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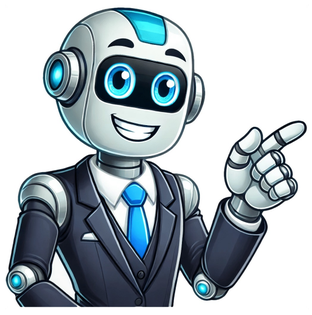

Ever wondered why your mail sometimes gets lost? Learning how to fill an envelope for USPS can help. It ensures your letters get to where they need to go safely.Sending mail might seem easy, but the right envelope filling is key. The United States Postal Service (USPS) has rules to help your mail get through the system smoothly.Proper envelope addressing is more than just writing an address. Its about following rules that postal workers use to send your mail fast and right. Every detail, from formatting to where you put things, is important in mail delivery.Key TakeawaysUse all capital letters when addressing envelopesAvoid punctuation in address linesEnsure clear, legible handwritingFollow USPS recommended address formattingPlace return address in the top left cornerUnderstanding USPS Envelope RequirementsUnderstanding USPS envelope guidelines can seem hard. But its key for mail to get where it needs to go. The United States Postal Service has rules for how to send mail.When you think about mailing, remember a few important things:Envelope size and dimensionsWeight restrictionsMaterial specificationsAddressing guidelinesMost envelopes are standard sizes that USPS likes. Letter-sized envelopes are 4-1/8 x 9-1/2. These fit postal rules well. But big or weird envelopes might cost more to send.What you need to know changes based on the mail type. First-Class Mail has its own rules. Knowing this can save you money and make sure your mail gets there fast.Heres how to mail right:Measure your envelope carefullyCheck weight limitsUse standard white or manila envelopesAvoid too much thicknessLearning these rules helps you mail better. It makes sure your mail gets there on time and without trouble.Choosing the Right Envelope SizeChoosing the right envelope is key for mailing success. It affects postage costs and keeps your stuff safe. Knowing envelope stuffing rules helps you make good choices.Each mail type needs its own envelope size. Standard letter envelopes are usually #10 (4.125 x 9.5 inches) to 69 inches. Mailing tips say to pick an envelope that fits your document just right.Measure your document before selecting an envelopeLeave slight extra space for smooth insertionAvoid overstuffing which can damage mailCheck USPS guidelines for specific size requirementsEnvelope sizes matter a lot for postage rates. Oversized or unusual dimensions can increase shipping costs. Experts say to stick to standard sizes to save money.Envelope TypeTypical DimensionsBest Used For#10 Commercial4.125 x 9.5 inchesBusiness letters, statements69 Manila6 x 9 inchesDocuments, contractsA2 Invitation4.375 x 5.75 inchesPersonal cards, small notesBy following these tips, your mail will get there safely and without breaking the bank.Preparing Your Letter for Mailing Getting your letter ready for the mail is key. It makes sure it gets there safely and looks good. Learning how to fill envelopes right can really help.First, pick the right paper and how to fold it for your envelope. Each size needs a special way to fold. This keeps your papers safe and neat.For standard #10 envelopes, use a tri-fold methodUse crisp, clean folds to prevent document creasingEnsure documents are flat and smooth before insertionHere are some tips for mailing envelopes:Organize documents in order of importanceUse lightweight paper for multiple-page documentsAvoid overstuffing the envelopeFor things like certificates or photos, use cardboard inserts. This keeps them safe from bending.Make sure theres room between the paper and the envelope. This makes it easy to put in and take out.Addressing Your Envelope CorrectlyLearning how to fill an envelope for USPS is key. The right address makes sure your mail gets there fast. Where and how you write the address matters a lot.See also How Many Stamps Do I Need for a Manila Envelope (USPS)USPS has rules for addressing envelopes. They want your address in the middle, on the longest side. This helps postal workers sort mail fast.Use black or blue ink for maximum readabilityWrite addresses in all capital lettersAvoid using punctuation marksEnsure handwriting is neat and legibleHeres the right way to write an address:LineAddress ComponentExample1st LineRecipient NameJANE SMITH2nd LineStreet Address or PO Box123 MAIN STREET3rd LineCity, State, ZIP CodeSPRINGFIELD IL 62701By using these USPS guidelines, you help mail get to the right place fast.Including Return AddressesYour return address is very important. It helps get mail back to you if it cant be delivered. Always put your return address in the top left corner of the envelope.The return address does a few key things:It lets the postal service reach you if mail cant be deliveredIt makes it easy to find who sent the mailIt follows postal rules for sending mailHeres how to write your return address:Use your full legal nameInclude your full street addressWrite the city, state, and ZIP code clearlyUse standard formatting without abbreviationsThe USPS says to use printed labels or write clearly. Avoid using pencil or light-colored ink that might be difficult to read. Putting your return address in the right place helps your mail get where its going.By following these steps, you make sending mail easier. This increases the chance your mail will get delivered right.Labeling for Special ServicesWhen you send important stuff, USPS has special services. These services add extra protection and tracking. Knowing how to label your envelopes is key.Special mailing services need special labels. This makes sure your package is handled right and tracked. Its great for sending valuable or urgent items.Certified Mail: Provides proof of mailing and deliveryRegistered Mail: Offers maximum security for valuable itemsPriority Mail: Includes tracking and faster deliveryInsurance: Protects against loss or