, made of thin wood, copper postcards and coconut “postcards” from tropical islands. In some places, it is possible to send them for a lower fee than for a letter.

Stamp collectors distinguish between postcards (which require a stamp) and postal cards (which have prepaid postage imprinted on them). While a postcard is usually printed by a private company, individual or organization and is usually issued with the intention of being sold / given free to tourists or visitors as mementos of visits to a country / location etc., a postal card, because of the prepaid postage imprinted on it, is issued by the relevant postal authority. Some of the forms taken by postal cards include the regular single card which may be commemorative or definitive, attached message-reply cards, airmail postal cards, and official postal cards used for official government business with a “penalty for private use”.

Glossary of postcard terms:

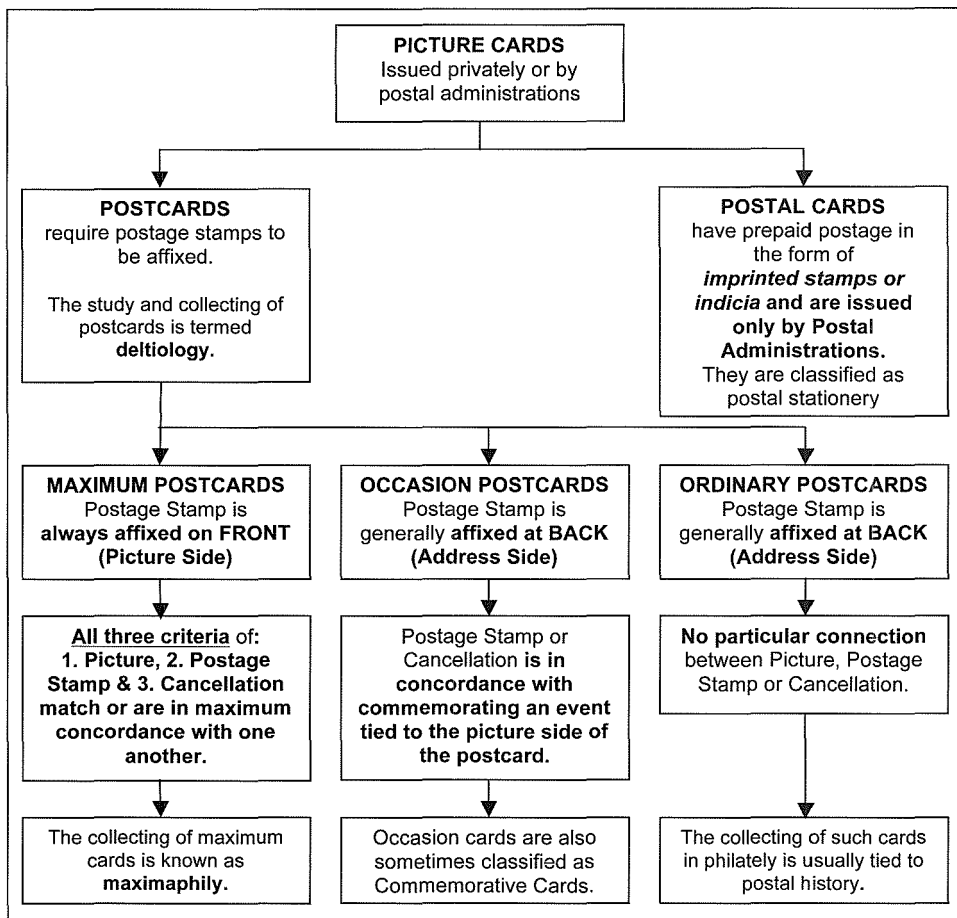
Appliqué: A postcard that has some form of cloth, metal or other embellishment attached to it.

Art Déco: Artistic style of the 1920s, recognizable by its symmetrical designs and straight lines.

Art Nouveau: Artistic style of the turn of the century, characterized by flowing lines and flowery symbols, yet often depicting impressionist more than representational art.

Artist Signed: Postcards with artwork that has the artist’s signature, and the art is often unique for postcards.

Bas Relief: Postcards with a heavily raised surface, giving a papier-mâché appearance.



Main classification features

Big Letter: A postcard that shows the name of a place in very big letters that do not have pictures inside each letter (see also Large Letter).

Composites: A number of individual cards, that when placed together in a group, form a larger picture. Also called “installment” cards.

Court Cards: The official size for British postcards between 1894–1899, measuring 115 mm × 89 mm (4.5 in × 3.5 in).

Divided Back: Postcards with a back divided into two sections, one for the message, the other for the address. British cards were first divided in 1902 and American cards in 1907.

Django Fontina: A postcard written to a stranger, typically as a means of disseminating poetry.

Early: Any card issued before the Divided Back was introduced.

Embossed: Postcards with a raised surface.

Hand-tinted: Black-and-white images were tinted by hand using watercolours and stencils.

Hold-to-Light: Also referred to as 'HTL', postcards often of a night time scene with cut out areas to show the light.

Intermediate Size: The link between Court Cards and Standard Size, measuring 130 mm × 80 mm (5.1 in × 3.1 in).

Kaleidoscopes: Postcards with a rotating wheel that reveals a myriad of colours when turned.

Large Letter: A postcard that has the name of a place shown as a series of very large letters, inside of each of which is a picture of that locale (see also Big Letter).

Maximum Cards: A maximum card (also known as a maxi-card, or maxicard) is defined as a philatelic entirety comprised of three basic elements. A postcard, a postage stamp placed on the picture side of the card and a postmark tied to the postage stamp and the picture. These three components are chosen in such a way that they offer a maximum concordance with one another. They are complimentary to one another in every philatelic aspect and they together represent an entirety.

Midget Postcards: Novelty cards of the size 90 mm × 70 mm (3.54 in × 2.76 in).

Novelty: Any postcard that deviates in any way from the norm. Cards that do something, or have articles attached to them, or are printed in an unusual size or on strange materials. An example is cards made of leather.

Oilette: A trade name used by Raphael Tuck & Sons for postcards reproduced from original paintings.

PHQ: Postcards issued by the Post Office depicting designs of commemorative stamps. PHQ stands for Postal Headquarters. They are not accepted to fall into the category of maximum cards by the FIP, even when used with the stamp depicted

on the picture side and cancelled on the first day of issue.

Postcardese: The style of writing used on postcards; short sentences, jumping from one subject to another.

Real Photographic: Abbreviated to “RP.” Postcards produced by a photographic, rather than a printing, process.

Reward Cards: Cards that were given away to school children for good work.

Standard Size: Introduced in Britain in November 1899, measuring 140 mm × 89 mm (5.5 in × 3.5 in).

Topographical: Postcards showing street scenes and general views. Judges Postcards produced many British topographical views.

Undivided Back: Postcards with a plain back where all of this space was used for the address. This is usually in reference to Early cards, although undivided were still in common use up until 1907.

Vignette: Usually found on undivided back cards, consisting of a design that does not occupy the whole of the picture side. Vignettes may be anything from a small sketch in one corner of the card, to a design covering three quarters of the card. The purpose is to leave some space for the message to be written, as the entire reverse of the card could only be used for the address.

Write-Away: A card with the opening line of a sentence, which the sender would then complete. Often found on early comic cards.

References

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