

The Journey of a Letter

A guide for teachers



Introduction

The Journey of a Letter DVD runs for about 7.5 minutes and provides an informative and fun look at what happens to mail from the time it is posted until it arrives at its final destination.

The DVD follows the journey of a letter from being written to its eventual delivery and is narrated by a teenage girl doing work experience with Australia Post. Postal services provide an important communication link between people, communities and nations. Many people and processes are involved in maintaining this vital communication link and ensuring regular, prompt and accurate postal deliveries. The DVD is designed to interest middle primary through to lower secondary students. Discussion questions and suggestions for follow-up activities have been provided for teachers so that this resource can easily be incorporated into classroom activities. All the lesson ideas would fit into the Key Learning Area of Society and the Environment and have been designed with an Australia-wide schools audience in mind.

The Journey of a Letter complements the national education printed resource produced by Australia Post, which is called *Our Post*. Classroom teachers can order the resource free of charge via the website

www.auspost.com.au/education



The Journey of a Letter

Questions for Discussion

1. What did you discover about Australia's postal service from the DVD that you didn't know before?
2. How do you feel when you get something sent to you in the mail? Why?
3. What is the best letter you've ever received? Why?
4. What is the best parcel you ever received? What was in it? Who was it from?
5. If you could write a letter to anyone in the world, whom would you write to? What would you say to him or her?
6. When is it better to receive a letter rather than an email? Why?
7. Modern technology has made our mail service faster and more efficient. Discuss some of the problems the mail service may have had in Australia in the early days.
8. This DVD traces the journey of a letter in Australia. What additional processes do you think a letter or parcel might have to undergo if it was sent overseas?
9. What is the correct way to address an envelope?
(See the example of a correctly addressed envelope on page 7).

Postal Quick Calculations

There are many interesting facts and figures about Australia Post. A number of these are mentioned on the DVD. Test your skills and quickly calculate the following:

a. There are about this number of posties working in Australia

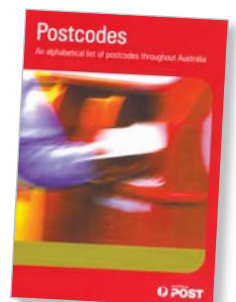
$$(4 \times 25) \times 100 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

b. On average, Australia Post handles about this number of parcels every day

$$(40 \times 100) \times 100 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

Follow-up Lesson Activities and Ideas

- ☒ As a class, brainstorm and then list the major stages a letter goes through after it is posted.
- ☒ Draw a flow chart to show the processes involved from the time a letter is posted to when it is delivered.
- ☒ Watch the DVD with the sound turned off. Can you describe what is happening?
- ☒ On a map of Australia choose different places and then find their postcodes using a postcode book (or the Find a Postcode tool on the Australia Post website). **auspost.com.au**
- ☒ Conduct a postcode-finding competition and see who can be first to find the postcodes of three different places.
- ☒ There are six different places called Richmond in Australia. Using a postcode book (or the Find a Postcode tool on the Australia Post website) **auspost.com.au** see how many other names you can find that have been given to places in three or more States. What do you think is the most popular name?



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- Compare barcodes on a number of letters posted to various addresses. What is the difference between them? What is the same?
- Investigate further how barcodes work.
- Find out what the standard letter size and thickness is (using **auspost.com.au**).
- After watching the DVD, brainstorm in groups of four, and then list as many “postal” words as possible and create your own find-a-word puzzles. Try them out on your friends.
- Choose a variety of articles from around your classroom and discuss the best way to package them for posting.
- In groups, write a short DVD script about a letter. Who sent it? Why did they send it? What happened when it arrived?
(Use the sample DVD script on page 5 as a guide. Remember that you need to think about characters, dialogue, camera directions and angles, and the soundtrack or backing music).

Australia Post Quick Quiz

Tick the box next to the correct answer for each question.