damageHeres how to label envelopes for special services:Pick the right special service labelWrite all needed info clearlyPut the label in the top right corner of the envelopeMake sure the label doesnt hide the addressServiceLabel ColorTracking AvailableCertified MailGreenYesRegistered MailRedYesPriority MailBlueYesPro tip: Always keep your receipt as proof of mailing for special services. This documentation can be very important if you need to track or verify your shipment.Applying Postage ProperlyUnderstanding postage for envelopes can seem hard. But, learning how to fill an envelope for USPS is easy. The main thing is knowing where and how to put the right postage on your mail.Always follow these important rules when putting on postage:Put postage in the upper right corner of the envelopeMake sure the whole stamp is seen and not creasedCheck the latest postage rates before you mailYou can pick from many ways to put postage on:Traditional postage stampsMetered postage from the post officeOnline postage printed at homePostal service self-service kiosksThe size and weight of your envelope decide how much postage you need. For regular letters, first-class stamps are perfect. But, bigger or heavier packages might need more postage to get delivered.Pro tip: If youre unsure about postage, go to your local post office. Or use the USPS website to figure out the exact postage. This helps avoid your mail being sent back because of too little postage.Sealing Your Envelope SecurelySealing your envelope right is key to keeping your mail safe. Make sure your seal is tight. This keeps your stuff inside and stops damage or loss.Here are some important tips for sealing your envelope well:Choose a good adhesive for a strong sealPress the flap down firmly and evenlyMake sure there are no gaps or loose edges before you mail itDont use too much water when sealingDifferent envelopes need different ways to seal them. Standard business envelopes have a flap that sticks with a little moisture. But, bigger packages or special mail might need more sealing.Professional tip: For important documents, add extra security. You can use:Seal stripsSecurity envelopes with special closuresSealing methods that show if someone has opened itCheck your seal well. A bad seal can cause the post office to reject your mail. Or, it might lose important things on the way.Writing Clear and Legible AddressesWhen you send mail, how clear your address is matters a lot. Clear addresses help your mail get to where its going fast. This means it wont get lost or sent to the wrong place.To fill an envelope right for USPS, here are some key tips:Use dark ink (black or blue) for maximum readabilityWrite or print addresses in uppercase lettersAvoid cursive or decorative handwriting stylesEnsure letters are neatly spaced and uniformDigital printing is great for addresses because its so precise. If your handwriting is messy, use address labels or print it from your computer. Professional-looking addresses help avoid mail problems.When you write, press hard but keep your letters clean and clear. Dont let smudges or mixed-up letters confuse machines. Postal workers and machines need to read your address fast and right.Pro tip: Always check your street name, zip code, and city spelling before sealing. A quick check can save you from mail trouble.Sending Your EnvelopeWhen youre ready to send mail through USPS, you have many options. Knowing how to send mail helps you pick the best way for you.Your main choices for sending mail are:Residential mailbox drop-offLocal post office submissionScheduled USPS pickup serviceTo send mail from your mailbox, just put it in your mailbox. The postal carrier will pick it up on their route. This is great for regular letters that meet USPS rules.Want to talk to someone? Go to your local post office. They can check your postage and answer your questions. This is best for packages or special letters.USPS also has a pickup service for those who cant leave home. You can set up a carrier to pick up your mail. This way, your mail gets sent without you leaving.Pro tip: Always check your postage and packaging meet USPS rulesReminder: Keep tracking info for packages and important lettersChoosing the right way to send mail depends on your needs and time. It also depends on what youre sending.Common Mistakes to Avoid When MailingMailing can be tricky. Simple mistakes can cost you time and money. They might even lose your important letters. Knowing the usps envelope guidelines helps you avoid these mistakes.Here are some key tips for mailing envelopes:Always double-check your recipients address for accuracyVerify postage requirements for different envelope sizesEnsure proper sealing to prevent mail from opening during transitWrite addresses clearly in dark inkUse standard addressing formats recommended by USPSWhen youre getting your envelope ready, watch out for these common mistakes. Incorrect addressing is the main reason for mail being returned or delayed.MistakeConsequencePreventionIncomplete AddressUndeliverable MailInclude full street name, city, state, ZIP codeInsufficient PostageReturn to SenderWeigh envelope, confirm current postage ratesIllegible WritingSorting DifficultiesPrint clearly or use address labelsSee also How to Book USPS Passport Appointment: Schedule Your ApplicationBy following these tips, youll avoid common mailing mistakes. This way, your letters will get to where they need to go without trouble.Tracking Your Envelope After MailingWhen you mail something through USPS, tracking it makes you feel better. The United States Postal Service has many ways to track your envelope. This way, you can see where your mail is at any time.To track your envelope, go to the USPS website and type in your tracking number. This number is given when you buy postage or use priority mail. For regular letters, you might need to ask for tracking at the