

Shopping online is a convenient way to look for the best prices on all your favorite things with the comfort of never having to leave your own home. Getting a great deal online involves more than just getting the lowest price. You'll want to be sure that products arrive on time, the quality is what you expect, and that there is a way for you to get support with any questions or issues you may have. This class will look at some of the more popular online marketplaces. Guidance is provided with the intention of introducing the general process of buying and selling online rather than specific seller details per platform. *The Bloomington Public Library doesn't endorse any of these companies and we encourage caution before making any online transactions.*

Facebook Marketplace

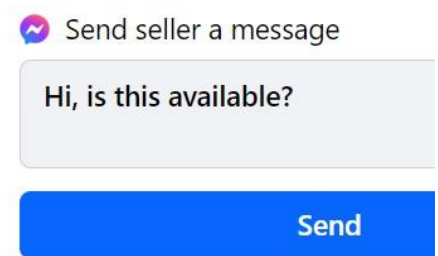
Facebook does not require any additional account setup for Marketplace. To access it, simply click the **Marketplace** button on the left side of your browser, or if you're on a mobile device, click the 3-line menu button and select Marketplace from the list.



Buying

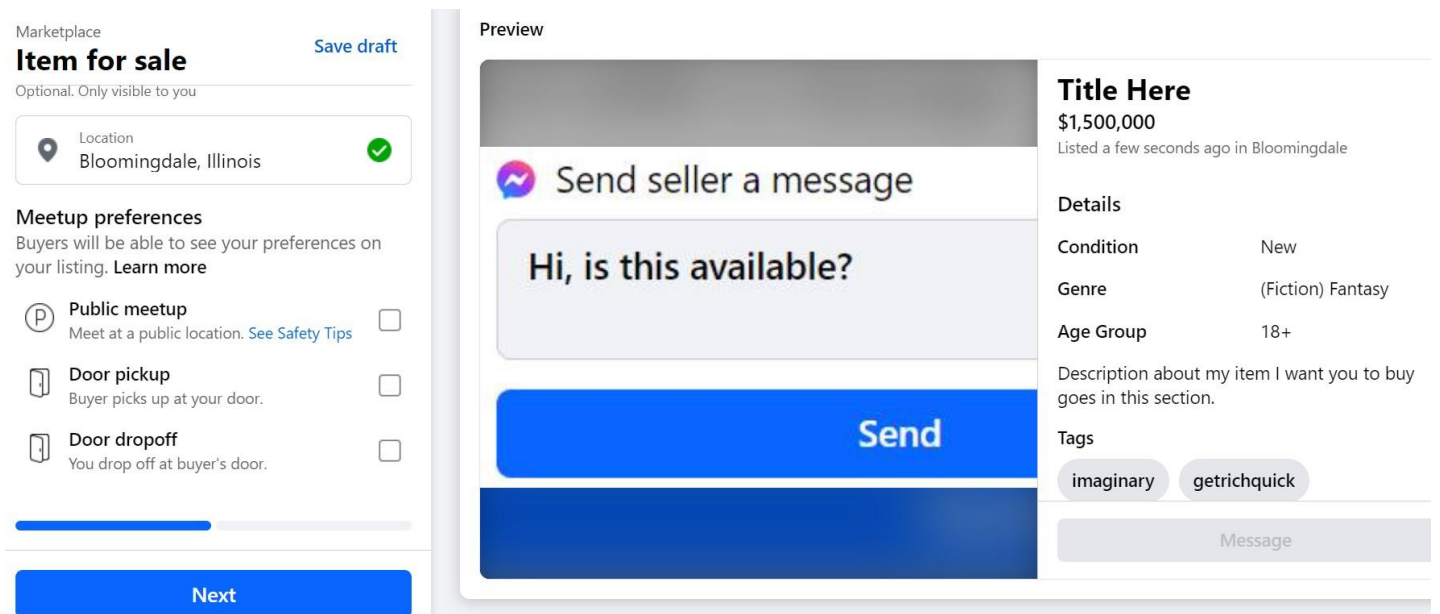
Marketplace uses the **Messenger** app for buying items. You can type in a message to send, and the seller will respond when they are able. The rest of the discussion would be a back-and-forth in Messenger to discuss meetup time and date.

