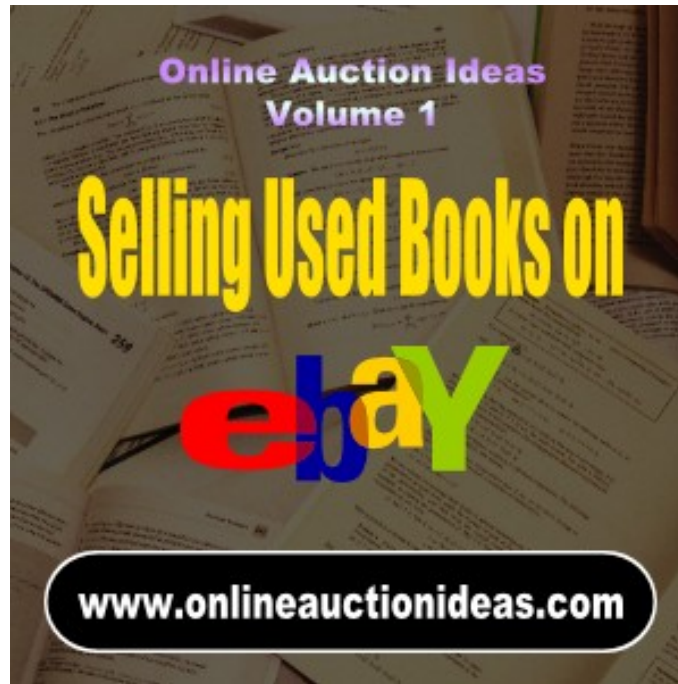


# ONLINE AUCTION IDEAS

## VOLUME 1

### SELLING USED BOOKS ON EBAY



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for downloading this free report, the purpose of which is to show you a simple way to earn some extra money by selling used books online.

The books we are focusing on are relatively modern non-fiction books rather than rare antiquarian books. Since we are unlikely to come across many signed first edition copies of Lord of the Rings while rummaging around car boot sales and flea markets (I wish!) we need to set our sights a little lower. So we are concentrating on books which can be bought from as little as a few pence and sold at online auction for £10 or more.

## **WHY SELL USED BOOKS?**

There are several reasons why selling used books online is an ideal business to start from home.

- Used books are in plentiful supply at very low cost so you can get started for very little outlay.
- There is potential for high profit margins.
- A reasonable stock of books will not take up a lot of room so there are no storage fees to pay.
- Books are not fragile so they are easy to pack and post.
- Books are easy to describe.
- The number of used books sold online has been growing year on year.

## **SETTING UP YOUR SELLER ACCOUNT**

If you are new to selling on eBay you will need to register and set up a seller account. You will also need a Paypal account to enable your buyers to pay with their credit or debit cards. All the information you

need to do this is available on the eBay website and you will find extra hints and tips on our blog at <http://www.onlineauctionideas.com/blog/category/getting-started/>

Once you have familiarised yourself with the eBay selling process, you are ready to start your new business.

## **CHOOSING YOUR NICHE**

The Books category on eBay is huge and has a great deal of competition so it is inevitable that many listings will end with no bids. To ensure that you keep your unsold items to a minimum it is essential that you take the time to research and get to know which books are likely to sell.

You will find research easier and more enjoyable if you begin by concentrating on just one or two subject areas that interest you and expand into other areas as you become more experienced.

By concentrating on non-fiction you will have fewer variables to get to grips with than would be the case with fiction. Here, we are targeting those non-fiction buyers who are interested purely in the subject matter of the book rather than book collectors who will want a specific edition of the book they are searching for.

## **CARRYING OUT RESEARCH**

There is a wealth of useful information to be found by browsing completed auctions on eBay. Not only can you see which books recently got the highest prices and the most bids, you can also find out the days of the week and times the auctions were listed, what days and times bids were made, what country the buyers are from, starting prices, length of auction and various other statistics, all of which can help you to get the best prices from your own auctions.

In order to search completed auctions you need to be signed in to your eBay account.

Click on '*Advanced Search*' at the top of any page; select '*Books, Comics & Magazines*' from the drop-down menu, and check the '*Completed Listings Only*' box. From the '*Sort By*' drop-down menu

select '*Price: Highest First*'. Click '*Search*' and you will be taken to a list of all the sub-categories. Click on '*Non-Fiction Books*' and you can browse through the list of completed auctions to see which books got the most bids and realised the highest prices.

