

Worksheet for Analysis of a Postcard

Prepare a written report on your assigned postcard by answering these questions about it.

PAINLESS GUIDE TO DETERMINING A POSTCARD'S PUBLICATION DATE

- **1893-1898** – The first postcards were sold at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The U.S. Government issued penny postcards (with a 1¢ stamp printed on it); privately printed souvenir cards required a 2¢ stamp. Only the address could appear on the stamped side of the card; printers sometimes left a blank strip for a short message on the front (picture) side of the card.
- **1898-1901** – In May 1898 Congress passed an act permitting private printers to print and sell postcards – they were clearly marked “Private Mailing Card” on the stamped side of the card (still reserved for address only) and required a 1¢ stamp.
- **1901-1907** – In December 1901 private printers were first allowed to use the words “Post Card.” Cards still required 1¢ postage. The undivided back was still reserved for the address only; any messages were written on the face of the card.
- **1907-1914** – Congress permitted the sale of divided-back postcards in 1907. The right side was reserved for the address, and the left for the message. Collecting and exchanging postcards, especially the high-quality hand-tinted ones, became extremely popular. Many poor-quality cards were also printed at this time.
- **1915-1930** – As Americans began to travel more widely, they bought millions of postcards as souvenirs of their journeys. Postcards of this era tend to have a white border and to depict scenic views, buildings and monuments, and technology (airplanes, automobiles, trains, & ships.) Many low-quality cards were produced.

A. ANALYZING YOUR POSTCARD: HOW OLD IS IT?

- Brainstorm at least five ways to determine the approximate date of a postcard.
- What features or objects can help you learn when this postcard was printed?
- Are there items such as clothing, hairstyles, or automobiles that can provide clues to the year the card was produced?

B. ANALYZING YOUR POSTCARD: WHAT DOES IT REPRESENT?

- Record any printed information you find on the face or back of the photo.
- List any person, building, or object identified on the card.
- Describe the condition of the card – is it bent, torn, or stained?
- Write a careful description of the card – what is pictured; the tint (black-and-white, hand-tinted, or color); the quality of the photo and the paper used; etc.
- Are the photographer and/or publisher identified?
- Where was the postcard mailed?

C. ANALYZING YOUR POSTCARD: WHO SENT IT?

- What do you know about the person sending or receiving this postcard?
- Why do you think the sender chose this particular card?

POSTAGE RATES IN CENTS

	<u>POSTAL CARDS</u> (Postal Service issued, with printed stamp)	<u>POSTCARDS</u> (Privately manufactured, commercially sold)
<i>Effective Date</i>		
May 1, 1873	1 ¢	N/A
July 1, 1898	1 ¢	1 ¢
November 3, 1917	2 ¢	2 ¢
July 1, 1919	1 ¢	1 ¢
April 15, 1925	1 ¢	2 ¢
July 1, 1928	1 ¢	1 ¢
January 1, 1952	2 ¢	2 ¢
August 1, 1958	3 ¢	3 ¢
January 7, 1963	4 ¢	4 ¢
January 7, 1968	5 ¢	5 ¢
May 16, 1971	6 ¢	6 ¢
March 2, 1974	8 ¢	8 ¢
September 14, 1975	7 ¢	7 ¢
December 31, 1975	9 ¢	9 ¢
May 29, 1978	10 ¢	10 ¢
March 22, 1981	12 ¢	12 ¢
November 1, 1981	13 ¢	13 ¢
February 17, 1985	14 ¢	14 ¢
April 3, 1988	15 ¢	15 ¢
February 3, 1991	19 ¢	19 ¢
January 1, 1995	20 ¢	20 ¢
July 1, 2001	21 ¢	21 ¢
June 30, 2002	23 ¢	23 ¢
January 8, 2006	26 ¢	24 ¢

Note: The ZIP code was first officially used July 1, 1963. “ZIP” stands for “zoning improvement plan.” The Zip+4 code was added in 1983.

37- Cotton Ginning Time
in Memphis, Tenn.