Note: the only way to pay online is if the listing has a Buy Now option on the listing. You would need to add a credit card in your Facebook account settings to do this. Sellers should always inform you of their in-person payment options.



Selling

To sell things on Marketplace, click the **Create New** Listing button on the left side menu. You will have to select the type of item you are selling, and then you will add your title, price, photos, and item description. You can also upload photos from the Facebook app on your mobile device. The last section will include Meetup preferences where you can choose how the actual transaction will go. When you are all set click the **Next** button. You will have the option to post the listing in more groups relevant to your area. Clicking the **Publish** button will have your listing go live shortly. From here you're all set until someone reaches out. Completed sales will have an option to leave feedback as well.



eBay

The first step with eBay will be to create your account by adding in your personal information. There is also an app if you'd prefer to use your phone. The account creation process will also require a phone number in order to text message you a verification code.

Once the account is created, you can go into your Account Settings in the upper left corner and start adjusting things like your account preferences, add shipping and payment information, etc.



Buying

eBay offers two options for purchases

- **Buy It Now**, you pay a fixed price and buy the item immediately.
- **Auction**, you bid on an item and try to win it for a lower price. Some listings also let you make an offer.

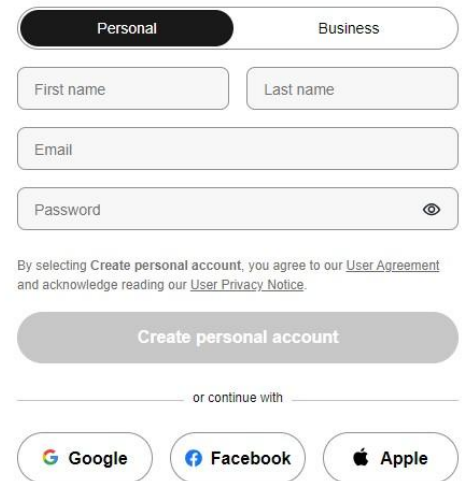
If you choose to auction, you will **place a bid** for the item. You can set a **reserve price** as well so you don't have to stay on the listing waiting for it to end. The system will automatically make you the highest bidder up to your reserve price. This will keep you from spending more than you'd like but still give you a chance to win. Some sellers will let you make a **best offer**, where you can immediately pitch them your buying max. If they accept, the listing will end and you will move into the payment/shipping section of the purchase. If they reject the offer, you can still bid or choose if you'd like to accept their counteroffer. The offer option is great for sellers looking to get a sale quickly instead of waiting for days to see how much people will bid for their item.

Selling

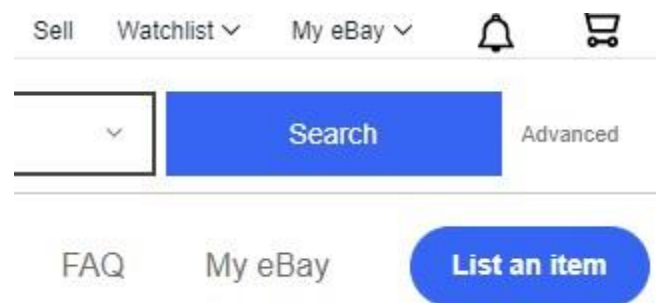
The upper-right corner of the site will give you options to **Sell** new items, check your **Watchlist** for items of interest that you might want to be in the future, and the **My eBay** tab where you can see all of the information on products you are buying and selling as well as anything else in your account. To list something for sale, you just need to click the "List an item" button in the upper-right corner of the site. *Listing limits are based on your sales volume and buyer feedback and adjusted by eBay.*

The first thing eBay will ask for is general information on the product. When you add details here, it will try and cross-reference pre-existing items to make the listing process quicker. If you don't see what you have listed, you can click the "Continue without match" button at the bottom to manually enter in the details of your product.