post office. Mobile apps and online sites make it easy to see where your mail is.If your envelope is late, dont worry. Call your local post office with your tracking number and details. USPS customer service can look into it and tell you where your mail is. Keep your tracking receipt for proof and to ask questions later.Digital tracking tools have changed how we watch our mail. They help with important documents or personal letters. Always check your tracking info and follow postal rules for a good mailing experience.USPS takes many envelope sizes. This includes #10, 69 inches, and 912 inches. The most common is #10 for letters. Larger sizes are for documents or catalogs.Make sure your envelope fits the size rules. This avoids extra postage or fees.Write the address in the center of the envelope. Use uppercase letters. Include the full name, street address or P.O. Box, city, state, and ZIP code.Put your return address in the top left corner. Use a clear font. Avoid cursive or fancy writing.Postage changes based on mail class, weight, and size. First-Class Mail for letters up to 1 ounce needs a standard stamp. Larger envelopes and packages have different rates.Check USPSs website or your local post office for rates.Use the adhesive strip on the flap. Press it firmly for a good seal. For important documents, add moistened tape or security seals.Avoid too much tape that might mess with sorting machines.If its a small mistake, cross it out and write the right info nearby. For big mistakes, use a new envelope. Always check the address before mailing.Yes, printed labels are okay and often better. Make sure theyre stuck on well, use a clear font, and follow USPS size and placement rules. Dont use wrinkled or hard-to-read labels.Use USPS Tracking or Priority Mail for tracking. Youll get a tracking number. Enter it on the USPS website to see where it is. Some services like Certified Mail track automatically.International mail needs extra postage and customs forms. Use Global Express Guaranteed or Priority Mail International. Include a customs form with details about the shipment.Check the destination countrys rules before mailing.Fold documents neatly and the same way. Use a tri-fold for standard letters. For bigger documents, use rigid mailers or flat envelopes.Avoid creases that might hurt the contents.Check the address for mistakes. Make sure the postage is right. If the mail comes back with a reason, like moved, fix your details before sending again.In an age of text messages and emails, it might seem a bit dated to drop a letter in the mailbox. But there are still plenty of reasons to send mail the old-fashioned way.For instance, a wedding or other invitation is best received via snail mail because while a text or evite is pretty much instantaneous, its not quite the same as getting an official hard copy to have on hand.And while birthday wishes are meaningful no matter how theyre conveyed, getting a funny or sweet card in the mail is an especially thoughtful way to recognize someone special. The same goes for a Christmas or sympathy card.If youve got something to send and are wondering how to properly address an envelope, were here to offer some assistance.Addressing an envelope takes some thought to do it properly, according to Diane Gottsman, a national etiquette expert at the Protocol School of Texas.I always use the name of the person, including an honorific when appropriate, Gottsman tells TODAY.com. Do not abbreviate the city and state for a formal envelope and make sure and include a return address.But thats just the beginning. Read on to learn, step-by-step, how to correctly address an envelope along with some additional guidance on using labels and other helpful tips.How to address an envelopeTODAY / TODAYWrite the return address in the top left corner.Write the recipient's address slightly centered on the bottom half of the envelope.Place the stamp in the top right corner.There are two addresses that are typically seen on the envelope, but only one is technically required: the recipient's. The sender's address isn't necessary, but it is recommended. If there are any mistakes that prevent the delivery of the letter, the lack of a return address means the post office will be unable to send it back in order to fix any problems.How to write the sender's (return) addressTODAY / TODAYStart with your full name.Write your street address on the next line. Use two lines, if needed.Follow that line with the city, state and ZIP code of your address.How to write the recipient's addressTODAY / TODAYFor informal letters, follow the same format as the sender's address.If sending a letter to someone at a specific business, the first line should be the company's name.In the next line, follow "ATTN:" or "c/o" with the individual's name. If the letter is not to someone at a specific business, the first line should simply be their name.The next lines two should be the street address, city, state and ZIP code.How to format military addresses (APO, FPO, DPO)TODAY / TODAYEven though they follow the same format as regular addresses, military addresses don't use the city and state names that many are used to.The city name will be either APO (Air/Army Post Office), FPO (Fleet Post Office) or DPO (Diplomatic Post Office).For the state, AA (Armed Forces America), AE (Armed Forces Europe) and AP (Armed Forces Pacific) are used, depending on the duty station.The ZIP code is the same, but sometimes the extra four number code is required for delivery.How to write an international shipping addressTODAY / TODAYIf sending a letter to an overseas address that isn't military, the address format typically stays the same just with the addition of the country name as the last line.Some countries place the ZIP code in front of the city and country but it varies from country to country, so just check to be sure.How to find the "ZIP+4" codeIf you're