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КОНКУРСНАЯ РАБОТА

Английский язык

« The importance of postage stamps in the past and nowadays. »

(исследование)

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The subject of research:

**"The importance of postage stamps in the past and nowadays".**

**The contents of research:**

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

I think hobbies must play an important part in the life of each person.

The definition of hobby in the dictionary is given as "regular activity or interest that is undertaken for pleasure, typically done during one's leisure time".

But very few people know how the word hobby actually originated. In the period of 1350, wooden toys were made in England. A 'hobby' was a name given to a wooden horse by English people. When this toy became famous among children, they started spending a lot of time playing this toy. Parents usually scolded their children by saying 'stop riding your hobby horse'. Soon the expression 'riding one's hobby horse' started gaining usage in daily activities of the English population.

This expression became synonymous with the meaning 'involve in some leisure activity'.

A hobby is simply an activity of fun which will help you develop your artistic skills and reduce your stress levels. Hobbies help us improve ourselves.

My hobby is collecting stamps. Postage stamps help us to study history of humanity. But the main purpose of the hobby of collection, I think, is to show off the collection to people around us. The praise received for rare collection is the source of inspiration for such a hobby.

I have been collecting stamps for a long time. The theme of the stamps is very close to me. I am interested in any information related to stamps. That’s why I’m going to talk about them today.

The relevance of this research at the moment is very high.

Many of my classmates and friends have no interest in anything except computer games. Some of them have a heavy dependence from computer games. It's very sad. And if one of them gains interest in stamps I will consider that I haven’t laboured in vain. So, I think my research is relevant to present.

And so, I want to present my research on the subject "The importance of postage stamps in the past and nowadays".

The purpose of my work was:

to find evidence to prove or disprove my hypotheses.

I have put forward two hypotheses:

1. postage stamps occupied an honorary place in the past centuries and were simply necessary for people;
2. postage stamps on envelopes have become a survival of the past today, in the days of high computer technology; but they are still interesting as the subject of art and history.

I set myself the following tasks:   
1. to find out the cause of appearing of postage stamps and their popularity in the past;  
2. to find out whether people need a postage stamp today in the days of high computer technology;

3. to analyse the received information and to draw conclusion about popularity of marks in the past and at present.;

4. to involve classmates in the ranks of collectors of stamps.

I used the following methods in my work:

1. collection and examination of information;

2. analysis, comparison of different points of view and facts;

3. studying blogs in the Internet;

4. studying statistics;

5. survey in the form of a questionnaire;

6. writing mini-essays;

7. a conversation with one of the collaborations of the nearest post office about the necessity of postage stamps (interview);

8. calculation and analysis of the results.

The work on a research project was carried out in three directions:

1.selection of material and its systematization;

2.comparison of different points of view and facts;

3.creating a Web-Presentation.

I think this work has practice-oriented character, as the research materials and the presentation can be used in English lessons and in extracurricular activities.

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**II. MAIN BODY**

**⮛1. THE CAUSE OF APPEARING OF POSTAGE STAMPS AND**

**THEIR POPULARITY IN THE PAST**

1. **When was the first stamp made?**

The postal service began in England during the sixteenth century as a messenger service by which the government in London could keep in contact with its officer’s around the country. Under Cromwell’s leadership, the postal service came under direct government control and by Charles II.

In the early eighteen hundreds, as Great Britain became the leading industrial nation, business and the expansion of commerce demanded a reliable and cost effective postal system. The slow and expensive method of collecting the postage upon got very required vast changes, perhaps most importantly to provide a reform postal rate.

The postage stamp is a relatively modern invention, first proposed in 1837 when Sir Rowland Hill, an English teacher and tax reformer, suggested an idea about a new simple and more effective way of a collection of money on postal charges. His improvements to the service included the idea of adhesive postage stamps.

Nowadays he is principally known for his development of the modern postal service and invention of penny postage.

