**Bogus**—not genuine. In philately, an inexact term, but usually refers to items intended to resemble real stamps. See also *counterfeit, fake, forgery*.

**Border**—see *frame*.

**Collector issues**—stamps issued exclusively for sale to collectors. See also *remainder, specimen*.

**Control number**—a number equivalent to a lot number, overprinted for auditing purposes. See also *serial number, sheet/pane number*.

  Cigarette decals often have a control number to identify a particular distributor’s purchase.

**Counterfeit**—a fraudulent imitation made to evade payment of taxes or to deceive collectors. In philately, roughly synonymous with *forgery*; however usually refers to an imitation created in order to deceive collectors. See also *bogus, fake, forgery*.

**Cut-down**—a type of *fake* in which *separations* have been removed to imitate an imperforate variety.

**Decal**—short for *decalcomania*. A picture, design, or label made to be transferred from specially prepared paper. A single or multi-layer design printed on one material, usually paper, that is to be subsequently and permanently applied to another surface, usually by means of water or heat activation of an adhesive. See also *heat transfer decal, self-adhesive*.

  Derived from the French word *décalquer* (to transfer). The “*mania*” was added during the decal craze of the late 1800s. Ordinary perforated stamps are distinct from decals because they are not produced on a carrier paper, meant to be transferred. To distinguish the two major types of decals, the term “decal”, and “heat transfer decal” are can be used to refer to water, and heat-activated transfer, respectively. A decal is also called a “transfer”, especially internationally.

**Decalcomania**—see *decal*.

**Denomination**—the numeral or literal inscribed value of a stamp that indicates the amount of tax paid, or the quantity of goods upon which tax has been paid. See also *value, and taxpaid*.

  The denomination may have monetary, weight, volumetric, or numeric units. It is not uncommon to have no denomination inscription, or to have more than one representation of the denomination inscribed.

  For Catalog listing purposes, if more than one denomination is inscribed, the monetary denomination is the first listed denomination. Lacking a monetary inscription, the most prominent, or most specific and least ambiguous, non-monetary inscription is listed first, i.e., 24-12 oz vs. 1 case. A second representation of the denomination inscribed on the stamp will normally be shown, especially when it promotes clarity, e.g., between 12-24 oz, and 24-12 oz. If noted for information or clarity, denominations not actually inscribed are contained within parentheses.

**De-monetized**—having been deprived of value for official payment. A revenue stamp that has been demonetized is no longer valid for use in showing payment of tax.
Demonetization is most commonly accomplished by defacing in a variety of ways. The purpose of demonetization may either be to cancel, or to prevent a stamp from being used. Examples of the former are listed as “used”. Examples of the latter are specimens, samples, and remainders. Unmarked remainders are merely mint stamps.

**Double impression**—Most generally, describes a linearly displaced duplication of all or part of a stamp’s design, regardless of cause. More narrowly, refers to the cause being printing. Linear displacement need not be purely horizontal, or vertical.

**Double print**—synonymous with the narrow meaning of double impression.

**Double transfer**—in its most general sense, roughly synonymous with double impression. A more narrow use would require detailed knowledge cause usually involving the history of the printing plate or lithographic transfer, and the printing processes used. 

**Error**—an accidental and marked deviation from the intended norm. See also fly-speck, oddities and variety. Examples in printing or production: totally missing colors in an otherwise finished stamp, or partially missing separation, e.g., imperforate between; inverted inscriptions or other design aspects. Small variations due to the stamp manufacturing processes themselves are not normally major and consistent enough to be considered errors. Examples of these variations would be “printing quality”, or heavy or non-uniform inking. 

Examples in design: misspellings, or factual errors; incorrect, or missing denomination. Generally speaking, errors are listed, in addition to the normal, intended, or corrected variety, as applicable.

**Essay**—an item differing in design in any particular from the actual issued stamp. Once issued, even if never used, a stamp ceases to be an Essay. Essays include the following: printed designs proposed but not adopted as proposed. There are die essays, plate essays, and forms of experimental essays, as well as unfinished or incomplete designs that may form part of a finally approved design. 

Designs that, after modification, result in stamps in the modified design; designs that are rejected and do not result in stamps. 

Projects in the form of stamps, submitted so that the issuing authority may judge of the type or standard of work.

Essays are listed using “E” listing suffix. Unissued stamps differing only in color from issued stamps are listed as Trial Color Proofs with listing suffix “TC”. 

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DRAFT
SRS Catalog Definitions

**Fake** - an imitation passed off as genuine. In philately, an inexact term, usually referring to genuine stamps, or aspects of them, that have been tampered with in order to deceive. Roughly synonymous with **bogus**. See also **bogus, counterfeit, forgery**.

