



# CIVICS IN REAL LIFE

# United States Postal Service

***Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how “We the People” interact with the government and each other. Let’s help each other expand our civic literacy.***



**UNITED STATES  
POSTAL SERVICE®**

Chiseled above the entrance to New York City’s James M. Farley Building is the unofficial motto of the **U.S. Post Office**, “neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift

completion of their appointed rounds.” These words by the Greek historian, Herodotus, reflect the spirit of the postal service. It gets the job done, no matter what.

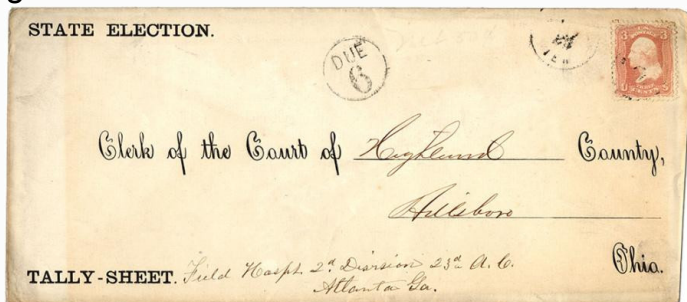
The U.S. Post Office is the trusted source to move government services between the government and the people. From the **franking privilege** of the United States Congress, to the Department of State relying on the Post Office for its **passport services**, to the delivery of election ballots at home and abroad, the U.S. Postal Service is a safe way for the delivery of personal, official, and time sensitive mail.

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Unofficial Motto of the U.S. Postal Service

The significance of the U.S. Post Office cannot be overestimated. For 245 years, it has been safeguarding our personal letters, augmenting our commercial enterprises, and helping to secure our democratic way of life. The framers of the U.S. Constitution understood this significance when they granted Congress the **power to create** a postal system in 1787 and it has continued to contribute to the growth of this nation ever since.

Even during this nation’s most trying times, the U.S. Post Office has been relied upon to help carry American democracy forward.



Since the **Civil War**, when circumstances prevented soldiers from voting in-person, states created a process for **absentee voting**. This process depended upon the postal service to deliver a soldier’s mail-in ballot securely and effectively to state election officials.

Since the Civil War, then, the U.S. Post Office has supported U.S. elections. **Voting by mail** has become an integral part of the electoral process, with all 50 states allowing it, and millions of eligible voters casting their votes by it.

As America prepares to vote during the COVID19 pandemic crisis, the creed of the U.S. Post Office remains important: “neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”

**To Think and To Do:** With the 2020 presidential election approaching, **what rules** does your state have for voting by mail? Compare your state’s rules with the rules of a neighboring state. If differences exist, what are they?

**Learn MORE** about the U.S Post Office and Absentee Voting. Free registration may be required.

- [America's Mailing Industry](#), from Smithsonian National Postal Museum
- [Absentee & Early Voting](#), from USA.gov



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