Sir Rowland Hill, the inventor of the postage stamp, is depicted on the stamps of several countries. Hill proposed a unified fee: for the letter weighing half an ounce - one penny. Email has become not only the public and media, but also very profitable. ⬩ *see link to the result of an international study in the British journal "Daily Mail"* *(Appendix №1)*

Another Englishman, bookseller James Chalmers, developed draft Hill. He

proposed to introduce postage stamps - the same one receipt, which is pasted on

the envelope to this day. James Chalmers was the inventor of the adhesive postage

stamp. *Appendix №2*

On May 6th 1840, the first adhesive postage stamps, bearing an engraved portrait of young Queen Victoria, became valid for use.

The penny black stamp was used for more than half an ounce, while the two-penny blue was used for letters of a heavier weight. *Appendix №2*

1. **The first collectors of stamps.**

Sir Rowland Hill as he was later to become, could not have realized how this simple solution to the problem of an efficient nationwide postal service was to create the world’s most popular and enduring hobby…stamp collecting.

The first collectors collected stamps of the whole world.

First, most people laughed at these collectors. But soon they became interested in them more and more.

From the early 1850s, there was enough interest in stamps because of antique dealers. They see an opportunity in them to improve their prosperity.

Among the earliest stamp dealers was the Brussel's antique dealer Jean-Baptiste Moens who became a dealer in 1852.

He is considered the "father of philately."

He began with a small business. At age nineteen, he was buying and selling new and second-hand books, coins and then stamps. Nowadays he is recognized as the first dealer in stamps for collectors. ⬩ *see link to Information from Answers.com (Appendix №4)*

Several European monarchs were keen on collecting of postage stamps, including King George V of the United Kingdom.

George V who ruled the British Empire more than 25 years, made philately by one of the most popular hobbies in the Great Britain.

He took a great interest in a collecting of stamps when he was only 13 years old.

By 1890 George had already have enough serious collection.

George's father, Edward, helped the son with a rare material for the collection which usual philatelists had no possibility to get.

King George V became President of the Royal Philatelic Society. *Appendix №4*

1. **The first adhesive postage stamps and the most valuable ones in the world.**

Penny Black and Penny Blue from Great Britain, 1840 were the world’s first adhesive postage stamps.  
They were the first stamps to call for prepayment of postage, rather than payment on delivery. You can see the portrait of young Queen Victoria on them.

*Appendix №5*

Queen Victoria's profile was a staple on 19th century stamps of the British Empire. She is on a half-penny of the Falkland Islands, 1891. *Appendix №5*

The second country which issued stamps was Brazil, 1843.

The first stamps of Brazil were issued on 1 August 1843 and are known as

"Bull's Eyes" due to their distinctive appearance. *Appendix №5*

The Mauritius "Post Office" stamps were issued by the British Colony Mauritius

in September( 1847) in two denominations: an orange-red one penny and a deep

blue two pence. Their name comes from the wording on the stamps reading "Post

Office", which was soon changed in the next issue to "Post Paid."

They are among the rarest postage stamps in the world, and are of legendary

status in the world of philately. *Appendix №6*

The One Kreuzer Black, or Schwarzer Einser, was the first postage stamp issued

in the kingdom of Bavaria, and the first anywhere in the territories making up

modern Germany. It was issued on 1 November 1849. *Appendix №6*

U.S. Franklin Z-Grill was published in 1867. This is the rarest of all postage

stamps in US. *Appendix №6*

British Guiana One Cent Black on Magenta was published in 1856.

This stamp is the rarest and most expensive stamps.

It printed on low quality paper in magenta with black ink.

There is only one left all over the world. So this stamp was unique and no other

else ever found. *Appendix №6*

’’Inverted Jenny,’’ a 24-cent stamp of 1918. This is the first US

stamp to celebrate airmail. This stamp shows the famous JN-4H plane, also called

the Jenny. This is perhaps the most famous US stamp error. You can see that they

accidentally printed the plane upside down. *Appendix №7*

The Three-Skilling Yellow is one of the Swedish government publications, first

printed in 1855. Three-Skilling Yellow is one of the rarest stamps. *Appendix №7*

Hawaiian Missionaries is the first Hawaii stamp. This is the rarest stamp because

it was roughly printed with thin paper and low quality. *Appendix №7*

**⮛2. A POSTAGE STAMP IN THE DAYS OF HIGH COMPUTER**

**TECHNOLOGY**

1. **The statistics in Philately today.**

Many years passed, but people have not lost an interest in collecting stamps.