Example: a perforated stamp, cut down to resemble an imperforate variety. Fake perforations.

**Flaw** - a blemish. A variation in the intended outcome caused by any design or manufacturing process. See also **fly-speck, variety**.

Flaws may be major or minor. “Plate flaws” showing up at certain positions on each sheet, possibly caused by damage or improper plate assembly and the like, are nearly synonymous with “plate varieties”. Printing flaws could be caused by dirt, irregularities in applying ink and pressure.

Major flaws may be listed; minor ones are not.

**Fly-speck** - a minor variation in the details of otherwise identical stamps that, though collectible, have little philatelic significance. See also **error, flaw, plate variety, variety**.

Fly-specks are normally beyond the scope of the SRS Catalog. Examples of flyspecks might include:

- minor position variation, or orientation of an overprint or hand stamp such as signature, serial number, denomination, or surcharge
- small variations in the dimensions of design features due to variable inking
- missing, partially missing, or smudged letters, or punctuation, slightly incomplete frame lines.
- various positions of legitimate “security dots”
- other extremely minor plate varieties

Examples of things that are not considered fly specks:

- missing or incorrect colors
- inverted frames, ornaments, or inscriptions
- major plate variation such as clearly different fonts in text
- different fonts or colors in overprinting, e.g., serifed vs. sans serif in overprinted serial numbers
- presence or absence of “security dots” or other security markings
- major variation in security features, such as size or font of control numbers, or purposeful, major variation in orientation, or other aspects of security (“safety”) printing incorporated into stamp or decal/card
- differences in printers’ imprint that indicate different dates of issue, e.g. on tags

**Font** - a specific size and style of a type face, e.g., 14 point, italic **Times New Roman**

**Forgery** - a fraudulent imitation. In philately, roughly synonymous with **counterfeit**; however usually implies defrauding the issuing authority, i.e., a “revenue forgery”. See also **counterfeit**.

**Frame** - the outer, containing feature of a stamp design, often a single or double line.

**Freak** - inconsistently occurring variation that may be minor or major, as opposed to **errors**, and **plate varieties**.

A printing freak might be noticeable over- or under-inking that was not caught in quality control. Freaks are not normally listed.
Heat transfer decal-a type of decal applied by activating a thermoplastic adhesive, as by ironing, and transferring from a carrier sheet to the taxed item, or package. See also decal.

Hyphen-hole-See slot perforation.

Imprint-lettering, usually in very small font size, and usually outside the design frame, that identifies the printer.

Imprints on tags may also contain additional information about date of printing. Different imprints may be listed separately.

Inscription-Lettering describing the state, the type of tax, the denomination, etc. as distinct from portraits, frames, borders or other design features.

Issue -v. to make officially available for use. n. the thing made officially available. Roughly synonymous with series, or set.

Issue date- the date a stamp is officially made available for use.

Issue dates are noted at the beginning of a series description. Proxies for the official issue date might be:

- Date of first known use as determined by a cancellation
- The initial year of office of a signing official
- Effective date of authorizing legislation
- An inscribed date

If dates are highly uncertain, they may be listed, in increasing order of uncertainty, as: 1985?, ca1985., 1981-85., 198?, 19??, ???.

Mottled-usually referring to paper, a surface with colored spots or blotches.

This is as opposed to a uniform, surface-colored paper. Mottled surfaces may be fugitive, may be prominent or faint, and be a repeating rather than totally random pattern.

Oddity-an imprecise, catch-all term for collectible items that may not obviously fit “error” or “freak”

Oddities are only selectively listed, for example when used synonymously with “plate variety”.

Ornament—an artistic feature of a stamp design.

Usually used with an adjective describing the shape or location, e.g., a corner ornament.

Overprint—an addition to the face of a stamp after the base stamp has been printed.

Examples of overprints would be most serial numbers. A surcharge is a special type of overprint.

Perfin—an item exhibiting a perfin. Having small circular holes punched as an identifying, cancellation, or security device, applied officially or privately.

Perfins are normally perforated initials, or perforated identifications, e.g., company names, or designation as a specimen as in “SPECIMEN COLUMBIAN BANK NOTE CO CHICAGO”
Perforation - a separation method accomplished by periodically removing paper along the border of a stamp. See also *slot perforation*.

Plate variety - a *variety* that occurs in the same position on a sheet or pane.

Position number or letter (or pane position number or letter) - an inscribed or overprinted number or letter that indicates the row and column position of an individual stamp on the sheet/pane.

