

Mixed Tenses – Fill in:

The Blue Mauritius

Mauritius _____ (be) a small island in the Indian Ocean off the southeast coast of the African continent.

But the beautiful place _____

(know/passive) for more than just being a popular tourist destination. The **Mauritius**

Post Office postage stamps _____

(be) amongst the rarest and most valuable stamps in the world.

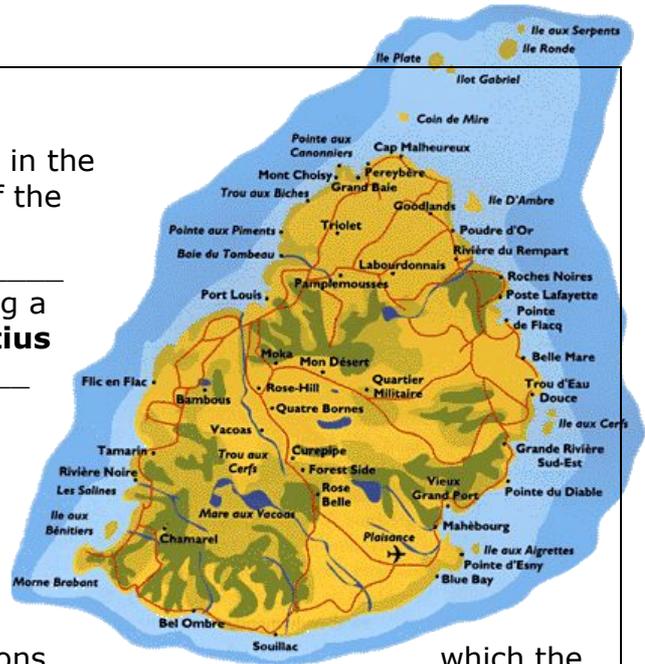
The first issues of these stamps

_____ (produce/passive) in September 1847. Many of them _____

_____ (use/passive) on invitations

Mauritian Governor's

wife _____ (send out) for a ball which she _____ (hold) that month.



which the



There are two reasons why the Blue Mauritius is so valuable: Firstly, it _____ (be) the first stamp of the British Empire which _____

(produce/passive) outside the United Kingdom. But apart from this, the first few issues _____ (print/passive) with the wrong wording.

They had "Post Office" rather than the more conventional "Post Paid" printed on the side. Probably, the stamps

_____ (be) incorrectly worded because the man who

_____ (produce) the stamps, Joseph Barnard,

_____ (be) a half-blind watchmaker and an old man

who absent-mindedly _____ (forget) what he _____

(suppose/passive) to print on the stamps. On his way from his shop to visit the

postmaster he _____ (pass) a post office with a sign hanging above it. This

provided the necessary jog to his memory and he _____ (return) to his

work and finished engraving the plates for the stamps, substituting "Post Office" for "Post Paid".

Ever since, collectors _____ (fascinate/passive) by this story, and throughout history, fanatics _____ (pay) a fortune to obtain one of

the few rare stamps. In 1993, an auction _____ (result) in numerous record-setting prices, including the sale of one unused example of the first

Mauritius issue. The 2d blue, as it _____ (call/passive) officially,

_____ (sell/passive) for over \$ 1 million. Only three examples of

the 2d stamp _____ (know/passive) to be in unused condition.

key: is, is known, are, were produced, were used, sent out, was holding (held), was, was produced, were printed, were, produced, was, forgot, was supposed, passed, returned, have been fascinated, have paid, resulted, is called, was sold, are known