

History of United States postage rates

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History of United States postage rates

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History of United States domestic first class & postcard rates

| Date Introduced | Rate for first ounce (USD) (Letter) | Rate for first ounce (Package) | Additional ounces | Postcard rate | Comments |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---|
| March 3, 1863 | .06 (.03 per half ounce) | .06 | .06 (.03 per half ounce) | | .02 per half ounce in drop boxes ¹ |
| March 3, 1883 | .04 (.02 per half ounce) | .04 | .04 (.02 per half ounce) | | |
| July 1, 1885 | .02 | .02 | .02 | | |
| November 2, 1917 | .03 | .03 | .03 | | War Years |
| July 1, 1919 | .02 | .02 | .02 | | Dropped back by Congress |
| July 1, 1928 | .02 | .02 | .02 | .01 | |
| July 6, 1932 | .03 | .03 | .03 | .01 | |
| January 1, 1952 | .03 | .03 | .03 | .02 | |
| August 1, 1958 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .03 | |
| January 7, 1963 | .05 | .05 | .05 | .04 | |
| January 7, 1968 | .06 | .06 | .06 | .05 | |
| May 16, 1971 | .08 | .08 | .08 | .06 | |
| March 2, 1974 | .10 | .10 | .10 | .08 | |
| September 14, 1975 | .10 | .10 | .09 | .07 | Last surface mail rate |
| December 31, 1975 | .13 | .13 | .11 | .09 | All domestic first class & postcards by airmail |
| May 29, 1978 | .15 | .15 | .13 | .10 | A Stamp Used |
| March 22, 1981 | .18 | .18 | .17 | .12 | B Stamp Used |
| November 1, 1981 | .20 | .20 | .17 | .13 | C Stamp Used |
| February 17, 1985 | .22 | .22 | .17 | .14 | D Stamp Used |
| April 3, 1988 | .25 | .25 | .20 | .15 | E Stamp Used |
| February 3, 1991 | .29 | .29 | .23 | .19 | F Stamp Used (also 4 cent F makeup rate stamp) |
| January 1, 1995 | .32 | .32 | .23 | .20 | G Stamp Used (also 3 cent G makeup rate stamp) |
| January 10, 1999 | .33 | .33 | .22 | .20 | H Stamp Used (also 1 cent H makeup rate stamp) |
| January 7, 2001 | .34 | .34 | .21 | .20 | Nondenominated Stamps Used |
| July 1, 2001 | .34 | .34 | .23 | .21 | Nondenominated Stamps Used |
| June 30, 2002 | .37 | .37 | .23 | .23 | Flag and Antique Toy Stamps Used |
| January 8, 2006 | .39 | .39 | .24 | .24 | Lady Liberty Flag Stamp Used |
| May 14, 2007 | .41 | 1.13 | .17 | .26 | Shape-based postage pricing introduced; Forever stamps introduced; different prices for letters and packages for the first time |

Popular Q&A

Q: Where can United States postage rates be found?
 A: To find the most current United States (USPS) postage rates, one should visit the USPS website. As of June 2013, the current postage rate for a first class letter is 41 cents. ... [Read More »](#)
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Q: What are the postage rates in the United States?
 A: A first class stamp at the post office costs 41 cents. ... [Read More »](#)
 Source: [www.chacha.com](#)

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| | | | | | |
|------------------|-----|-------------|---------------------------------|-----|--|
| May 12, 2008 | .42 | 1.17 | .17 | .27 | Price change announced February 11, 2008 |
| May 11, 2009 | .44 | 1.22 | .17 | .28 | Price change announced February 10, 2009 |
| April 17, 2011 | .44 | 1.71 (3 oz) | .20 (letters) .17 (packages) | .29 | ² |
| January 22, 2012 | .45 | 1.95 (3 oz) | .20 (letters) .17 (packages) | .32 | |
| January 27, 2013 | .46 | 1.95 (3 oz) | .20 (letters) .17 (packages) | .33 | Price change announced October 11, 2012 |
| January 27, 2014 | .49 | 1.95 (3 oz) | .21 (letters) .17 (packages) | .34 | Price change announced September 25, 2013 ³ |