Often, the relationship of the position number to the physical location must be determined with an unbroken, or partial sheet or pane, or inferred from attached stamps.

Printer’s waste - faulty, partly printed, or partly processed items that were not intended for circulation, use, or sale. See also *remainder, unfinished stamp*.

Examples are stamps with overprinted image of same stamp in different color, or other stamps printed on the reverse. Unfinished stamps are a sub-set of printers’ waste. Printers’ waste is not listed, but may be noted, especially if it has become widely available to collectors.

Proof - An impression taken from an approved die or plate in the design actually issued, regardless of color.

Proofs are almost always imperforate, and lack serial numbers. Items listed are those known, or strongly suspected to be proofs, and are denoted with a “P” suffix. See also *Trial Color Proof*.

Provisional - n. an item produced to meet a temporary need.

Examples might be overprinting an existing stamp, or printing officially sanctioned language such as on a label.

Provisional items are generally listed, especially when deemed important for telling a more complete story about actual issued stamps.

Remainder - an obsolete stamp, often canceled to order and sold to the public. Remainders might include unused inventory of a printer, issuing authority, or user.

In some cases it may be difficult, or impossible to distinguish a remainder from an issued, mint stamp, or a Specimen. If not de-faced in some way, a remainder is merely a mint stamp. Remainders are not listed, but may be noted if a distinguishing characteristic exists.

Rouletting - a separation method accomplished with periodic tearing or slitting the borders of a stamp in a way that does not remove paper. Gauge is determined as with any other separation method. See also *perforation, slot perforation*.

Occasionally, guides for separation by the user are added during the rouletting process. These guides are usually colored, dashed lines with “gauge” matching the rouletting tears. This type of rouletting is termed “roulette in (color)”. “Clear” or “colorless” roulette is unnecessarily specific unless required for clarity.

Safety - an aspect included in the manufacture of philatelic items to discourage re-use, or counterfeit.

Safety paper may have special materials incorporated into the bulk, or on the surface. These materials may have unique properties, the presence or absence of which can be detected visually or with specialized equipment. Safeties may utilize special printing processes that produce designs that are
difficult to duplicate. Safeties in decals may involve special intermediate printed layers that extend to the card, or carrier sheet, or holograms.

**Sample** - See Specimen.

**Sans serif** - without serifs. Refers to inscriptions or overprints in distinction to serifed. See also serif.

**Self-adhesive** - an item that adheres to a surface by means of a pressure sensitive adhesive, i.e., a “peel and stick” label or “sticker”. In philately, a stamp, created on a temporary carrier paper that is peeled off and affixed permanently by pressing to the item needing evidence of tax paid.

Although fitting the most general definition of decal self-adhesives are referred to by this more specific name.

**Separation(s)** - a generic term referring to the various methods for making a stamp, or part of a stamp, easily detached from each other, or from a sheet. The most common are perforation, and rouletting.

**Serial number** - a group of numbers inscribed in order to count and distinguish an item individually. See also control number, position number.

A serial number for a sheet is termed “sheet number”. Sometimes serial number prefixes and suffixes are noted in listings to identify series numbers known.

**Serial number prefix** - a letter or letters preceding a serial number, usually indicating a particular set, or series of serial numbers.

If all possible six digit serial numbers have been used, a new serial number prefix provides a new set of possible serial numbers.

**Serial number suffix** - letters or numbers following a serial number. See also position number.

A similarly located position number is not considered a suffix for the purpose of listing description. Often suffixes are codes that relate to state classifications, or denominations.

**Series** - a grouping of related stamps, listed together. A letter or letters, usually serial number prefixes or suffixes, referring to a grouping of serial numbers.

The relationship can either be the various denominations of otherwise identically designed stamps, or a grouping of identically designed stamps for which the issue dates are unknown, or vary widely.

Series letters are occasionally noted in listings in order to record which are known. Individual series letters are not listed separately unless they are a part of the base stamp, i.e., not overprinted.

**Serif** - a small decorative embellishment added to a basic type face character.

“Serifed” refers to characters with such embellishments. The thickness of the lines forming serifed characters often varies.

**Times New Roman** is a common serifed typeface.

**Calibri** is a sans serif (without serifs) typeface.
Se-tenant - two or more un-separated stamp designs, colors, overprints, or separation methods, created adjacent to one another on a pane.

Usual referred to as a “se-tenant pair”, or “...pair se-tenant”.

Sheet number - numbers, or letters and numbers printed on a sheet or pane in order to count and distinguish them individually.