You will find a list of sub-categories to the left of the page so if you have already decided which subject you would like to concentrate on, you can click on the appropriate link from that list rather than browsing through the whole '*Books, Comics and Magazines*' category.

In the search results the items that sold will have their finishing prices shown in green; those with their prices shown in red ended with no bids or did not reach their reserve price.

It is inevitable that a percentage of the books you list will go unsold but regular research will enable you to know your market, thus keeping your unsuccessful listings to a minimum.

I am currently compiling a list of non-fiction books which are regular hot sellers on eBay and I will be making regular posts of my findings in the book-selling section of our website at [www.onlineauctionideas.com](http://www.onlineauctionideas.com).

## **STARTING WITHOUT CASH OUTLAY**

A no cost way to start your new online bookselling business is to have a clear out of your own unwanted books, and ask your family and friends if they have any. But first you will need to find out if there is any demand for them as there is no point in paying listing fees for books that no one wants to buy.

To find out if your books are likely to sell, go to '*Advanced Search*', enter the title and author of your book in the '*Enter keyword or item number*' box, check the '*Completed listings only*' box and click '*Search*'. You will then be shown all auctions for the book that have ended within the last 15 days (if there were any) and this will give you an idea of whether or not your book is worth listing.

## **SOURCING AND BUYING STOCK**

There is no need to rush out and buy dozens of books to get started. Keep your financial risk to a minimum by starting slowly, and build up your stock by re-investing your profits.

One of the many advantages of selling used books is the fact that there are so many places to find them.

**Garage sales and estate sales** can be a bit hit and miss. Some will have lots of interesting books for sale at low cost; others may have only a few books or be asking unrealistic prices for them.

**Flea markets and car boot sales** usually have lots of stalls with books for sale. The sellers usually have no idea of the value of the books and are often happy to sell at very low prices.

**Charity shops and thrift stores** are also likely to have large quantities of used books for sale, but prices vary. While some charity shops sell books from around 20p each, others charge a few pounds for books in good condition and some even employ staff to research the value of the books and price them accordingly.

**Public libraries** sometimes sell off books at bargain prices in order to make room for their new stock. Some constantly have books for sale displayed within the library; others hold occasional sales so it is worth finding out the procedure for your local library.

## **PREPARATION**

It is incredibly frustrating to get halfway through listing an item and then realise that you haven't worked out your postage costs or you can't remember which folder you saved your photograph in, so it is well worth your while to check that you have to hand all the information you will need before you begin.

Buyers like to see the item they are bidding on so be sure to have good, clear photographs to accompany your listing. All other things being equal, an auction with good photographs will always out-perform an auction with a poor photograph or one with no photographs at all.

If you are selling a low cost book, one good clear photograph should suffice. If it is a more expensive book, potential buyers will feel more confident in bidding if they can see the condition of the book and its cover from various aspects, including front, back and spine. Be sure that any defects can be clearly seen.

The first photograph on eBay is free but there is a charge for additional photographs if you are using eBay's hosting service. However if you host your own photographs you can use as many as necessary in your listing at no extra cost. If you don't have your own web space, sign up with a free picture hosting site such as [Photobucket](#).

You will need to weigh each book so that you can work out how much post and packing is going to cost. If you don't want to invest in parcel scales when you first start out you can use kitchen scales. Remember to include the cost and weight of packaging materials when calculating your postage charges.

## **LISTING YOUR BOOKS**

### **Category**

The first thing you will need to do is choose the most suitable category within which to list your book and you may find that there is more than one appropriate category available to you. If that is the case, check completed listings of similar books to see which category the sellers of the most successful auctions chose. Alternatively you could list in more than one category, but be aware that listing in two categories will double your listing fees.

### **Title**

The auction title is your only opportunity to grab a prospective buyer's attention and entice them to click through to read your description. As there are only a limited number of characters available (55 at the time of writing), it is important to pack in as many relevant keywords as possible. The title of the book and name of the author are the most likely search terms that anyone searching for that particular book will use so they should always be included. With any remaining characters, you can give extra details such as HB (hardback), 1<sup>st</sup> edition, signed, etc., or add extra keywords such as the subject of the book.

## **Subtitle**

Since a subtitle costs extra but does not show up in the search results there is little to be gained from using this option unless the book has some special feature which makes it more desirable and which you can not fit in the main title.

