

USPS

By Karen Zhang



## Karen in America

USPS全称是United States Postal Service, 美国邮政署, 亦称美国邮局或美国邮政服务, 是美国联邦政府的独立机构。中国邮政和美国邮政有很多不一样的地方, 我们请Karen给我们一一道来。

When you hear Americans talking about the USPS, you probably wonder what it is. It stands for the United States Postal Service. Just like China Post, the USPS provides postal service across America. But what's different is the USPS is an independent agency of the U.S. federal government whereas China Post is state-owned.

What attracts me most about the USPS is the small white mail delivery vans [有蓬货车]. The postmen are also drivers, steering the wheels on the right. (In the U.S., like China, the driver normally sits on the left side of the car.) Therefore, they can deliver mail to every household [家庭] with a sidewalk [人行道] mail box without leaving the delivery vans. The van on the driver's side doesn't have a door, which gives them easy access [通路] to the mail boxes.

There're tens of thousands of such USPS mail delivery vans working every day except Sundays. And if you want to mail a standard-sized letter, you don't need to visit the post office. All you need to do is just put the stamped mail into an outgoing mail slot [缝, 狭槽] or in your own mail box and put up a red flag on the side of the mail box. The postman will pick up your letter when he delivers the daily mail to you.

In America, the standard domestic postage is 49 cents. If you want to buy some stamps for domestic mailing, you just ask for the Forever Stamp Book. Each book consists of 20 stamps. Why are they called Forever stamps? Because postage cost varies over time, if you have a Forever stamp, its face value won't be affected even though the postage has risen.

Speaking of American stamps, they're actually stickers. You don't need glue to paste the stamp on the envelope like those in China. You tear the back of the stamp and stick it on the envelope. There! The letter is ready to mail. If you're a stamp collector, you'll be thrilled to see zillions of varieties of American stamps. There're people, nature, buildings, symbols, anniversaries of events and many more themes. I like to collect the stamps with the theme of Chinese New Year. Each year, the USPS will release a series of stamps with the Chinese zodiac [十二生肖图] or symbols related to Chinese cultures, such as kumquats [金橘], red lanterns and fire crackers. They are really beautiful! 🍊