unsure of the extra four-number code, USPS has a ZIP code lookup tool on their website.Choose to look up the ZIP code by address and enter all the required information.Press "Find" and USPS will give you the ZIP+4 code.How many stamps to use and mailing costsTODAY / TODAYPlacing the stamp on a envelope is easy, it simply goes in the upper righthand corner. Knowing which stamps and how many to use can be the tricky part, however.In July of 2024, a postage rate change went into effect leading to new pricing on sending mail.For a standard 1-ounce letter being mailed in the U.S., the price of a postage stamp is now 73 cents. Square, oversized and oddly-shaped envelopes start at $1.19. Standard, rectangular postcards cost 56 cents to mail.On a standard letter, each additional ounce over 1 ounce requires additional postage of 28 cents per ounce.Purchasing Forever stamps is always a good idea because even when stamp prices increase, they remain usable regardless of how much new stamps cost, which is why they're known as "Forever" stamps.Sending a 1-ounce letter internationally, including Canada, Great Britain and more than 180 other countries, costs $1.65. For larger envelopes, postage prices will vary depending on weight, size and destination.Global Forever stamps are available for purchase and work just like the U.S. ones; once purchased, they remain usable indefinitely, even if prices increase.With the appropriate stamp, accurate addresses for both the sender and the recipient, and the right placement of all three on the envelope, your letter is ready for mailing.Sarah LemirePhoto by Ethan Hoover on UnsplashThe United States Postal Service (USPS) processes and delivers nearly half of the worlds mail. However, without a legible and valid delivery and return address mail often ends up in the U.S. Postal Services official lost and found department called the Mail Recovery Center (MRC). In 2014, they received 88 million items of undeliverable mail!Whether youre mailing postcards, letters or packages ensure your mail is addressed correctly and wont be returned or sent to the MRC.In this post, Im going to share how to correctly address mail.Step 1. Write the Delivery AddressWrite the delivery address inside the boundary of the optical character reader (OCR). Illustration by Jeff Shibasaki / Culture Gaps.Left justify and legibly write in pen or print the delivery address on the same side of the postcard, envelope or package that will bear the postage. When printing, use a sans serif typeface (e.g. Helvetica, Arial) with a minimum of 6-point type for uppercase letters.FormatRecipients Full NameComplete AddressCity, State, ZIP Code1.1 | Use Uppercase LettersThe USPS will accept lowercase letters (10 to 12-point type) as long as they meet postal guidelines for OCR readability. However, to avoid potential errors and delays, always use uppercase letters.ExamplesNolan Griffin NOLAN GRIFFINDr William Larkin DR WILLIAM LARKIN1.2 | Omit Punctuation, Special Characters and Extra SpacesThe USPS prefers punctuation to be omitted. This includes commas, periods, parentheses, quotations, etc. Hyphens, however, are used in the ZIP+4 Code.Special characters like the at symbol and ampersand should also be omitted.Double spaces and blanks should be single-spaced, but two spaces are preferred between the state postal code and the ZIP Codes and ZIP+4 Codes.ExamplesDR. BILLY LARKIN DR WILLIAM LARKINANN ARBOR, MI, 481081000 ANN ARBOR MI 481081000GEORGE & SALLY GREEN GEORGE AND SALLY GREEN1234 E. MAIN ST. STE. B6 1234 E MAIN ST STE B61.3 | Correctly Address RecipientsInclude the recipients first and last name. If the recipient is a doctor, lawyer, government official or military personnel, use honorific titles like SSGT and DR. Also, use honorific titles in business or to show respect like MR, MRS and MS.If recipients are married, write the husbands honorific title (MR), the wifes honorific title (MRS), plus the husbands full name. Remember, the USPS prefers AND instead of the ampersand symbol.ExamplesWILLIAM LARKIN DR WILLIAM LARKINRYAN BUTTERWORTH SSGT RYAN BUTTERWORTHSALLY GREEN MRS SALLY GREENMR. & MRS. NOLAN GRIFFIN MR AND MRS NOLAN GRIFFINAbbreviate organizational endings with USPS-approved abbreviations to compress the recipient line and save space. For example, abbreviate COMPANY as CO and INCORPORATED as INC.Commonly understood business words should also be abbreviated to save space like abbreviating ACCOUNT as ACCT.ExamplesGOVERNMENT GOVTCORPORATION CORPFOUNDATION FNDTNLEGAL LGL1.5 | Abbreviate Compass PointsThere might be a 1234 E Main ST and a 1234 W Main ST. Not including E or W could result in your mail being sent to the wrong location or returned. To avoid problems, include USPS-approved abbreviations for compass points called directionals.Examples1.6 | Abbreviate Street SuffixesTo condense the address line, use USPS-approved street suffix abbreviations like AVE instead of AVENUE.Examples1.7 | Abbreviate Secondary Unit DesignatorsInformation that precedes the address is called a secondary unit designator (e.g. apartment, suite, floor). The USPS has about two dozen approved abbreviations.The pound symbol (#) is acceptable as long as theres a space between the pound sign and the secondary number. The pound symbol should not be used as a secondary unit designator if the correct designation is already specified.ExamplesAPARTMENT APTAPT # 207 APT 207SUITE STE# 54971.8 | Dont Abbreviate CitiesWhile NOLA might be clear to you, it may not be clear to the OCR machine that you meant New Orleans. Dont abbreviate city names.ExamplesNOLA NEW ORLEANSSAN SPRG SANDY SPRINGS1.9 | Abbreviate StatesAbbreviate U.S. states, Washington D.C. and U.S. territories with the USPS-approved 2-letter postal codes. Avoid confusing the USPS-approved abbreviations with other state abbreviations like WASH instead of WA. Also, remember two spaces are preferred