

THE SHARP COLLECTOR'S PLAYBOOK

# Collectibles Spot. Authenticate. Value. Profit.

*The cross-category field manual for spotting value in anything — cards, comics, coins, toys, games, vinyl, memorabilia & more — with worked case studies, a full resource directory, and 26 AI research prompts.*

- The 6 universal value drivers
- 3 worked case studies
- 7-play flipping playbook
- Sourcing & sell calendar
- Grading & authentication, by category
- 10 costly mistakes
- 26 AI research prompts
- Full resource directory

# The Playbook

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- 01 **Read the Market First** — *one framework, every category*
- 02 **The 6 Universal Value Drivers** — *the model that prices anything*
- 03 **Grading & Authentication** — *who certifies what, and why it matters*
- 04 **Don't Get Burned** — *fakes, repros & forged autographs*
- 05 **Where & How to Source** — *estate sales to auctions, ranked*
- 06 **Sell for Top Dollar** — *the right channel for every item*
- 07 **The Flipping Playbook** — *7 repeatable money plays*
- 08 **The Playbook in Action** — *3 worked case studies*
- 09 **10 Mistakes That Cost You Money** — *learn them free*
- 10 **Build a Collection That Appreciates** — *thesis, storage, the calendar*
- 11 **The AI Research Toolkit** — *26 copy-paste prompts*
- 12 **The Resource Directory** — *the links serious flippers use*
- 13 **Your Deal Scorecard** — *print it, score every buy*
- 14 **Quick-Start & Glossary** — *your first 30 days*

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This is the master framework behind every category. Read it once, then keep three things close: the **AI Toolkit** (Ch 11) when you research, the **Deal Scorecard** (Ch 13) when you buy, and the **Resource Directory** (Ch 12) when you need to ID, comp, or authenticate something. You bring judgment; this does the legwork.

# One Framework, Every Category

Cards, comics, coins, toys, games, vinyl, memorabilia — they look different, but value in every collectible comes from the same three forces: **scarcity, condition, and demand**. Master that and you can spot a deal in a category you've never collected.

## The universal model

Whatever the item, ask three questions: **How rare is it?** (production, survival, variants) · **What condition is it in?** (and is it complete/original/authentic?) · **Who wants it, and how badly right now?** (demand and timing). Price is where those three meet.

## Where value lives, by category

| CATEGORY                 | VALUE LIVES IN...                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Trading cards            | Rookies/first prints, parallels, grade, low pop         |
| Comics                   | Key issues (first appearances), grade, page quality     |
| Coins                    | Key dates/mint marks, grade, eye appeal, varieties      |
| Video games              | Sealed/CIB condition, rarity, grading (WATA/VGA/CGC)    |
| Toys & action figures    | Mint-on-card, vintage lines, AFA grade, completeness    |
| Vinyl records            | First pressings, condition, pressing variants (Discogs) |
| Memorabilia / autographs | Authentication, provenance, who/what/when               |
| Antiques / vintage       | Maker/mark, age, condition, rarity, regional demand     |

**WATCH OUT · THE "OLD/VINTAGE = VALUABLE" TRAP**

Age alone rarely creates value — across every category, mass-produced items stay cheap no matter how old. Look for scarcity and demand, not just years. The exception is condition: for common-but-old items, only a pristine, complete, authenticated example breaks from the pack.

## The flipper's edge

You don't need to know every category — you need to (1) recognize when something *might* be valuable, (2) ID it fast, and (3) check real sold comps before you buy. The AI toolkit and resource directory in this guide are built to do exactly that on anything you pick up.

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You don't buy categories. You buy scarcity, condition, and demand —  
wherever you find them.

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# The 6 Universal Value Drivers

These six work on any collectible. Score an item across all six and you can value almost anything — and instantly spot when something's mispriced, even outside your wheelhouse.

**1**

**Significance.** Is it a first, iconic, or sought-after example?

**2**

**Maker & Subject.** Brand, artist, player, character, franchise.

**3**

**Scarcity.** Production, survival rate, numbering, variants.

**4**

**Condition.** Grade/tier — and complete, original, authentic?

**5**

**Availability.** How many are out there / graded right now.

**6**

**Demand & Timing.** Nostalgia cycle, trend, current heat.

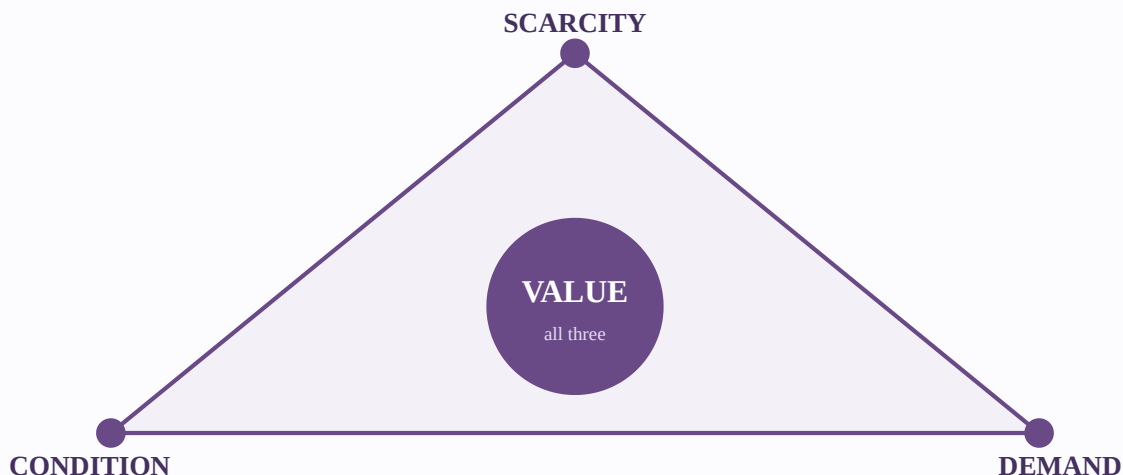


FIGURE 1 — VALUE SITS WHERE SCARCITY, CONDITION & DEMAND OVERLAP

## Why availability is the driver everyone forgets

An item can be old, branded, and clean — and still be common if thousands survive. The opposite is also true: a humble-looking piece can be scarce. Always check how many actually trade (sold comps, population/census, or a database) before assuming rarity.

#### SHARP TIP · SCORE IT 1–10

Rate any item 1–10 on each driver before buying (that's what the printable *Deal Scorecard* in Ch 13 does). Edge lives where one driver — often *significance* or *scarcity* that the seller didn't recognize — is underpriced. That's the whole game in thrift and estate sourcing.

# Grading & Authentication

Across every category, third-party grading and authentication do the same three things: build **trust**, add **liquidity**, and create a **multiplier** — a verified, sealed example sells for more and faster than a raw one.

## Who certifies what

| CATEGORY                       | LEADING CERTIFIERS           |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Trading cards                  | PSA, SGC, Beckett (BGS), CGC |
| Comics                         | CGC, CBCS                    |
| Coins                          | PCGS, NGC (CAC verification) |
| Video games                    | WATA, VGA, CGC, PSA          |
| Toys & action figures          | AFA / CGA                    |
| Funko / pop culture            | PSA, CGC                     |
| Autographs & memorabilia       | PSA/DNA, JSA, Beckett (BAS)  |
| Posters, magazines, home video | CGC                          |

*The grading industry shifts fast and new entrants appear — confirm a certifier's current standing and resale demand for your specific item before submitting. (Links in the Resource Directory.)*

## The condition language



#### MONEY MOVE · THE GRADING MULTIPLIER (EVERYWHERE)

Whether it's a card, comic, coin, or sealed game, the top condition tier can sell for multiples of the tier just below — because high-grade survivors are scarce and demand concentrates on the best copy. That spread is the basis of *grade/authentication arbitrage* (Ch 7). Always check the realized spread between tiers before you submit.

**Authenticate before you pay** on anything commonly faked — autographs, high-end vintage, sealed games. A raw, unauthenticated item carries risk; a certified one is verified and liquid.



# Don't Get Burned

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The fastest way to lose money isn't a bad bet — it's a fake, a reproduction, or a forged autograph you didn't catch. Across categories, the defenses are the same.

## Fakes, reproductions & reprints

Every popular category has convincing repros — reprinted cards/comics, restruck coins, reissued vinyl, bootleg toys, resealed games. Tells: wrong materials, off fonts/colors, modern gloss on "vintage" items, missing/incorrect maker marks, dimensions that are slightly off. When in doubt, compare to a known-genuine reference photo.

## Forged autographs

Signed memorabilia is the riskiest corner of the hobby. Prefer items **authenticated by PSA/DNA, JSA, or Beckett** over "signed, COA included" from unknown sellers. An unverified COA is worth little.

### WATCH OUT · FAKE SLABS & SWAPPED ITEMS

Counterfeit holders and authentication labels exist across categories. **Always** verify the certification number on the grader's official site and confirm the item, grade/details, and photo match. If a seller won't show the cert number clearly, walk.

## Restoration & "improvements"

Cleaning a coin, trimming a comic, repainting a toy, or "restoring" an antique usually *destroys* value. Originality is prized almost everywhere. When unsure, leave it as-is and let a professional evaluate.

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If the deal feels too good, it's not a deal — it's a lesson with a price tag.

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## Your 30-second safety checklist

- ID the item precisely (maker, year, variant) before valuing it.
- Verify any cert/authentication number on the official site.
- Anchor price to **sold** comps, never asking prices.
- For autographs/high-end, insist on PSA/DNA, JSA, or Beckett.
- Use buyer-protected payment rails for big buys.

# Where & How to Source

In cross-category flipping, sourcing is the edge. The best margins come from places where sellers don't know what they have — and you do (with help from your phone).

| CHANNEL                                 | BEST FOR                                | WATCH THE...                           |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Estate & garage sales                   | Underpriced finds across every category | Get there early; ID fast on your phone |
| Thrift stores                           | Cheap mispriced inventory, volume       | Hit-or-miss; build a route             |
| Goodwill online (shopgoodwill)          | Sourcing without leaving home           | Shipping; bid discipline               |
| Local auctions / AuctionZip             | Lots, estates, variety                  | Buyer's premium; lot risk              |
| eBay / Facebook / Mercari               | Targeted buys, sold-comp transparency   | Fakes; condition photos                |
| Heritage / LiveAuctioneers / Invaluable | High-end & rare across categories       | Buyer's premium                        |
| Shows & conventions                     | Volume, negotiation, networking         | Hype pricing; bring comps              |

## Five sourcing rules that pay for themselves

- **ID before you buy.** A 20-second photo ID + sold-comp check prevents most bad buys (Prompt #1/#22).
- **Comp on sold, not asking.** Asking prices are wishes.
- **Buy what you can verify.** If you can't authenticate it, price in the risk.
- **Know one niche deeply.** Specialist knowledge is where the biggest steals come from.
- **Build the all-in number.** Price + fees + shipping + (if grading) authentication before you commit.

**MONEY MOVE · THE "DEATH PILE" DISCIPLINE**

Flippers accumulate unsold inventory ("the death pile") fast. Track every buy's cost and status (the bonus *Collection Tracker* does this), and don't source faster than you can list. Cash tied up in a pile isn't profit.