Slot perforation - a separation method in which the perforations are usually rectangular-shaped holes.

Slot perforation is synonymous with “hyphen-hole perforation”. “Hyphen-hole rouletting”, or “slot rouletting” are incorrect terms.

Specimen - mint examples of issued stamps that have been officially defaced in some fashion, or lack serial or control numbers, if applicable, so as to de-monetize them. Defacing methods could include the word “Specimen” or its equivalent by overprint, perforation, manuscript, or by inscription, or by security punches, or both.

Specimens may have been created for a variety of purposes: to show examples of a printer’s work, i.e., for salesman samples, to inform state agencies in advance of official issue and receipt, or merely to retain de-monetized, archival examples.

For state revenue stamps, “Specimen” is synonymous with “Sample”. See also remainder, proof, unfinished stamp

Examples of Specimens:

- items indicated as Specimens by the Champion Catalog and Supplement compiled from ABNC and CBNC archives, having the following features:
  1. security punched, and overprinted “SPECIMEN”. (Stamps normally having a serial number may have one, or have none, or “0000”)
  2. single or double security punched (fixed spatial relation) hole or holes, with or without serial number, if applicable
  3. lacking only serial number, serial number and prefix/suffix, or having “000000” serial number
  4. overprinted, or manuscript “SAMPLE”, or “SAMPLE NOT TO BE SOLD”
  5. partially perforated with the 8-9/16” long “SPECIMEN COLUMBIAN BANK NOTE CO. CHICAGO” (each partially perforated stamp is considered a Specimen)

Items that can also be considered “specimens”:

- overprinted or manuscript “VOID” or “CANCELLED”
- perfins of an official character, as opposed to a cancellation

Items generally not considered Specimens:

1. Non-mint items with other markings. However, salesman samples containing punched decals that have been transferred from the paper on which they were printed are considered specimens.
2. Incomplete or unfinished items. Before declaring a stamp to be unfinished it will be necessary to rule out the possibility that it is an essay or a specimen. Examples aspects might be: imperforate (if only issued perforated), punched and missing color, missing any inscription of the issued stamp.

In some cases, of course, the meaning of punched holes, “VOID” or “CANCELLED”, etc. is not known. Generally, when the purpose of an item is not known, it must be strongly suspected to be a specimen, or it is not listed as such, but may be noted. Specimens are listed separately with suffix “S”.

**Stamp** - in definitions refers to all types of state revenue philatelic items that show evidence of a tax paid. Used this way, can refer to any, or all of: adhesive stamps, die-cut self adhesives, meter stamps, decals (both water activated, and heat transfer) or tags.

**Surcharge** - an overprint that alters or confirms the face value or use of a stamp.

**Surround** - the area outside the design of a decal that may be plain, or show evidence of a safety pattern/text. Also called “corona” by some.

**Taxpaid** - a revenue stamp that does not have a monetary denomination. See also *denomination*.

**Tête-bêche** - literally “head to tail”. A stamp printed so that it is inverted with respect to its neighboring stamp or pane.

**Trial color proof** - impressions from the approved design die or plate in any color ink other than the issued stamp.

**Unfinished stamp** - a stamp that did not go through all manufacturing processes of the same issued stamp. See also *essay, remainder, specimen, printers waste*.

Examples might be: missing perforations, missing colors, missing overprints.

Unfinished stamps would not normally be listed in the SRS Catalog; however, unfinished stamps relatively widely available to collectors may be mentioned in detailed notes. Before declaring a stamp to be unfinished it will be necessary to rule out the possibility that it is an essay or a specimen.

**Value** - what a stamp is worth in “the market”. The amount that a knowledgeable collector may pay to acquire. See also *denomination*.

Catalog values can be determined by historical sales, or by consensus of knowledgeable collectors. The value is not the most that a desperate, ignorant buyer will pay, nor the least a lucky buyer was able to “steal” for at auction. Catalog values are listed as mint, and used. Values are for sound stamps (considering use) with Fine centering, and for used items, in condition typical of use.

**Variety** - a particular stamp. A stamp that differs from the intended norm.

Philatelically, varieties may be imprecisely classified as major or minor. Generally speaking, in the latter sense, only major varieties are listed.

“Minor variety”, “minor blemish”, “minor flaw”, and “fly speck” are roughly synonymous, and would not generally be listed. Examples of minor varieties would be: the various vertical positions of the Fred O. Dickinson (small) signature in Florida documentary stamps; missing letters or punctuation in some AZ Luxury stamps, and LA insecticide stamps++++, and some FL egg stamps.
Primary references consulted:


