

How much for postage?

Today, I found in my bag forty stamps that I had bought around Christmas time, and not used. I had bought them for mailing Christmas cards, but this year, for some odd reason, I didn't mail out any cards at all. I usually do. I must have just completely forgotten. Anyway, I'm keeping them with my stationary and office supplies for sending off bills. One thing that I have noticed about stamps is how they increase in price every year. Mailing, or posting letters as we say in England, is becoming more and more expensive. Living far away from friends and family doesn't help either. My mother recently sent off a package of Christmas presents to my sister; we shared the cost of the package, and it is just as well. The postage generally costs more than the value of what you are sending! Then there are all the different options you can choose for the freight. There is Federal Express which is super speedy and very costly. US postal service offers regular delivery, next day air mail (for national deliveries), or mail with tracking. A few days ago my mother also sent a small package to my brother who lives in New Zealand. She was told in the post office that it would cost eighty nine dollars. "What?" she replied. "Why so expensive?" was her next question. Apparently, they had added the tracking charge which was the majority of the total cost. "Forget about the tracking," she said. "Just send it the cheapest way possible." They did, and the price was only one tenth of the original cost. The world of mail is fascinating. When you think of how we manage to communicate with and send things to people on the other side of the planet, and most of the time with success, it is quite impressive! Yes, there are disasters with mail getting lost, held up, or broken, but most of the time, our precious packages arrive on time and in one piece.

Grammar notes.

Common expressions: doesn't help, forget the...., to be held up.

1. The car is stuck in the mud, and this rain doesn't help!

OR It doesn't help that the only supermarket is closed, and we don't have any food!

2. Forget the travel insurance; just buy the plane ticket!

3. My parcel was held up in customs for three weeks.