Create an account



The form includes tabs for 'Personal' and 'Business'. It has input fields for 'First name', 'Last name', 'Email', and 'Password'. Below the fields is a link to 'User Agreement' and 'User Privacy Notice'. A 'Create personal account' button is present, along with social media options for 'Google', 'Facebook', and 'Apple'.



Toys & Hobbies > Outdoor Toys & Structures > Dart Guns & Soft Darts [Change your category.](#)

Title

Use words people would search for when looking for your item.



The input field contains the text 'NERF B8240UFO Rival Nemesis Blaster'. Below the field is a yellow warning icon and the text: 'Medium length. Don't forget to include details like brand, color, size, specs, condition, etc. 35/80'.

Describe the item

eBay will next ask you for the condition of your product. Be honest, as a product that isn't accurate in this section can get a guaranteed return from the buyer and you will have to cover the return shipping charges. After this section, you will be in the main listing area. Here you will add a title with the most important parts, photos of the product, and a description that covers any and all details about it. Be sure if your item has any damages listed in the description that you include a photo of the damaged area. eBay will allow you to upload up to 24 photos for each listing typically. It is also always a good idea to leave notes in the description about your turnaround time and shipping options.

Description

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Write a detailed description of your item, or save time and let AI draft it for you.

Set your pricing

The last section will allow you to set pricing for the product and shipping. You can choose **Auction**, where users can bid on the product, or **Buy It Now**, which is a flat price you set. Both have their merits depending on how quickly you'd like to sell the product and the price you think it could reach. You can also set a minimum for offers to prevent being offered too low a price during auction. Shipping options let you choose the service(s) you want to offer. You can select USPS, UPS, or FedEx options. There is also a local pickup option where you'd hand-deliver the item. Shipping pricing can be set as a flat rate, free shipping, or shipping based on distance. eBay will automatically show a potential buyer the shipping cost based on their location.

Ship your item

Provide the package weight and dimensions to calculate the cost, or enter a fixed cost.

<p>Package weight</p> <p>Lbs. Oz.</p> <p>1 12</p> <p>Package dimensions</p> <p>Length (in.) Width (in.) Height (in.)</p> <p>12.0 8.0 4.0</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know the package details</p>	 <p>USPS Priority Mail</p> <p>1 - 4 business days Max. 70 lb \$10.35 - \$18.05</p> <p>Change shipping service</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Offer free shipping Buyer gets free shipping; you pay the cost.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Buyer pays calculated shipping Calculated based on the buyer's location and the package weight and dimensions.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Buyer pays flat shipping You decide the cost.</p>
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Finalize and list

The last page will give you a chance to review your information so far, set up any listing promotion or charity options you'd like, and set it you want to accept returns. Once everything looks good, just hit the List It button and you're all set! Once it sells, eBay will guide you through getting it packed and shipped. You will need to print the shipping label and packing slip at this point or will usually have the option for a QR code to show at the shipping office that will let them handle it for you.

Other Popular Options

There are a near-infinite number of other sites that allow you to buy and sell online, and typically will use formats nearly identical to the examples shown with eBay and Facebook Marketplace. Typically the biggest difference will be commission fees sites charge to host your online listings. The most popular sites and their origins:

Amazon (USA)	ASOS (UK)	AliExpress (China)
Etsy (USA)	Rakuten (Japan)	Shein (China)
Shopify (Canada)	Mercari (Japan)	Temu (China)

Reminders for Buying and Selling Online

Know the merchant and their reputation

If you already know the store, shopping their online store is typically very safe. You can always walk into the local store for help if there is a problem, and if you know others who have had consistently positive experiences with the online store, you can be reassured of the site's quality. If the seller has a review/feedback area, check what the middle-grade reviews say about them. Fake reviews are usually 5 star reviews, but 3 or 4 stars tend to be more genuine.