1. At the very beginning of the DVD, Tom was
 - a) writing a letter to enter a competition
 - b) having afternoon tea
 - c) posting a letter
 - d) reading a letter
2. Australia Post sorts about
 - a) 20,000 articles of mail a day
 - b) 120,000 articles of mail a day
 - c) 1,200,000 articles of mail a day
 - d) 20,000,000 articles of mail a day
3. Mail centres are where our mail is
 - a) sorted
 - b) posted
 - c) colour-coded
 - d) recycled
4. Letters that are too thick are
 - a) machine sorted
 - b) hand sorted
 - c) not sorted
 - d) returned to their sender
5. In the mail centre, machines
 - a) turn letters the right way up and cancel postage stamps
 - b) scan postcode numbers
 - c) print a barcode
 - d) all of the above
6. The Tray Management System
 - a) moves mail around the mail centre
 - b) moves trays around the Australia Post canteen
 - c) looks a bit like a roller coaster
 - d) a and c
7. The barcode that is printed on every letter and parcel contains
 - a) secret information for spies
 - b) information about the destination of each piece of mail
 - c) information for hotel owners
 - d) no information at all

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Australia Post Quick Quiz

Tick the box next to the correct answer for each question.

8. Every hour, a letter sorting machine can sort how many letters?
- a) 15,000
 - b) 25,000
 - c) 35,000
 - d) 45,000
9. In Australia Post outlets you can
- a) pay your bills
 - b) do banking
 - c) buy gifts and stationery
 - d) all of the above and more
10. Express Post delivers mail to many places in Australia
- a) within a week
 - b) within 48 hours
 - c) on the next working day
 - d) within minutes
11. It's important to put postcodes on letters because
- a) the person who invented postcodes would be upset if you didn't
 - b) it tells the sorting machines where to send the letters
 - c) you need something to fill up those little orange boxes
 - d) postcodes tell you all about posties
12. Your name and address should be on the back of the envelope
- a) so your letter can be sent back to you if the address is incorrect
 - b) so Australia Post can write to you
 - c) so the sorting machine can put your address barcode on it
 - d) to give you something else to do
13. Packages sent by post should always be
- a) packed with bits sticking out
 - b) gift-wrapped and tied up with ribbon
 - c) well-packed and secure
 - d) left unwrapped
14. Australia Post delivers mail to delivery centres and some post offices in Australia
- a) by air and sea
 - b) by road and rail
 - c) by rail and sea
 - d) by air and road
 - e) all of the above
15. Posties start sorting mail for delivery
- a) after morning tea
 - b) at about 6 am
 - c) after lunch
 - d) late at night

Solutions found on page 7.

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The Journey of a Letter DVD script

Tom and Lauren are young actors and they had a great time filming the DVD.

Below is a sample taken from the DVD script. A script is always written before filming. Sometimes small changes are made to the script once filming begins.

You will find this sample useful for the activity on page 3 relating to writing your own script.

	AUDIO	VISION
1.	<p>Music under:</p> <p>TOM VOICE-OVER:</p> <p><i>So, that's the reason I'm entering this competition to win the four free tickets to the game.</i></p> <p><i>From Tom Fletcher</i></p> <p><i>P.S. I hope you think my letter is the best.</i></p>	<p>We begin to hear a voice-over as the camera pans down to Tom.</p>
2.	<p>LAUREN:</p> <p><i>I'm running late, but I said I would post my brother's competition entry.</i></p> <p><i>Phew just in time for the afternoon collection. I really hope Tom wins.</i></p>	<p>We see Lauren moving quickly to a letter box just as the Australia Post van pulls up.</p> <p>As Lauren walks away.</p>
3.	<p>LAUREN:</p> <p><i>Did you know that Australia Post handles around 20 million articles of mail every working day!</i></p> <p><i>That's about one letter for every Australian every day.</i></p> <p><i>All these letters and parcels get picked up by all these trucks and vans you see on the road.</i></p>	<p>We are presented with various shots of the van and other Australia Post vehicles making their way around town.</p>
4.	<p>LAUREN:</p> <p><i>They deliver them to the nearest mail centre ... and there are dozens of them across Australia. They make sure all the mail is sorted and sent to the right place.</i></p>	<p>STOCK FOOTAGE:</p> <p>Trucks and vans delivering to mail centres.</p>
5.	<p>LAUREN:</p> <p><i>I love doing work experience at Australia Post. Come on, I'll show you around.</i></p>	<p>Lauren walks through the front of the mail centre and puts on her safety gear.</p>

