

The 1987 Technical Education and Vocational Training commemorative stamp issue of Saudi Arabia

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King Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud or simply King Fahd was the fifth king of Saudi Arabia. He ruled his country from June 13, 1982 until he passed away on August 1, 2005. He was the longest reigning king of the country.

During his reign, the government of King Fahd placed a special focus on technical education and vocational training. The government's vision was to make certain that the people in the country had skills/training through different trade schools that would provide the country with different craftsmen.

With the aim of training and building a better workforce, the government built more than 70 technical and trade schools throughout the kingdom. The number of students that participated in these programs was greater than 83,000.

The government also formed a Manpower Council. Its aim was to create a plan that would promote a powerful, skilled group of laborers. All government entities would participate in this plan.

The government felt that it was time to commemorate the progress of technical education and vocational training in the kingdom.

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Figure 1

So, on April 8, 1987, it issued a set of four stamps in a se-tenant block of four as shown in Figure 1.

The four stamps are listed in Volume 6A of the 2024 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue. While a se-tenant block of four of these stamps is listed as number 1046, the single stamps are numbered 1046a-d.

In the grade of very fine, a used or never-hinged se-tenant block of four is valued the same at \$7.00. As for the single stamps, each never-hinged example has a retail value of \$1.60 and \$1.40 used.

The four stamps were designed by the Directorate General of Posts. They were printed by lithography on white unwatermarked paper by the Government Security Printing Press in Riyadh, the capital.

The quantity issued was small at 200,000 se-tenant blocks of four. The four stamps have the same face value of 50 halalas each.

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The stamps were issued in sheets of 48 stamps with each sheet containing twelve se-tenant blocks of four. The stamps are perforated gauge 12.

The stamps are multicolored and attractively designed. The text on them is bilingual, in English and Arabic.

The eye-catching design of the stamps is interesting. It uses four connected stamps in a se-tenant block of four to create a complete blue cogwheel. Within the periphery of the cogwheel on every stamp, there are three Arabic words that are equivalent to "Vocational and Technical Trades". Each stamp's denomination and currency are in Arabic behind the words, and in English in front of them.

In an upright position and outside the cogwheel, the Gregorian year "1987" is placed at the upper center of each stamp and the Hijri year "1407," written in Arabic, is situated at the center of the stamp's right side. The Hijri year corresponds to the Gregorian years 1986-1987.

If you are looking for the name of the country on these stamps, you won't find it. As of 1982, Saudi Arabia began using its national emblem on its stamps instead of the country name. The national emblem consists of two crossed swords under a palm tree. In an upright position of every one of these stamps, the national emblem sits outside the cog wheel in the upper right corner. Its green color pairs nicely with the yellow background to make these stamps attractive.

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Figure 2

Each one of the four stamps that make up the cogwheel features a picture of a different trade. Looking at Figure 2, and starting with the upper right stamp, the design features a photo of a lathe operator. The upper left stamp shows a picture of a drill press operator. While the lower left stamp shows a welder, the lower right stamp contains a photograph of an electrical lab technician.

In mint condition, these stamps are found in singles, pairs, blocks of four, larger multiples as well as in full sheets.

When adding mint stamps to their collections, collectors stay away from single stamps and they focus mainly on obtaining se-tenant blocks of four. Collectors don't desire hinged or even lightly hinged stamps.

Postally used examples of the four stamps can be easily found on or off paper. I have seen a small collection of these stamps, on piece, where they had originated in different Saudi Arabian cities.

I saw several se-tenant blocks of four that were canceled-to-order in different Saudi Arabian cities. These include Riyadh, Mecca, Jeddah and Medina.

All four stamps have been seen as singles on commercial covers.

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Philatelic covers exist with se-tenant blocks of four. Some of these covers have addresses and traveled through the mail.

