



STAMP ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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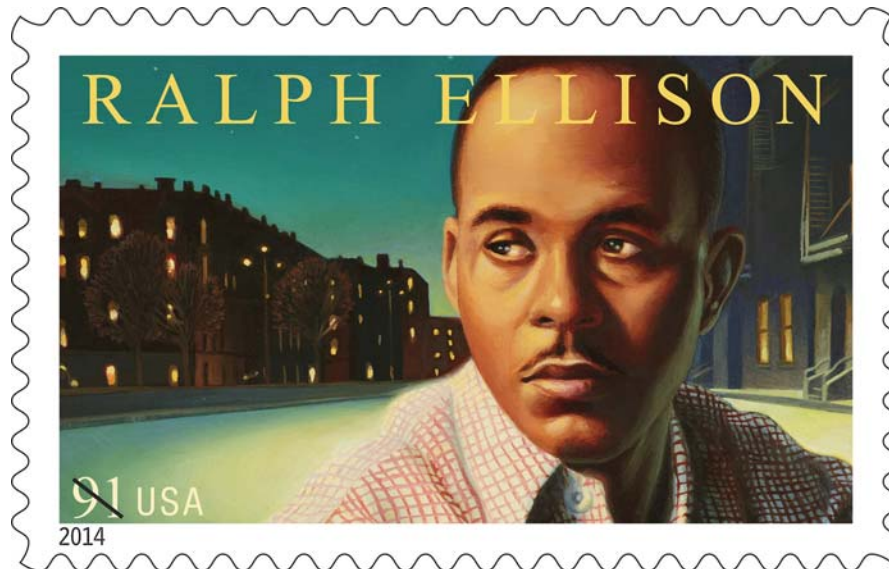


Photo of Ralph Ellison courtesy of The Gordon Parks Foundation

Prolific Author Ralph Ellison Honored on U.S. Postage Stamp

To obtain a high-resolution image of the stamp for media use only, email roy.a.betts@usps.gov.

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service today issued the 29th stamp in the Literary Arts series honoring author Ralph Ellison for First-Class Mail weighing up to three ounces. Customers may purchase the 91-cent stamp at usps.com/stamps, 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724) and at Post Offices nationwide.

With his 1952 novel *Invisible Man*, a masterpiece of 20th-century fiction, Ellison drew on a wide range of narrative and cultural traditions, shedding vivid light on the African-American experience while setting a new benchmark for all American novelists.

The stamp art is an oil-on-panel painting featuring a portrait of Ellison based on a black-and-white photograph by Ellison's friend Gordon Parks, a renowned staff photographer for *Life* magazine. The photo appeared on the back of the dust jacket of the first edition of *Invisible Man* in 1952. The background of the stamp art shows a Harlem street at twilight. The artwork for this stamp was created by Kadir Nelson. Art director Ethel Kessler designed the stamp.

Drawing deeply on European and American literature as well as jazz, the blues, African-American folklore, and popular culture, *Invisible Man* won the National Book Award in 1953. Ellison's nonfiction writing, especially the 1964 collection *Shadow and Act*, has also been praised for providing touchstones for black artists who loved American culture but often felt excluded by it.

Ellison participated in countless cultural commissions and advisory boards, including the National Council on the Arts and the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, while also serving as an advisor to the National Portrait Gallery, a board member at the Kennedy Center, and an honorary consultant to the Library of Congress. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969 and served as Regents Professor and Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities at New York University from 1970 through 1979.

In 1985, Ellison received the National Medal of the Arts. The following year, he published *Going to the Territory*, a collection of his essays, articles, and speeches from 1963 to 1983. Focusing on literature, art, and music, *Going to the Territory* includes tributes to author and friend Richard Wright, composer and bandleader Duke Ellington, and artist Romare Bearden.

Ralph Ellison died in New York City on April 16, 1994.

Customers may view the Ralph Ellison stamp, as well as many of this year's other stamps, on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), on Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or at [USPSstamps.com](https://www.USPSstamps.com).

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at local Post Offices, at The Postal Store at usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others, and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Ralph Ellison Stamp
Cancellation Services
8300 NE Underground Drive, Pillar 210
Kansas City, MO 64144-0001

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark up to a quantity of 50. For more than 50, the price is five cents each. All orders must be postmarked by April 19, 2014.

Ordering First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are seven philatelic products available for the pane of 20:

- 116506, Press Sheet w/Die Cuts, \$182.00 (print quantity of 2,500).
- 116508, Press Sheet w/o Die Cuts, \$182.00 (print quantity of 2,500).
- 116510, Keepsake (Pane & Digital Color Postmark Set), \$20.95.
- 116516, First-Day Cover, \$1.35.
- 116521, Digital Color Postmark, \$2.06.
- 116531, Stamp Deck Card, \$0.95.
- 116532, Stamp Deck Card w/Digital Color Postmark, \$2.41.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage,

products and services to fund its operations.

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