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	AUDIO	VISION
6.	<p>LAUREN V/O:</p> <p><i>They've got the most amazing machines here, each with their own special job.</i></p> <p><i>This is where the mail comes when it first arrives.</i></p> <p><i>Letters that are too thick have to be put aside to be hand sorted as they will not go through the machines – so, if you're posting photos or sending bottle caps for competitions, you should use a padded bag.</i></p> <p><i>These letters are going into a machine that turns all the letters up the right way and cancels the postage stamp.</i></p> <p><i>It's awesome!</i></p>	<p>Show wide shot of all the equipment.</p> <p>Shots of mail arriving.</p> <p>Lauren helps put mail on the conveyor belt.</p> <p>Lauren picks out letters that are not suitable.</p> <p>Letters flying past Lauren's face.</p>
7.	<p>LAUREN:</p> <p><i>The mail now gets fed into another machine, just as smart. It's called a letter-sorting machine and these machines have eyes!</i></p> <p><i>I'm not kidding, these machines have an electronic eye, you know like the speed cameras ... but this one is even faster and smarter.</i></p> <p><i>The electronic eye scans the address and, with the help of a very smart computer, prints a special barcode, which contains all sorts of information about where each letter is going.</i></p>	<p>Lauren walks to the machine and feeds a pile of mail into it.</p> <p>The camera zooms into the machine to examine the process.</p> <p>In tight, travelling shots we examine the machine in action.</p>
8.	<p>LAUREN V/O:</p> <p><i>Did you know that this machine can read over 35,000 letters every hour!</i></p> <p><i>And if you and I sorted them by hand it would take us more than three days!</i></p> <p><i>I think the machine wins.</i></p> <p><i>There is also a fantastic machine here that looks like a roller coaster, called a Tray Management System, that moves the mail around the centre.</i></p>	<p>Lauren marvels at the machine and tries to count the letters as they go past.</p> <p>Lauren watches the mail moving overhead.</p>

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Puzzle Solutions

Australia Post Quick Quiz

1. *a* 2. *d* 3. *a* 4. *b* 5. *d*
6. *d* 7. *b* 8. *c* 9. *d* 10. *c*
11. *b* 12. *a* 13. *c* 14. *e* 15. *b*

Postal Quick Calculations

1. 10,000
2. 400,000

Examples of correctly addressed envelopes

Front of Envelope



Back of Envelope

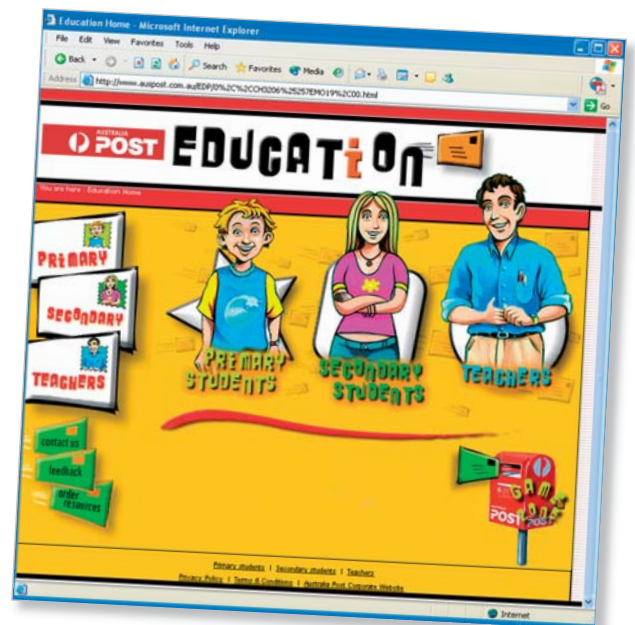


Website

Australia Post has an informative and entertaining education website. The material on the website is designed to interest students of all ages. There is also a wonderful selection of educational resources for teachers, targeting a wide range of student age groups and learning levels.

Why not visit the website today?

www.auspost.com.au/education



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