

DOING DOUBLE DUTY

Pity the poor postage stamp – so much to do, so little space.

The typical postage stamp has three things to do: tell what country it is from, tell the amount of postage paid or the service paid for, and present one or more messages. All of that has to be squeezed into about one square inch, give or take. Clever designers make good use of that limited space by using one visual element with multiple meanings.



These penguins aren't hatching an egg. With one simple change to a life-like image, the designer shows an alluring scene of penguins and simultaneously indicates that a new currency is being introduced. (French Southern and Antarctic Territories, 2002)

A happy coincidence let the designer make slight modifications that allow the last two letters of the country name also indicate the stamp's value of 68-euro cents. (Austria, 2017)



It's very clear whose right to vote is being celebrated with this clever graphic. (Canada, 2016)



Look carefully at the clouds and you'll see the faces of the aircraft designers. (Great Britain, 1997).

If you are interested in stamp design, and more generally how graphic images are used on postage stamps to communicate, visit the Graphics Philately Association website:
<http://www.graphics-stamps.org>

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