between the state and ZIP Code.ExamplesMICH MIGEORGIA GACALIFORNIA CA 9410412071.10 | Include the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 CodeA ZIP (Zone Improvement Plan) code is a 5-digit number to identify an area of the country and delivery office where mail is directed the American equivalent to the postal code in British English. Currently, there are more than 42,000 ZIP Codes used in the United States.In 1983, the USPS introduced the ZIP+4 Code to reduce the number of handlings and decrease potential errors. The ZIP+4 Code adds a hyphen and four additional digits to denote a delivery sector (e.g. block, office building) and a delivery segment (e.g. office building floor, department in a firm).Examples94104 1207 94104120794104XXXX 902100803Step 2. Write the Return AddressIllustration by Jeff Shibasaki / Culture GapsThe return address informs the USPS where the mail should be returned if it cannot be delivered.In the upper left corner, left justify and legibly write in pen or print the return address on the same side of the postcard, envelope or package that will bear the postage. When printing, use sans serif typeface with a minimum of 6-point type for uppercase letters.FormatSenders Full NameComplete AddressCity, State, ZIP CodeStep 3. Add PostageIllustration by Jeff Shibasaki / Culture GapsAffix the correct postage amount in the upper right corner. The USPS provides a useful postage price calculator on its website for calculating the postage price of postcards, envelopes, boxes and other shapes and sizes.Where to Buy U.S. StampsPost OfficesPharmaciesGrocery StoresUSPS.comStamps.comFinal ThoughtsYou just learned the correct way to address U.S. mail. If you follow these preferences, you can expect the USPS slogan We Deliver For You to be their promise and you wont need to worry about mail being returned or sent to the Mail Recovery Center.These days, the art of sending traditional mail can seem a bit outdated. However, knowing how to properly address an envelope is still a valuable skill. It's not only useful for sending letters or packages but also an excellent way to teach your kids about communication and attention to detail.The basics of addressing an envelopeAddressing an envelope correctly ensures that your mail reaches its intended destination without any hiccups. According to the United States Postal Service (USPS) there are specific steps to follow when addressing an envelope:Write the recipient's name in the center of your envelope.Write the street address or post office box number below the recipient's name, on the second line.Write the city, state, and ZIP code on the third line.In the upper left-hand corner, write your name and return address.Place a stamp in the upper right-hand corner.Helpful tips for addressing an envelopeIf you're sending mail to an international address, remember to include the country's name on the fourth line of the address.Use capital letters and avoid using any punctuation marks except for hyphens in street addresses.Remember to use a pen or permanent marker, write neatly, and place the address in the center of the envelope.Postage is required to ensure your mail reaches its destination even if the recipient's address is incorrect or incomplete.When sending a letter or package to an apartment or unit, include the recipient's name, followed by the street address on one line and their apartment or unit number on the next line.Obey the weight and size restrictions from USPS to avoid additional fees or delays in delivery.Follow any rules and regulations about what you can mail safely and legally.From saving for the future to understanding credit, see how families are thriving with Greenlight.Fun ways to practice addressing envelopes with your kidsTeaching kids how to address an envelope can be a fun learning experience. Here are some creative ways you can incorporate it into playtime:Practice writing the addresses of their favorite fictional characters or famous people they admire, like superheroes or historical figures.Play "post office" by setting up a mock mailbox and have your child address letters to their stuffed animals or toys.Use envelopes in arts and crafts projects, like making personalized cards for family members or friends. Have your child address the envelopes themselves.By making the process of addressing an envelope fun and interactive, your kids will be more likely to remember the steps and develop their handwriting skills at the same time.FAQs about how to address an envelopeQ: What is the correct way to address an envelope?A: Addressing an envelope is simple. Start with the recipient's name, followed by their street address, city, state, and ZIP code in that exact order on the front of the envelope. Don't forget to put your return address in the top left corner - it's like leaving a breadcrumb trail back to you.Q: How should I write the recipient's name on the envelope?A: The recipient's name should be the headline of your envelope - it goes on the first line of the address. Include any necessary titles or honorifics, such as Dr., Mr., Mrs., or Ms.Q: Where should the stamp go on the envelope?A: The stamp has a special spot in the top right corner of the envelope. Make sure it's secure so it doesn't decide to take its own journey during transit.Q: What information should be included in the return address?A: Your return address is your calling card on the envelope. It should include your full name, street address, city, state, and ZIP code. This way, if your letter decides to boomerang back, it knows where to go.Q: How do I ensure my letter gets to its destination?A: To make sure your letter reaches its destination, give the recipient's address a double-check for accuracy, seal the envelope securely, and don't skimp on the postage. It's like ensuring your letter has a full tank of gas for the journey.Q: What should I do if I don't know