# Sell for Top Dollar

Buying well gets you in. Selling well is where the profit lands. Match the channel to the category and value, then optimize the listing and timing.

| ITEM VALUE      | BEST CHANNEL                           | WHY                                                      |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Under ~\$50     | eBay / Mercari / Whatnot               | Volume and reach; low friction                           |
| ~\$50–\$2,500   | eBay (auction or BIN+Best Offer)       | Deepest buyer pool, transparent comps                    |
| \$2,500+ & rare | Heritage / Hake's / LiveAuctioneers    | Reaches serious money; trades commission for top results |
| Niche items     | Category specialist (Discogs, COMC...) | The right buyers already gather there                    |

## The listing that wins

- **Title = keywords.** Maker, year, model/variant, condition, grade/authentication. Buyers search exact strings (Prompt #16).
- **Real photos.** All angles, marks/flaws, and any cert label. Honest photos cut returns and build trust.
- **State condition accurately.** Overstating tanks feedback and invites disputes.
- **Best Offer with a floor.** Auto-decline below your number; let buyers feel they negotiated.
- **Pick the right venue.** Niche items often do better on the category's home platform than on general marketplaces.

**SHARP TIP · KEEP RECORDS FROM DAY ONE**

Track cost basis, fees, and sale price on every item (the bonus *Collection Tracker* does this). Beyond knowing real profit, marketplace sales can trigger tax reporting — clean records make tax season painless. (Not tax advice — confirm with a professional.)

## Chapter 07

# The Flipping Playbook

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Seven repeatable plays that work across categories. None require insider access — just ID skills, comps, and the AI toolkit.

### Play 1 — Estate / thrift arbitrage

Buy underpriced finds where the seller doesn't know what they have, ID and comp on the spot, and resell at market.

#### THE MATH

A \$3 unmarked item, identified as a desirable maker via photo ID + sold comps, resells for \$65. The edge is knowledge, not luck — and it's repeatable across categories. Prompt #22 (photo ID) + #2 (comps) is the workflow.

### Play 2 — Buy raw → grade / authenticate

Buy an ungraded card, comic, coin, game, or signed item that looks high-grade/genuine, certify it, and capture the verified premium.

### Play 3 — Category-knowledge edge

Go deep on one niche (a maker, line, label, or era). Specialist knowledge lets you spot steals others walk past.

### Play 4 — Lot break-up

Buy a mixed lot or collection, pull the valuable pieces to sell individually, and offload the rest to recover cost. The "free" keys are profit.

### Play 5 — Trend / nostalgia speculation

Buy ahead of a nostalgia wave or media moment (a franchise revival, an anniversary). Highest upside, highest risk — size small.

### Play 6 — Completion / set premium

Collectors finishing a set, run, or rainbow overpay for the last pieces. Owning the hard-to-find one lets you name the price.

### Play 7 — Buy the dip / off-season

Source when attention and prices are soft (off-season, post-hype), then sell into the next demand spike.

#### **RISK RULES · READ BEFORE YOU DEPLOY CAPITAL**

1) Set a bankroll and never exceed it. 2) Liquidity matters — an item you can't sell isn't worth its comp. 3) Don't chase a hot trend at the top. 4) Diversify across categories. 5) Collectibles are speculative alternative assets, not guaranteed returns.

# The Playbook in Action

Three worked examples showing the full workflow — research, decision, execution, outcome. Numbers are illustrative round figures to show the *method*, not promises.

Case 1 — The thrift-store find

PLAY 1

SETUP

An unmarked ceramic piece on a thrift shelf catches your eye. Priced at \$4.

RESEARCH

Photo ID (Prompt #22) flags the maker's mark as a sought-after pottery line; sold comps (Prompt #2) on a cross-category database show \$60–\$90 for similar pieces.

DECISION

Tiny downside, strong comps. Verdict: BUY — the seller didn't recognize the mark.

EXECUTE

Bought for \$4, listed with a keyword title (Prompt #16) and clear photos of the mark and condition.

Outcome:

Sold ~\$72. The whole edge was a 30-second ID the seller never did.

Case 2 — The lot break-up

PLAY 4

SETUP

A "mixed collectibles" box lot at a local auction — cards, a few toys, some records. Won for \$80.