Franklin Roosevelt, who designed several American commemorative stamps while U.S. President, was a stamp collector. *Appendix №8*

Freddie Mercury, lead singer of the band Queen, collected stamps as a child. His childhood stamp album is in the collection of the British Postal Museum & Archive. *Appendix №8*

John Lennon of The Beatles was a childhood stamp collector. His stamp album is held by the National Postal Museum. *Appendix №8*

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has revealed that he likes to indulge in what has been called the hobby of kings - stamp collecting. *Appendix №8*

Let's see how interesting Philately today.

After studying the statistics, I can say that over the past 10 years stamp prices of the 1st class have increased **by 110%,** and stamp prices of the 2nd class have increased **by157%** .⬩*see link to average data for Europe(Appendix №9)*

Based on the above data we can say that collecting stamps is popular.

When we hear the words "postage stamps ", we usually imagine collection of albums but not the envelope with sticky stamps. I think everyone will agree with me.

Paper letters in white envelopes have become rather pleasant faint memory of the past than the means of communication and conveying information about any question. Of course, it's great that progress does not stand in the same place. It constantly moves forward finding new ways of communication through many miles in our modern, high-tech society with 24-hours access to the Internet.

And if we want to hear the voice of our beloved people we can always call at any time! It's so convenient! No one wants to waste time on writing letters because everyone is busy nowadays.

Studying the statistics on the Internet I found out that from 2009 to 2014, the number of paper letters decreased **by 3.3 billion**.⬩*see link to average data for Europe(Appendix №10)*

Do we need paper letters today?

1. **Studying blogs in the Internet.**

Studying blogs in the Internet I found out the following things:

Fewer and fewer people think that writing letters seem weird nowadays with the SMS and e-mails, they almost forgot the existence of the post office.

Here's what they say:

’’A postage stamp was one of the most revolutionary inventions in the world. But in the era of e-mail-E-Mail, Skype & Co square of paper with jagged edges is not necessary!!’’

’’Everyone likes a postage stamp, but no one need it and it's dying screams "Lick me!"’’

’’I think so, SMS and emails will replace letters. I have not received or written any letters for many years. I will send SMS or call when I wanna contact somebody. Nowadays communication is very convenient and quick. You have various choices to keep in contact with your friends, for example, QQ, msn, SMS, a mobile telephone and etc. Especially, for our young guys. We prefer a fashionable and quick way to enjoy our life. Letters, as a traditional communicated way, will be the history…’’

’’ I think it's terrible for me to think of that. When I have something to tell my friends, I prefer calling them or sending e-mail. Handwriting letters really needs to waste more time than sending an e-mail.’’

However, there are drawbacks to using the Internet as a way of communication.

Some people miss the usual letters. They say:

’’I do not know what to say, but to be honest I usually miss the feelings when I receive and read SMS. Phone calls are also very different as the voice is off when you hang up the phone. Even e-mail is different….it needs to be deleted. The familiar handwritings, the repeatability even after years, the concentration need when you write the letters, all of them make the letter communications unique.’’

’’ I received a lot of letters from my friends when I was at high school. I miss the past days when I could read letters. I think the letters carry a lot of information. People write to you because they care about you and they are willing to spend some time on writing to you.’’

So, only **about 10%** of people, expressing their opinion, think that paper letters

are relevant today.

*To my mind, a handwriting letter is a very pleasant thing. In my opinion, everybody likes to receive such a letter. A letter tells you that someone was thinking about you. Unlike a telephone call, you can keep a letter and read it again and again. You may say that nowadays people don’t write letters to each other or do it very seldom. It is true. E-mail messages replaced handwriting letters today. But an e-mail message is a quite another thing. In e-mails people often try to make their messages shorter, leaving out unnecessary details. SMS or text messages are*

*even shorter than e-mail messages. They have to be as short as possible. People who send them often use strange shortenings. Here are some examples: friend-frnd, love-lv, week-wk and etc.* *And where's the romance?!*

1. **The analysis of mini-essays.**

We asked our classmates to write an essay giving their opinion on the following topic: Whether handwriting letters have become a survival of the past. Whether they are needed today.

