

Tips for eBay Buyers

You'll need to register with eBay in order to bid on items or to search through completed auctions (to check prices). They'll ask for financial information (a credit card or bank account) when you register.

Research the items you're looking for and see what they've sold for in the past.

Carefully examine the seller's feedback ratings and what items they were for. You may not want to buy a \$1200 flat-screen television from someone who has gotten all of their good feedback selling \$2 coffee cups.

When you bid on an item you enter into a binding contract to buy it if your bid is highest.

When you bid the maximum you would ever want to pay for the item right at the beginning, eBay will keep your bid on top by raising your bid step by step, unless someone else bids higher than your maximum.

Decide in advance the maximum you will pay for the item, not during the last few seconds of the auction.

Make sure that you completely understand what is being sold, its condition, and the shipping and packing charges for the item.

If the seller's sale to the winning bidder falls through you may be contacted by the seller through eBay with the option of buying the item, even though your's was not the winning bid.

If it seems like too good a deal, it might be a scam. Watch out for first-time sellers, "deals" outside of eBay, suspicious payment arrangement requests, and sellers with little or unfavorable feedback.

Pay with a method that allows for some protection if the transaction goes bad. eBay and PayPal are owned by the same company and work well together. Never use Western Union to pay for an online purchase, and never do "deals" with third parties.

eBay will try to help you resolve a dispute with a seller if you work within their system.

Tips for eBay Sellers

You'll need to register with eBay in order to bid on items or to search through completed auctions (to check prices). They'll ask for financial information (a credit card or bank account) when you register. The same eBay registration works for selling and buying.

Research the items you're planning to sell to see what current auction prices are like, how the descriptions read, and to see what similar items have sold for in the past.

Carefully craft your auction title and description to cast your item in the best light, to make it easy to find in a keyword search, and to have it show up in the best category. Consider adding your item to additional categories if it seems like that will help people searching eBay to find it.

Use the best photos you can for your listing. Show as much of the detail of your items as you can, and use a neutral background. Kitchen table, not so great! For flat and shallow items you can even use a scanner to create images for your auction.

Decide whether to include a Buy-It-Now price, what your minimum price will be, and if you want to set a reserve price on your auction.

You can exclude certain bidders (those from outside your shipping area, those with low feedback scores, etc.) when you set up the auction.

You can add information to the auction description once the auction has started if you need to, but read eBay's guidelines on how that will affect your auction.

Good feedback from buyers is the equivalent of gold on eBay! The higher your feedback rating, the more likely people will be to bid on your items. Good feedback comes from honest listings, quick communication with bidders and buyers, and good packing and quick shipping.

eBay Links: www.ebay.com <http://pages.ebay.com/education>

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