RESEARCH

Triaged the lot (Prompt #1 across items): two cards and one first-pressing record carry most of the value; the rest is common.

DECISION

Sell the three keys individually, bundle the commons. Verdict: BUY the lot for the keys.

EXECUTE

Listed the keys separately with proper titles; sold the remainder as a single bundle to recover cost.

Outcome:

Keys sold ~\$210, bundle ~\$45. All-in \$80. The commons paid for the lot; the keys were profit.

## Case 3 — Authentication arbitrage

PLAY 2

**SETUP** A signed item listed raw with a vague COA, generic title. Asking \$120.

**RESEARCH** Authentication path (Prompt #9): comps show PSA/DNA- or JSA-authenticated examples at \$400–\$550; unauthenticated copies languish.

**DECISION** The signature looks consistent; authentication should clear easily. Verdict: BUY and authenticate.

**EXECUTE** Bought at \$115, submitted for authentication, relisted with the cert and clear photos.

**Outcome:** Sold ~\$470. All-in ~\$170. The premium came from turning an unverified signature into a verified one.

# 10 Mistakes That Cost You Money

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Every one has a price tag. Learn them here for free instead of paying tuition to the market.

**1 Pricing off asking, not sold.**

Listings are wishes. Only *sold* comps tell you what the market actually pays — in every category.

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**2 Assuming old or vintage means valuable.**

Mass-produced items stay cheap no matter the age. Look for scarcity and demand.

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**3 Ignoring condition and completeness.**

Missing pieces, damage, and "details" problems gut value. Original and complete wins.

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**4 Grading/authenticating things that don't clear the fee.**

If certified value doesn't beat raw with room to spare, you paid to slab a loss.

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**5 Buying expensive items unauthenticated.**

Fakes, repros, and forged autographs hide in raw lots. Let certification be your insurance on big buys.

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**6 "Improving" an item.**

Cleaning, trimming, repainting, or restoring usually destroys value. Originality is prized.

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**7 Chasing a hot trend at the top.**

Buying during the nostalgia spike is buying the peak. Source in the quiet.

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**8 Over-sourcing into a death pile.**

Cash tied up in unlisted inventory isn't profit. Don't buy faster than you can sell.

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**9 Skipping cert/authentication verification.**

Fake slabs and COAs exist. Thirty seconds on the official site saves you from a counterfeit.

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**10 Treating it as a guaranteed investment.**

Collectibles are speculative alternative assets. Collect with conviction, size sensibly, never bet money you need.

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# Build a Collection That Appreciates

A pile of random stuff is clutter. A collection — or an inventory — with a thesis is an asset. Decide what you're building before you buy.

## Pick a thesis

- **Specialist flipper** — go deep in one category where your knowledge is the edge.
- **Generalist sourcer** — buy across categories using ID + comps, flip fast, stay liquid.
- **Blue-chip collector** — hold graded/authenticated keys in proven categories.
- **Nostalgia speculator** — a small, high-risk sleeve for trend bets.

## Protect what you own

- **Right supplies per category** — sleeves/toploaders, bags/boards, inert coin holders, figure cases.
- **Environment** — stable temperature and humidity; out of sunlight; never a damp basement or hot attic.
- **Certified items** — protect the slab/label too; ship in proper mailers.
- **High value** — insurance and a simple photo inventory; never "improve" or clean.

## The sourcing & sell calendar

Demand and supply swing through the year. Use the calendar to source in the quiet and sell into attention.

| WINDOW                             | WHAT HAPPENS                                            | YOUR MOVE                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Spring–summer (yard/estate season) | Sourcing supply peaks                                   | <b>Buy</b> hard; build inventory for Q4         |
| Convention season (summer)         | Announcements & demand spikes in pop-culture categories | <b>Sell</b> hyped items; source in person       |
| Back-to-school / fall lull         | Attention dips, prices soften                           | <b>Buy</b> the dip on long-term holds           |
| Q4 holidays                        | Gift demand lifts sell-through and prices               | <b>Sell</b> into peak demand                    |
| Tax-refund spring                  | Discretionary spending rises                            | <b>List</b> mid-tier items into stronger demand |
| Media / anniversary moments        | Specific franchises or subjects spike                   | <b>Sell</b> affected items into the news        |

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Collect on purpose. The thesis is the asset; the items are how you express it.