the recipient's name?A: If the recipient's name eludes you, no worries. You can use a general term like "Resident" or "Occupant." It's like addressing the letter to the keeper of the mailbox.Q: How should I address an envelope to a business?A: When sending a letter to a business, start with the company's name, follow it up with the recipient's name (if known), and then jot down the business address.Q: Is it necessary to include a return address?A: Including a return address isn't a must-do, but it's a really good idea. It gives the postal service a plan B, allowing them to return the mail to you if it can't be delivered.Q: What kind of pen should I use to address an envelope?A: Go for a pen with dark ink, preferably black or blue. This helps ensure your address is clearly visible. Pencils might seem like a good idea, but they can smudge or fade.Q: How much postage do I need to mail a letter?A: The amount of postage required depends on the size and weight of your letter. As of 2024, a standard-sized, one-ounce letter gets by with a single first-class stamp. But if your letter is packing some extra weight or size, you might need more postage. Your local post office can help you figure this out.Ready to send some mail?Now that you know how to properly address an envelope, why not put it into practice? Whether it's a handwritten letter or a thank-you card, following the guidelines provided by USPS can ensure your mail reaches its destination smoothly. Envelopes are for sending flat, flexible things, like letters, cards, checks, forms, and other paper goods. For just 1 $0.73 First-Class Mail Forever stamp, you can send 1 oz (about 4 sheets of regular, 8-1/2" x 11" paper in a rectangular envelope) to anywhere in the U.S.! Show More Envelopes must be rectangular and made of paper to qualify for letter prices. Your envelope can be a maximum of 11-1/2" long x 6-1/8" high. (A standard No. 10 envelope is 9-1/2" long x 4-1/8" high.) You can fold what you put in your envelope, but it needs to stay flatno more than 1/4" thick. If you want to send letter-sized papers without folding them, you can use a large envelope (called a "flat"); the postage for flats starts at $1.50. If your large envelope is nonrectangular, rigid (can't bend), or lumpy (not uniformly thick), you'll have to pay the package price. TIP: If your envelope can't fit through USPS mail processing machines, or is rigid, lumpy or has clasps, string, or buttons, it's "nonmachinable" and you'll have to pay $0.46 more to send it. (See additional postage in Step 3.) You'll also have to pay more if your envelopes are square or vertical (taller than they are wide). Postcards are for short messages that you don't need to put in an envelope. Save money using a $0.56 postcard stamp to send a standard-sized postcard anywhere in the U.S. Standard postcards are usually made of paper, are between 5" to 6" long and 3-1/2" to 4-1/4" high, and are between 0.007" and 0.016" thick. Size & Weight Requirements Postcards & Envelopes Envelopes: Write your address (the "return" or "sender" address) in the top left corner. Write the delivery address (the "recipient" address) in the bottom center. Postcards: Postcards come in different formats, so write the delivery address in the space it gives you (on the same side you write your message and put the stamp). Show More Print your return address and the delivery address clearly, in the correct spots, to make sure your mail is delivered on time. Address Format Tips Print addresses neatly in capital letters. Use a pen or permanent marker. Do not use commas or periods. Include the ZIP+4 Code whenever possible. Write Sender Address Write your address (the "return address") in the top-left corner. Include the following on separate lines: Your full name or company name Apartment or suite number Full street address City, State, and ZIP+4 Code Write Delivery Address Write the delivery address (the "recipient" address) in the bottom center of the envelope. Include the following on separate lines: Recipient's full name or company name Apartment or suite number Full street address City, State, and ZIP+4 Code Advanced Tips for Secondary Addresses (like Apartment or Suite) Postal Addressing Standards Special U.S. Addresses Puerto Rico Some Puerto Rico addresses include an urbanization or community code for a specific area or development. Addresses with an urbanization code, abbreviated URB, should be written on 4 lines: MS MARIA SUAREZ URB LAS GLADIOLAS 150 CALLE A SAN JUAN PR 00926-3232 More Puerto Rico Address Examples U.S. Virgin Islands Virgin Islands addresses have the same format as standard addresses. The right abbreviation for this territory is "VI," not "US VI" or "USA VI": MS JOAN SMITH RR 1 BOX 6601 KINGSHILL VI 00850-9802 Military and Diplomatic Mail (APO/FPO/DPO) Mail to military and diplomatic addresses is treated differently: Do not include the city or country name when you send something to an APO/FDO/DPO address in another country. This keeps your mail out of foreign mail networks. Do include unit and box numbers if they're assigned: SEAMAN JOSEPH SMITH UNIT 100100 BOX 4120 FPO AP 96691 More Details on Military Addresses When you're done addressing your envelope, put what you're sending inside the envelope, then close and seal it (using the envelope's glue or tape). A First-Class Mail Forever stamp costs $0.73 and goes in the upper right corner of the envelope. (You can also use any combination of stamps that adds up to $0.73.) If your letter is heavier or bigger, or if you want to add insurance or extra services like Certified Mail service, you'll pay more. A standard postcard stamp costs $0.56. (Large or square postcards will cost more.) Put the postcard stamp in the space provided near the delivery address. Show More Postage for letters mostly depends on weight and size/shape. You can weigh your letter with a kitchen scale, postal