If the deal looks too good to be true, avoid it

Any online store that promises too much at too low a price is suspicious. Items bought from overseas companies are typically made with a different level of quality control and can use sizing charts dependent on place of manufacturing. For example, a shirt made in Korea sized 2XL would actually be the equivalent to a LG in America. These aren't always directly listed at the top of the page. These issues can pop up frequently on sites or apps like Wish, Temu, and Shein.

When buying gift cards, always read the Terms and Conditions

If the gift card is for someone else, be sure the store is legitimate, that the person uses the store, and that there are no hoops they will have to jump through. Some gift cards charge an extra fee to activate, or have limited time availability, or require additional online accounts to use. Some online gift cards are digital gift cards, not physical.

Warranties and social media accounts are not required to buy things

Some e-stores require more information than necessary to make a purchase. It is normal to be asked to provide some method of payment, billing/shipping address, telephone number, and email address. Merchants requesting more information beyond that should be a concern. You never want to give out your bank account, social security information, or driver's license number. Some companies ask questions about your interests, but these should always be optional and you should be cautious about providing the information. Check the site's privacy policy to understand how exposed your information may become. Many stores clearly state that they do not share, sell or rent consumer's information – others say they own your info and can use it however they choose.

Always try to use a unique password

You will often be asked to create an account with a password when you make a purchase. Most sites allow a guest checkout option if you don't want to make an account. If it's not critical, don't worry about making one. If you plan to use the shop more frequently, go for it, but make sure your password is new and definitely not the same as your bank.

Avoid any site that isn't secure

Before entering any personal or credit card info onto a shopping site, check if the web address on the page begins with "https:", not "http:" That little 's' tells you the website is secure and encrypted to protect your information. Most browsers will have a padlock symbol next to the https area now and will warn you if a site is potentially unsafe.

Use a Credit Card or PayPal

Do not use a debit card for online purchases as these do not have the same security protections in place for you should a problem arise. A credit card can be frozen if you believe there are unauthorized charges if your financial information is stolen, and the money in your bank account remain untouched. Consider designating one credit card to only be used for online shopping expenses, separate from the card you use to pay bills. This way, if the card gets compromised, you can quickly shut it down without impacting any other type of transactions.

“Free” shipping isn’t always a good thing

Some merchants have hefty shipping fees to balance out the low pricing of their goods or a very long shipping time (months in some cases). Tracking options are typically provided for online purchases but overseas shipping is usually not as detailed. If it’s a time-sensitive purchase, try checking if the items are sold locally anywhere instead.

Scammers take on all shapes and sizes

Don’t let a buyer rush you to meet for a sale, especially if they immediately demand your address. If you are selling high-price items and give away your address, you could potentially set yourself up for an easy robbery. Always meet in a safe, well-lit area, usually something like your local police station. Anyone trying to not be seen on camera in these places could be considered suspicious.

Only accept payment options you trust

Common scam tactics can involve payments via gift cards because they are difficult to track and make it tough to get your money back. Be cautious of any cash that looks odd. If you want to be extra certain, you can buy a counterfeit cash marker that changes color on fake currency. Another option is to use online payment platforms like Venmo or Zelle which will securely send money between banks without exchanging your account information.

Report any suspicious buyers

If someone constantly asks for your address, repeatedly changes the meeting time and place, or tries to swap out available items after a transaction begins, be sure to report the account on the platform used. Also, be wary of anyone who tries to keep your communication away from the platform. Scammers trying not to be tracked will message you about an item and then request you only respond to them at an email address not connected to the site or through a different app so they can’t be caught as easily.

Selling tips and tricks

<https://www.ebay.com/sellercenter/listings/listing-best-practices>

<https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/learn-more/selling/>

<https://sell.amazon.com/sell>

<https://www.shopify.com/pricing>

<https://www.etsy.com/sell>

<https://www.mercari.com/us/how-to-sell/>