



Letters - Where do letters go when you post them?

Fact

- When you post a letter at a post box it doesn't go straight to the address on the envelope. It goes through the New Zealand postal system.
- The letters are picked up by a van and taken to the nearest Mail Service Centre where they are sorted into bunches of letters and parcels going to different areas.
- Then the letters and parcels are sent to each area. Some by truck and some first by plane and then by truck.
- They end up at the Local Delivery Centre where they're sorted into each street.
- Then they're delivered to the address on the front of the envelope by a postie.
- The cost of the stamp you put on the front of the letter pays for all this to happen.

Do you know

- Thousands and thousands of letters get sent every day in New Zealand.
- Most of the letters at the Mail Service Centres get sorted by machine and some machines can sort up to 35,000 letters an hour.
- The machines can even read the address written on the front of the envelope so it can sort the letters into the areas they're being posted to.
- Some people and businesses use Post Boxes at the post shop and have their mail delivered there.
- If the address is wrong or it can't be read by the machine it gets sent back to the person who sent the letter - if they've put their return address on the back.
- If the address is wrong and there is no return address on the back or on the inside of the letter it gets filed at the Mail Service Centre.

Experiments you can do

Post someone a letter to someone in your extended family (like a cousin or grandparent) in a different part of the country and make a note of the day you sent it. See how long it takes to get to them. Let them know that you're conducting this experiment and get them to reply straight away telling you the date they received your letter. You should be able to tell the day that it was sorted at the Mail Service Centre by looking at the Post Mark that gets printed over the stamp.

Send a letter to someone who lives even further away. How long does it take to get to them?

Other Investigations

How does the postie deliver the mail in your area? Some posties ride bikes, some walk, some use vans and some ride motorbikes. What does your postie do and what time of the day does your mail usually get delivered?

Jokes

What travels around the world but stays in its corner? A stamp!

How many letters are there in envelope? Answer - One