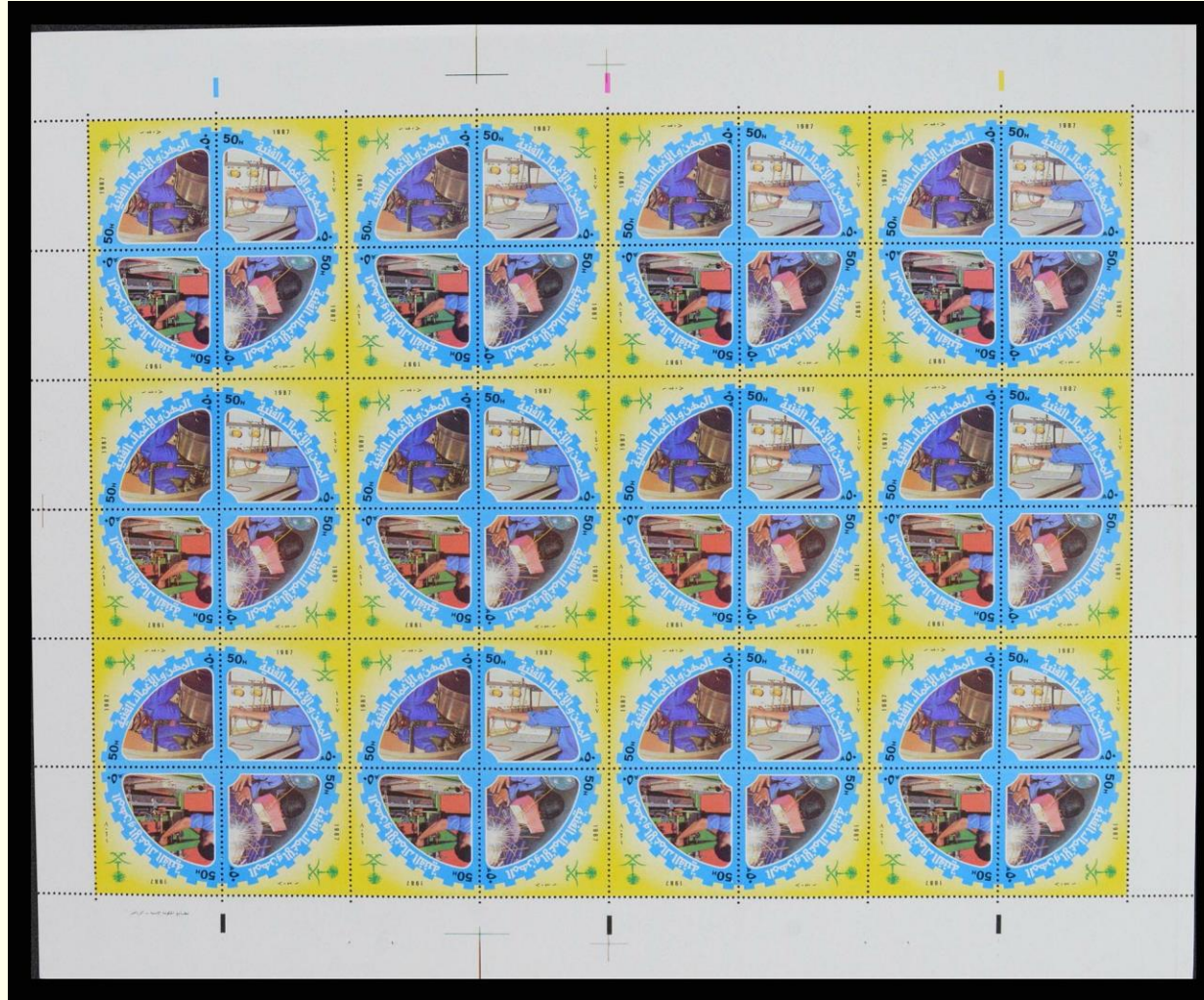
First Day Covers are known.

Whether you collect mint or used stamps, make certain when purchasing a se-tenant block of four to inspect all four stamps carefully. I have seen blocks of four where one or more stamps have faults. Because these stamps are readily available, make sure the se-tenant block of four you are buying is free from faults.

Today, the quantity available of these stamps is less than the quantity issued. Certainly, in 35-plus years, examples of these stamps got lost or became damaged. In addition, the number of collectable stamps in fault-free condition is less than what has been produced. I have seen stamps with faults such as missing perforations, creases as well as thins.

This is a very vibrant stamp set that could have been photographed in any technical school in the country. It gives credit to the unsung workforce that really keeps a nation going. These people are taking on the work that many others don't want to do just because they can be very laborious jobs. These four stamps are a tribute to the backbone of the labor force in any country. They are well worth collecting.

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Complete sheet of blocks

**The 1987 Technical Education and Vocational Training
commemorative stamp issue of Saudi Arabia**

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