scale, at a self-service kiosk, or at the Post Office counter. TIP: As a rule of thumb, you can send 1 oz (4 sheets of printer paper and a business-sized envelope) for 1 First-Class Mail Forever stamp (currently $0.73). The postage for a large envelope (or flat) starts at $1.50 for 1 oz. Where Can I Buy Postage? TIP: If you're sending larger envelopes (flats) using Priority Mail or Priority Mail Express service, you can use Click-N-Ship service to pay for and print your own postage online. Additional Postage If your envelope weighs over 1 oz, you can buy additional postage in the amount you need: For letters up to 3.5 oz, each additional 1 oz is $0.28. For large envelopes up to 13 oz, the price varies for each additional 1 oz. Nonmachinable items, including envelopes that are lumpy or rigid, or have clasps, string, or buttons will cost $0.46 more to send. You'll also have to pay more if your envelopes are square or vertical (taller than they are wide). You can also buy 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10 stamps at The Postal Store. TIP: Put the stamp on last; that way, if you make a mistake at any other point, you won't waste a stamp. Calculate a Price Add-On Services If you want insurance, proof of delivery, signature services, or other optional services, you'll have to pay extra. Our Insurance & Extra Services page has more details; some of the more common add-on services for letters include: Certified Mail: Get proof that you mailed your item and that the recipient signed for it. Registered Mail: USPS's most secure mail servicemail is processed manually, handled separately and securely, and signed for along every step of its journey. The recipient must sign for the mail to confirm delivery (or attempted delivery). Return Receipt: You'll get a printed or emailed delivery record showing the recipient's signature. You can combine Return Receipt with other services, including Certified Mail, Registered Mail, Priority Mail Express service, and more. Adult Signature Required: Only an adult (age 21+) can sign for the mail after showing a valid government ID. Once your envelope or postcard has the correct addresses and postage, you can send it several ways, including putting it in your mailbox or dropping it in a blue collection box or at a Post Office location. Show More Put your letter inside your mailbox and raise the flag (if you have one). If you have a cluster mailbox, drop it in the outgoing mail slot. Drop it off in a blue collection box. Take it to a Post Office lobby drop. Important Note: If your envelope has postage stamps and weighs more than 10 oz or is thicker than 1/2", you can't put it in a collection box; you have to give it to an employee at a Post Office location. See more details on What Can and Cannot be Deposited in a Collection Box? Post Offices & Drop-Off Locations The Postal Service uses high-speed sorting machines to help process and deliver 425.3 million mail pieces each day. Here are some extra tips to improve your mail sending experience: Stay flexible: Don't send rigid (hard) objects in paper envelopes. Sending embellished invitations (for weddings, graduations, etc.)? Get them hand-canceled or put them inside another envelope. Need tracking? Learn about your options. Show More Postcards, letter envelopes, and large envelopes (flats) all need to bend to fit through USPS high-speed sorting machines. OK: Flexible, flat things like stickers, photos, trading cards, etc. should be okayas long as your envelope stays flat, not lumpy, and less than 1/4" thick. Not OK: Don't put rigid objects (like flash drives, coins, keys, hard plastic card cases, etc.) loose in unpadded paper envelopes: They could get torn out of the envelope, jam the sorting machines, cause a delay, or even get lost. Instead, for rigid and odd-shaped objects (or things you don't want to get bent), we recommend using a padded envelope or small box and sending it as a package. If you want to send a specially decorated envelope (like some wedding invitations): You can pay the extra fee for nonmachinable First-Class Mail items, bring your mail to the Post Office counter, and ask the retail associate to hand-cancel your embellished invitations. For externally decorated invitations: If you use wax seals, strings, ribbons, etc. on your envelopes, don't try to send them exposed. Instead, to make sure your envelopes arrive looking the way your designer intended, put them inside another envelope. Need Tracking? Tracking is not available for First-Class Mail items. If you'd like to get tracking information for your letter: You can pay extra to send your letter using Priority Mail Express or Priority Mail service. You can get delivery confirmation by adding Certified Mail or Registered Mail service. (You can even combine it with Return Receipt if you want the recipient's signature.) You must use a standard address format accounting to the United States Postal Service (USPS) while sending a mailer to the USA. A US address can have three to six lines. You have to write the recipients name on the first line in capital letters.It is also the attention line, you can start by writing ATTN or ATTENTION. The second line consists of the companys name. Then, you must use the third line to provide a valid street address.Correct abbreviations with street directionals in the street address are vital to guide the postal carrier. The third line of a US address informs about the city, state, and ZIP code. US addresses also use a state abbreviation like Australian addresses.An appropriate ZIP code is also necessary for your mailing address. It works in the same way as postcodes work in Australia. However, ZIP codes can range up to nine digits.Most people prefer using 5-digit ZIP codes, but it's better to add ZIP+4 codes to ensure accurate and timely mailing. You will also need to add the country name USA on the last line since