There are arguments for and against using such letters as the means of communication. (**16%** of teens- for; **84%** of teens- against)

That's what they think about this:

’’There is no doubt that using high-tech as the way of communication has its advantages.

First of all, it is a quick way to convey somebody information on any question.

It means that students have more free time for other activities.’’

’’One drawback of using SMS and emails is that students don’t use theire writings skills.’’

’’I think that the use of high-tech for communication is a welcome and useful development. When you suddenly have anything to tell somebody you can just call or send message.’’

’’We didn't want to take in hands a pen to write a letter, instead we click on a keyboard and within a few seconds our messages reach their goal!’’

’’Everybody likes to receive a letter from a friend. A letter tells you that someone was thinking about you. Unlike a telephone call, you can keep a letter and read it again and again. To enjoy writing letters as much as to enjoy receiving them.’’

’’Phobe Xu said,’’ When someone spends time writing a letter to you, it means you are special to him/her.’’

’’ Text messaging is the most convenient and the cheapest form of communication.’’

’’Emails have replaced letters and postcards almost completely. People prefer emails, which are quicker to write and send and more sure to reach the addressee.’’

’’One of the world’s oldest methods of connectivity and written communication is on the decline. Many people don’t write personal letters any more. Fewer still know how to compose a letter.’’

*”* A *handwritten**letter has meditative qualities, nostalgic elements and emotive properties.*

*Unlike telephone calls, e-mail messages or text messages, I can* *read or reread such a letter sitting with a cup of coffee* *and relish its feel in my hands, its pleasant smell of the stationery on which it was written.”* (*my own opinion)*

1. **The analysis of survey in the form of a questionnaire.**

One method to achieve the purpose of the study was a sociological survey based on our developed questionnaire.

We asked our classmates, teachers, and parents to answer the following questions:

1. ***Are you for or against letters with postage stamps?*** ***Submit*** ***your arguments.***
2. ***Why do you think handwritten letters are a dying art form?***
3. ***Do you enjoy writing with pen or pencil, and paper?***

***d) Do we need a postage stamp nowadays?***

***e) Is*** ***collecting*** ***stamps relevant to present? What is your opinion of this hobby?***

***f) Do you collect stamps?***

1. ***Are you for or against letters with postage stamps?*** ***Submit*** ***your arguments.***

**+ pros+  *18% of teens and adults***

*”* SMS and e-mail need to be deleted; the voice is off when you hang up the phone; letters with postage stamps can be reread repeatedly even after years.”

”If you receive a letter from friend it's evident that you are special to him/her because someone is willing to take time to write to you.”

”A handwritten letter is nostalgia.”

”Bitter-sweet taste of a postage stamp became so nostalgic, like soup made from semolina.”

”Unfortunately, one of the most important cultural values of the modern world disappears from our daily lives.”

**- cons- *82% of teens and adults***

”It is so fast and convenient to send SMS or give phone calls.”

”Letters need more time than SMS and email, they are more expensive (you have to buy some letter papers and envelops).”

”Most of us are accustomed to SMS, mobile phone and email. It’s so convenient!”

”We can communicate on Skype or call someone when we want to hear his/her voice.”

1. ***Why do you think handwritten letters are a dying art form?***

***⬩*** ***Poor Handwriting 17%***

***⬩*** ***Text Messaging 100%***

***⬩*** ***EMai 100%***

***⬩*** ***Illiteracy 3%***

***⬩******Too Busy 100%***

1. ***Do you enjoy writing with pen or pencil, and paper?***

***⬩ No 72%***

***⬩*** ***Never 12%***

***⬩*** ***Sometimes 11%***

***⬩Often 5%***

1. ***Do we need a postage stamp nowadays?***

More than **5%** of respondents were confused. They didn’t know to say.

