

 The Royal Mail has a long and interesting history.

Read the text. For questions 1–10, choose the best answer (a, b, or c).

The Royal Mail is the national postal service¹ of the United Kingdom, which collects and delivers letters. Letters are posted in red pillar boxes or post boxes, also called letter boxes. Postmen also deliver mail each morning direct² to homes or offices. In the countryside they travel round in vans, but in towns and villages they ride bicycles. There are 35,000 Royal Mail bikes and the distance postmen travel by bikes each year is the same as going to the Moon and back again 200 times!



Post Brenhinol

Royal Mail



¹ service — служба

² direct — прямо, непосредственно

The Royal Mail delivers 84 million items every working day and has more than 14,000 post offices. Every year the British send one billion letters to other countries.

The Royal Mail has a long and interesting history. It has been around since the days of Henry VIII. The Royal Mail appeared in 1516. In 1635 King Charles I opened the Royal Mail to the public. Post boys who worked for the Royal Mail carried letters, riding on horses. In 1784, fast coaches started to carry the mail. In the 1830s, coaches disappeared because of the arrival of the railways. In those days a person who got a letter had to pay for it and a postman had to wait to collect money. The cost was high, a postman's visit was often unwelcome, and many people didn't want to pay. In 1840 Rowland Hill suggested a postal reform, according to which the one who sent a letter had to pay a penny for it no matter how far the distance travelled.

Thanks to Rowland Hill, on May 6, 1840, Penny Black, the world's first postal stamp, appeared. Penny Black cost one penny and had a picture of Queen Victoria on it. It was the first stamp in the world and that is why there was no word "Britain" on it. Penny Blacks are now quite rare.

Today, British stamps do not have the country's name on them either and British people rely on the Royal Mail as much as they did hundreds of years ago.

If you want to learn more about the Royal Mail you can visit the British Postal Museum and Archives in London or the Postal Museum in Bath. They both tell you about the Royal Mail and its significant place in history. In the Royal Mail Archives one can also find information on family members who worked in the postal service. In the Postal Museum in Bath you can see working machines, a life-size Victorian post office and a children's activities room.

1 The Royal Mail

- a collects and delivers letters. b collects letters. c delivers letters.
- 2 In the UK you can see
 a three types of boxes for posting letters.
 b two types of boxes for posting letters.
 c one type of boxes under three different names.
- 3 Nowadays in the UK postmen usually deliver mail using
 a bicycles and coaches. b bicycles and vans. c coaches and railways.
- 4 Postmen also deliver mail direct to
 a offices every working day. b offices and homes every working day.
 c homes every working day.
- 5 One billion letters are
 a posted by British people every year.
 b delivered by British postmen every day.
 c sent by British people to other countries.
- 6 The Royal Mail has been around since the days of
 a Henry VIII. b King Charles I. c Queen Victoria.
- 7 The Royal Mail opened to the public in
 a 1516. b 1635. c 1784.
- 8 Before 1840 people
 a paid for the letters they sent. b paid for the letters they got.
 c did not pay for the letters they sent or got.

TEST YOURSELF

- 9 The Penny Black was the first and the only postal stamp in the world, that is why it
 a had no word "Britain" on it. b was very rare.
 c had a picture of Queen Victoria and the name of the country on it.
- 10 In the Postal Museum in Bath visitors can see
 a a life-size figure of Queen Victoria.
 b a life-size post office from the days of Queen Victoria.
 c life-size figures of members of a family who worked for the Royal Mail in the past.

Your score	10	9-8	7-5	4 и менее
Your mark	5	4	3	2