

## **LEARNING WITH WWW.POSTCROSSING.COM**

**Postcrossing** is an online project that allows its members to send and receive postcards from all over the world. The project's tag line is "send a postcard and receive a postcard back from a random person somewhere in the world!" Its members, also known as **postcrossers**, send postcards to other members and receive postcards back from other random postcrossers. Where the postcards come from is always a surprise.

Postcrossing is the union of the words "postcard" and "crossing" and its origin "is loosely based on the Bookcrossing site". However, the "crossing" or exchange of postcards works in a different way. A member sends a postcard to another postcrosser and receives a postcard back from a random postcrosser. Exchanges between the same two members only occur once; although direct swaps between members happen, they are not part of the official happenings on the site. The project is completely free and anyone with an address can create an account. However, the postcards themselves and postage fees to mail them are the responsibility of each user.

By June 2015 Postcrossing had more than 554,570 members in 213 different countries. The highest concentration of Postcrossing members reside in the United States, Russia, China, Taiwan, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Finland, Belarus, Ukraine and Brazil [1].

Postcrossing is a really simple way to exchange postcards with people around the world. The process is simple.

- After registering, you choose to 'Send a Postcard'.
- The site then gives you the name, address and profile information of a person to send a postcard to.
- When that person registers the card as being received, your details will be given to someone else, who will then send you a card.
- So, for every card you send, you should receive one in return.

The site is incredibly easy to use and has some clever tools to keep track of the cards that you have sent / received. You are also able to scan your cards and show them to others on your own "Postcard Wall".

Postcrossing is very useful in the *classroom*:

- A school / class account could be registered and used to allow children to send postcards (under adult supervision) with people around the world.
- As postcards are sent or received, their destination / location of origin could be identified in atlases / Google Maps / Google Earth. It might also be a good opportunity to find out more about that place, and the history / culture of the people living there.
- Some wonderful classroom displays could be created, using the postcards and information about the places they are from.
- Children could also make their own postcards. This might also be an opportunity to use ICT (e.g. 2Publish+). Some of the Postcrossing members use the site to collect postcards and they occasionally state that they would rather not receive homemade cards. The choice of postcard recipients is also

completely random, so it's not possible for schools to ensure that they are sending to other schools [2].

Postcrossing is interesting not only for children but also for students. There are some ideas how to use this website and postcards in student's learning.

- Read the postcrosser's profile and send a short message to the sender.

Ex.

*Hello Postcrossers!*

*My name is Alexandra und I'm 44 years old. I live with my husband and my two children (12 and 15 years old) in Bielefeld in a house with garden. We like to be and to work in our garden.*

- Describe your postcard, which you have just received. Do you like it? Why?
- Read the postcrosser's profile and explain what card you chose to send to this postcrosser.

#### About Sien...

On April 15th I became 64. I'm living in Belgium, in Zonhoven, near Hasselt, with my husband Michel. I have one daughter Ellen, she's almost 37, I have no grandchildren.

I'm retired since July 1st 2014. I have a lot of time now for my hobbies: I make mosaics with glas, tiles, marble,.... Look at the avatar: I made this mosaic and it's called: "dare to dream", it was a card I received from a postcrosser in Canada, it was a splendid card to make a mosaic of.

I like travelling too. I have a Japanese friend living in Shinozaki, near Tokyo. We are penpals for more then 50 years. I visited her in 2007 and she was in Belgium a few years ago. In May I visited her and her husband to celebrate our 50 years of friendship, and we had such a good time!

I like to receive all kind of cards: animals, especially dogs(favourite dogs: Westies and Border Collies), Unesco cards, trains, music and musical instruments... But other cards are o.k. too!

And when it's X'mas time: I like to receive X'mas cards. And in April you can write me a Birthday card.

While I'm a Japan lover, I love Gotochi cards a lot and also Taiwan, Gotochi-style cards. If you send me that kind of card, I will send you some Belgian cards, or Belgian chocolates in exchange.

My favourite stamps: stamps of fauna and flora, trains, art, Christmas stamps, EUROPA stamps and stamps about music and musical instruments.

#### Mailbox location



Leaflet | Data, imagery and maps provided by MapQuest, OpenStreetMap and contributors, CC-BY-SA

Lat: 51.0, Lon: 5.4 | [Open in google maps](#)

- You've got a postcard, read the information and write a short "thank you message" to the sender of the postcard.
- Give the feedback of the postcard you've just received. Put down some attractive facts about your country, region, history of your town etc.

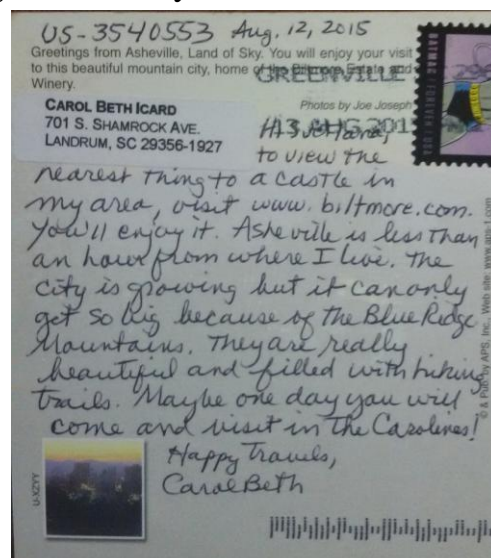
Ex.



- Look at the postcard ID and differentiate the country. What do you know about this country?

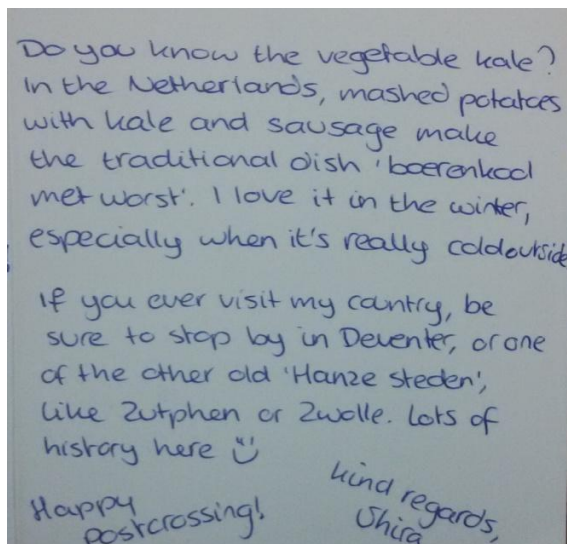
*Ex.* CA (Canada), CN (China), IT (Italy), NZ (New Zeland) etc.

- Read a postcard and write this person back. Describe yourself; write something interesting about you, your job or family.



- Read about the postcrosser's traditional dish and write about your favorite food and in this case you can write a recipe.

*Ex.*



- Express what daily life is like where you're sending the card from by describing what you did today, your routine, etc.
- Write 5 curious facts about the place where the card is from.
- Give local travelling tips from your area! What are the must-sees around you?
- What do you have in common with the recipient of your card?
- Did you ever travel to the place where your card is going? Recall your best memory of that place.
- Did anything important happen in your country lately? Share an interesting news bit!

Postcrossing can help you learn not only about other countries, far away places, different people but also practice your English and other languages with fun.

## REFERENCES

1. Postcrossing [Электронный ресурс] // Режим доступа до тексту: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postcrossing>. – Назва з екрана.
2. Postcrossing in the Classroom [Электронный ресурс] // Режим доступа до тексту: <http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/geography/postcrossing.htm>. – Назва з екрана.