you're sending an international to the US.There could be some format variations in residential, PO Box, or military addresses. Keep reading this blog to know how to write an address US. We will also discuss some tips that will help you make your mailing addresses valid and deliverable. Mailers must follow the standard US address format accepted by the United States Postal Service (USPS).A US mailing address can have three to six lines.US uses a ZIP+4 code system to ensure efficient delivery routes and timely deliveries.It is necessary to use uppercase letters and avoid using punctuation while writing US mail addresses.Provide a return address on your mailer to help the postal authorities.An address verification tool helps you validate and standardize your mailing address according to US standards. US mailing addresses usually range from three to six lines. Find below the components of the US address format:Recipients NameAlways write the recipients name on the first line. It is also called the attention line, so you can begin by writing ATTN or ATTENTION.Companys NameYou can mention the companys name on the second line. Some people write the companys name on the first line if they arent sure of the recipients name.Delivery AddressThe third line typically consists of the street address. The USPS also refers to it as the delivery address line. Some examples of US street addresses are:106 DOYERS ST8 ARLINGTON DR599 NW BAY BLVD72 ANDERSON PLAs you can see, there are several abbreviations in street addresses. For example, ST stands for Street, BLVD stands for Boulevard, and PL stands for Place. You can check the complete list of abbreviations on the USPS website.Also, you should use the correct abbreviations for street directional, like N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, SW.City, State, and ZIP codeThe second last line has three crucial elements of an American mailing address: city, state, and ZIP code.The US addresses also use the state abbreviation instead of the name, like Australian addresses. So, write the city name at the beginning of the line, followed by the 2-digit state abbreviation.Again, make sure to use the correct abbreviation as prescribed by the USPS.The last thing you should add to this line is the ZIP code. It works in the same way as postcodes work in Australia. However, postcodes have only four numbers, whereas ZIP codes range up to nine digits.Most people only use the 5-digit ZIP codes. But, it is advisable to add ZIP+4 codes (the additional digits added to ZIP codes) to ensure accurate mailing.This line should look something like this:ALLENTOWN PA 18101 0598Country NameThe correct US address format while sending mail from Australia has the word USA on the last line. If you want, you may write United States of America, but it is recommended to write USA.It is one of the most significant aspects of your mailing address while mailing internationally.So, the US address format is:Recipients full nameCompany nameStreet addressCity, state, ZIP codeCountry nameHeres an example of an American address according to the above format:CAROLINE MILLERJSP INC105 KROME AVEMIAMI FL 33185 3700USA Apart from the standard US address format that we discussed above, there are some variations that you should about.Residential AddressesWhile mailing a residential address, you need not add the company name on the second line. You can begin with the recipients name and add the street address on the following line.Recipient NameALARIC DIASStreet Address8 ONTARIO STCity, State, ZIP CodeCLEVELAND, OH 44113-1602Country NameUNITED STATES OF AMERICABusiness AddressThe first line should include the company's name. The second line should include the recipient's name, and the third should mention the department name.You should add ATTN' before the recipient's name to ensure delivery to the correct desk and office. It will look like this.Organization NameACG PVT. LTD.Recipient NameATTN: JUDITH SMITHDepartment NameFINANCE DEPARTMENTDelivery Address123 W MAIN ST. APT 56City Name, State Abbreviation, and ZIP CodeWASHINGTON, DC 20018-2134Country NameUNITED STATES OF AMERICARural AddressVillages typically do not have official street names. In this case, include the village name, followed by the nearest city or town. All the other elements will remain the same as a standard address.Recipient NameJUDITH SMITHName of the VillageVILLAGE OF RIVERTONNearest City/Town, State, and ZIP CodeGREENVILLE, ME 02131Country NameUNITED STATES OF AMERICAGovernment Office AddressIt is similar to the business address; however, you don't have to add the recipient's name.In the first line, write the name of the government office. Mention the specific department in the second line.Government Office NameMINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRSDepartment NameEXCHANGE DEPARTMENTDelivery Address123 W MAIN ST. APT 56City Name, State Abbreviation, and ZIP codeWASHINGTON, DC 20018-2134Country NameUNITED STATES OF AMERICAAddresses for Private Courier Service ProvidersAdding the recipient's phone number to the last line is advisable. This helps the delivery agent contact the person if they can't find the exact address.Recipient NameJUDITH SMITHDelivery Address123 W MAIN ST. APT 56City Name, State Abbreviation, and ZIP CodeWASHINGTON, DC 20018-2134Country NameUNITED STATES OF AMERICAPhone number+1 3210-223-4262PO BOX AddressesThe US shipping address format for PO boxes is not very different from the other address formats. You only need to replace the street address with a PO box number.Heres an example:Recipient NameSTUART GELLEROrganization nameTROPIC PRODUCTIONS LTDP.O. box numberPO BOX 6903City, State, ZIP CodeLOS ANGELES, CA 90079 6285Country NameUNITED STATES OF AMERICANote: If you want, you can also add the street address on the line above the PO Box number.Military AddressesThe US military address format is a little tricky