More than **7%** of teenagers and adults think that postage stamps are needed to send letters

One in every four respondents thinks that a postage stamp is need to collectors as the subject of art and history. **(25%)**

The rest of teens and adults believe that postage stamps are a survival of the past. They are not needed at all. **(63%)** *Appendix №11*

1. ***Is collecting stamps relevant to present? What is your opinion of this***

***hobby?***

***+ pros+ 7% of teens and adults***

”I am sure that a more visual training manual is not invented by humanity yet. Stamps give information in the most attractive form.”

”This is the uniqueness of Philately that we can teach children using postage stamps.”

Postage stamps are of interest to people because they can be used to study the history of humanity.”

**- cons- *93% of teens and adults***

”Collecting postage stamps is not interesting to young people; philately is

for the elderly men.”

”Young people are not in philately, the number of collectors is reduced.”

”Postage stamps are not of interest to kids, as there is the Internet, Skype, mobile phones...”

”Modern children don't collect stamps and, it seems, don't even know what it is.”

1. ***Do you collect stamps?***

Only 2% of respondents collect stamps.

1. **The opinion of one of the collaborations of the nearest post office**.

We interviewed one of the collaborations of the nearest post office in Odintsovo.

She thinks that we don’t need a postage stamp any more.

Here is a fragment of the conversation:

- Could you tell us whether the volume of letters on paper is decreasing now?

- Unfortunately, Yes! With the appearing of e-mail a number of personal letters

became less, and official letters became much more, for example, taxes, summons

from the court, bills and so on.

- Do you think whether a postage stamp is popular nowadays?

- I don’t think so. The letter’’ A’’ in the rectangle is used instead of a stamp now.

The cost of delivery is included in the price of an envelope.

It means that we don’t need a postage stamp any more. *Appendix №12*

1. **CONCLUSION.**

From all the above we can draw the following conclusions.

A postage stamp was a very important invention, perhaps most importantly to provide a reform postal rate, and occupied an honorary place in the past centuries. It was a new simple and more effective way of a collection of money on postal charges. A postage stamp was simply necessary for people because it was the cheapest and most convenient method of collecting postage.

There was also enough interest in stamps because of antique dealers. They saw an opportunity in them to improve their prosperity. And so, this simple solution of the problem of an efficient nationwide postal service created the world’s most popular and enduring hobby, collecting stamps. Many people collected stamps of the whole world. Even monarchs were keen on collecting of postage stamps.

From all the above I can say with confidence that postage stamps were very popular and important in the past.

I think I coped with the first task. I’ve found out the cause of appearing of postage stamps and their popularity in the past. I'm also sure I’ve reached my first purpose, since I produced many facts proving one of my hypotheses that postage stamps occupied an honorary place in the past centuries and were simply necessary for people.

I also think I coped with the second and third tasks. I can state firmly that people almost doesn't need a postage stamp today as letter mail rate. Because of the new high computer technologies most people use mobile phones and the Internet to communicate and exchange information. No one wants to waste time on writing letters because everyone is busy nowadays. I'm sure I’ve reached my second purpose, since I produced a lot of facts proving other my hypothesis that postage stamps have become a survival of the past today, in the days of high computer technology. All my statements are based on documentary material and my research after different points of view and statistical facts.

But the facts also speak themselves that a postage stamp is still needed as a subject of adoration for many collectors. It is very interesting as the antiquarian subject of art and history.

I think I coped with the last task partly.

Unfortunately, no one of my classmates collects stamps. But I think that my attempt to involve classmates in the ranks of collectors of stamps succeeded. I also think many of my classmates have already gained interest in stamps today, since they decided to continue work on this subject.

For this reason I consider that I haven’t laboured in vain. I hope they’ll be interested in postage stamps more and more. I also hope their favorite hobby will be collecting stamps. Not only my classmates, but I learn a lot of interesting things for myself.

I also think that my research materials and the presentation are very useful because they can be used in English lessons and in extracurricular activities.

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