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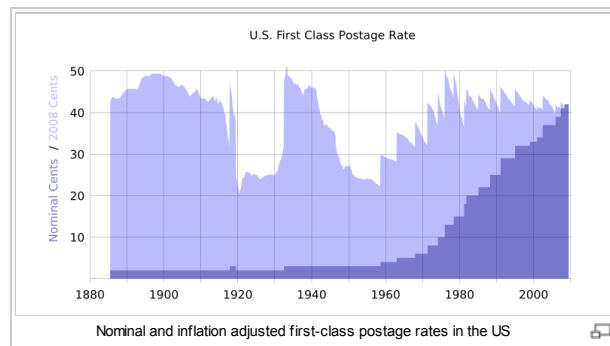
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Plot

Taking the above data and plotting it yields the graph shown to the right. The dark plot is the nominal issued price of the stamp and the light plot is the price adjusted for inflation and is shown in 2008 US cents.

This plot shows that, despite the rise in the nominal cost of a first-class stamp, the adjusted cost of the stamp has stayed relatively stable. The large jumps in the early 1900s are because a change by a single penny was large compared to the cost of the stamp. For example, the price increase from \$0.02 to \$0.03 on July 6, 1932 was a 50% increase in cost. Additionally, while the cost of the stamp itself remained fixed, the adjusted price in 2008 dollars was not fixed over time which added to larger jumps in adjusted prices.



Historical notes

Domestic [Parcel Post](#) service was adopted in 1913, 25 years after the Post Office had agreed to deliver international parcel post packages pursuant to the [Universal Postal Union](#) treaty and various bilateral agreements with other nations.^[1] Initially, there were no or few postal regulations governing packages mailed by parcel post. To construct a bank in [Vernal, Utah](#), in 1916, a [Salt Lake City](#) Company ascertained that the cheapest way to send 40 tons of bricks to the building was by parcel post. Each brick was individually wrapped and mailed. Postal rules were promptly rewritten.^[1]

Bulk postal rates were restructured in 1996:

- Second Class became Periodicals
- Third and Fourth Class Mail became Standard Mail (A) and (B)
- Special Fourth Class Mail was renamed Special Standard Mail.

In 2007, First Class Mail was restructured to include variable pricing based on size, not just on weight. Shape-based postage pricing is a form of [dimensional weight](#). Also at that time, International Parcel Post air service was rebranded as Priority Mail International, and Parcel Post surface service was discontinued for international destinations.^[1]

Regular [Air Mail](#) service began in 1918 and over the years rates varied considerably depending on distance and technology. Domestic Air Mail, as a class of service, officially ended May 1, 1977. By that time all domestic First Class Mail was being dispatched by the most expeditious means, surface or air, whether or not the Air Mail postage had been paid.

Additional charges for [Special delivery](#) existed from 1885 to 2001. Today, Express Mail Overnight is the closest service.

During the summer of 2010 the USPS requested the [Postal Regulatory Commission](#) to raise the price of a first class stamp by 2 cents, from 44 cents to 46 cents, to take effect January 2, 2011. On September 30, The PRC denied the request, but the USPS filed an appeal with the [Federal Court of Appeals in Washington DC](#).^{[1][2]}

On December 24, 2013, the USPS announced yet another increase in postal rates. Stamps will cost 3 cents more, increasing their price to 49 cents. Bulk mail, periodicals and package service rates will each increase by six percent. The increase is intended to make up for a 5 billion loss during the 2013 fiscal year.^[1]

See also

- [United States postal abbreviations](#)
- [United States Postal Service creed](#)

Unions of the U.S. Postal Service:

- [American Postal Workers Union](#)
- [National Association of Letter Carriers](#)
- [National Postal Mail Handlers Union](#)
- [National Rural Letter Carriers' Association](#)

History:

- [Post Office Murals](#)
- [American Letter Mail Company](#)
- [Postage stamps and postal history of the United States of America](#)

External links

- [Current USPS Postage Rate Charts - simple tables](#)

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Sources

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- [The History of Postage Rates in the United States](#)
- [Consumer Price Index data](#)
- [Nondenomination Stamps FAQ](#)
- [Paying the Postage in the U.S., 1776-1921](#)

Further reading

Beecher, Henry W. and Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz. *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-2011*. Bellefonte, Pa.: American Philatelic Society, 2011. ISBN 9780933580787

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