## **Description**

Unlike the title, there is no limit to the amount of space you can use in the description so you should make the most of this opportunity to describe the book in detail. This should include the following:

- Format (hardback or paperback)
- Size
- Number of Pages
- Publisher/Date of Publication
- ISBN Number
- Special Features (1<sup>st</sup> edition, signed copy etc.)

Give a detailed and accurate description of the condition of the book, its bindings and the dust jacket making sure to include any defects. If you are honest when describing the book, the buyer is unlikely to be disappointed and leave negative feedback or request a refund (or both).

Following the description of your book, it is a good idea to state which payment methods you are willing to accept, say whether or not you will ship internationally, and give details of post and packing costs for each destination. Although all this information is included elsewhere within the auction, including it at the end of the description saves the prospective buyer having to search around for it.

## **WHEN THE AUCTION CLOSES**

Contact the buyer as soon as possible after the auction ends. They may have paid immediately, in which case thank them for their prompt payment and let them know when the item will be shipped. If they have not paid, send an invoice with a message thanking them for their winning bid and confirming which payment methods you will accept.

When you have posted the book, email the buyer again to confirm that you have sent it and tell them when they should expect to receive it. At this point you can ask them to leave feedback when they have

received the item in satisfactory condition and tell them that you will do the same for them.

Each time you email the buyer, you have the opportunity to remind them that you have other items listed which may interest them and invite them to add you to their list of favourite sellers. You can also invite them to visit your website and/or sign up for your newsletter if you have one.

Always endeavour to post the book as soon as possible after the auction ends, preferably within 48 hours. Be sure to keep the buyer informed if there is any delay.

### ***Packing***

As mentioned earlier, books are relatively easy to pack but care must still be taken to ensure that they reach their destination in good condition. Low cost paperbacks can just be slipped into a padded envelope but more expensive hardbacks need some extra protection such as a thick covering of bubble wrap to prevent damage during transit.

### ***Leaving feedback***

There are conflicting opinions as to whether buyers or sellers should be first to leave feedback. One train of thought is that once the bidder has paid, they have honoured their side of the transaction and so are entitled to receive positive feedback. But many sellers feel that if they are the first to give feedback, a buyer who is unhappy for some reason is more likely to wade right in and leave negative feedback rather than contacting the seller to try to resolve the issue. I always wait until I have received feedback from the buyer before I reciprocate.

## **CONCLUSION**

I hope you have enjoyed reading this report and that it has given you an insight into how simple, enjoyable and profitable selling used books online can be. All you need to do now is take action. Decide on what subject you would like to concentrate on and search the completed auctions to see what people are buying.

And remember to bookmark our website at [www.onlineauctionideas.com](http://www.onlineauctionideas.com) where we will be regularly suggesting hot selling books for you to look out for.

Good luck, and be sure to let us know how you get on! ☺

## **RECOMMENDED RESOURCES**

Below is a list of resources which we hope will be of benefit to you, some free, some paid for. We can vouch for all the products and the people behind them as we never recommend anything that we ourselves have not found useful in taking our own business forward.

**[Make Your Net Auction Sell](#)**, a free ebook written by eBay expert Sydney Johnston will provide both novice and more experienced sellers with usable and do-able information and ideas. The book contains everything you need to know to carry out successful auctions, how to: write powerful ads; figure out your costs so that you sell at a profit; master record keeping; arrange shipping and handling; accept payment; build traffic. Also includes info regarding suppliers and auction sites; money-making ideas; how to avoid mistakes that cut into your profits and studies of successful sellers that are making huge sums of money. Download this free ebook [here](#).

The free **[ebay Seller's Guide](#)** from expert Terry Gibb explains the tried and proven methods of eBay Power Sellers. You'll learn how to get higher bids, how to force viewers to look at your other auctions, how to get high quality, fast loading photographs in your auctions. Learn to make your buyers more confident about dealing with you. Higher confidence means higher bids. Learn exactly what you can do to lower complaints. Find out how to offer a 100 percent money back guarantee and get very few returns. Plus a simple strategy that will force buyers to leave feedback. Download this free guide [here](#).

**[Creative eBay Selling Newsletter](#)** is the most read eBay success newsletter in the world. [Click here](#) to join over 90,000 readers that are already benefiting from the powerful eBay tips and strategies taught by best selling author and eBay expert Jim Cockrum.