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## Chapter 11

# The AI Research Toolkit

26 copy-paste prompts that turn any AI assistant into your research analyst — for *any* category. Fill in the **[brackets]** and go.

### READ THIS FIRST · HOW TO NOT GET FOOLED BY AI

AI is great at **identification, structure, and the right questions** — and unreliable at **exact current prices**, which it can invent. Use these to ID an item and frame the decision, then confirm every number against real *sold* comps (Ch 12). AI builds the case; the live market sets the price.

### DO THIS ONCE · THE MASTER SETUP PROMPT

Paste this at the start of a session (or save it as a Custom GPT / Claude Project) so the AI behaves like a disciplined cross-category analyst for everything after.

#### ★ Master Setup

[COPY ↓](#)

You are my collectibles research analyst, across ALL categories. For everything this session:

- First IDENTIFY the item precisely (category, maker, year, model/variant).
- Anchor value to SOLD comps, never asking prices. If I haven't given you data, tell me exactly what to pull and where (eBay sold, WorthPoint, category DB).
- Reason through the 6 drivers: significance, maker/subject, scarcity, condition, availability, demand/timing.
- Flag any dollar figure you're not confident about and tell me to verify it.
- End every answer with a clear action: BUY / PASS / NEGOTIATE / GRADE / AUTHENTICATE / SELL / HOLD — plus the single biggest risk.
- Be blunt. I'd rather miss a deal than overpay. Confirm you understand.

### A · IDENTIFY & VALUE

#### 1. Instant Item Valuation

Use when: you want a fast value range and the reasons behind it.

### Item Valuation

[COPY ↓](#)

Value this collectible and explain the reasoning.

Item: [category] – [maker/brand] [name/model] [year/variant]

Condition: [describe; complete? original? authenticated?]

Give: (1) a value RANGE, (2) the 6 drivers scored 1-10, (3) the biggest factor, (4) exactly which SOLD comps / databases to pull to confirm.

## 2. Sold-Comp Anchoring

Use when: about to buy or list and you need reality.

### Comp Anchor

[COPY ↓](#)

I'll paste recent SOLD prices for [item + condition].

Data: [paste 5-10 recent sold prices with dates/sources]

Give the realistic range, the trend, outliers to ignore, and the number I should not pay above (buying) / list below (selling).

## 3. Where Does Value Live Here?

Use when: you're new to the category and need orientation fast.

### Category Map

[COPY ↓](#)

I'm looking at [category]. Explain where value concentrates: what makes a piece valuable vs common, the key makers/subjects/variants, the condition language, and the #1 thing a beginner overpays for. Keep it practical.

## 4. Is This Priced Fair?

Use when: you found a listing and want a verdict.

### Price Check

[COPY ↓](#)

Here's a listing: [paste item, price, condition, photo notes].

FAIR, HIGH, or LOW vs sold comps? Reasonable offer? What would make you walk? List what to verify before buying (authenticity, completeness, variant).

## 5. Should I Grade / Authenticate This? (ROI)

Use when: deciding whether certification pays.

### Cert ROI

COPY ↓

```
Run a grading/authentication ROI.  
Raw cost $[x]    Cert + shipping all-in $[y]  
Value if top tier $[a] | mid $[b] | low $[c]  
My honest odds: [e.g. 30/50/20]  
Expected value vs selling raw. CERTIFY or DON'T, plus break-even tier. Show math.
```

## 6. Which Certifier Should I Use?

Use when: choosing a grader/authenticator for the category.

### Certifier Picker

COPY ↓

```
For [item / category], which grader or authenticator gives the best resale and  
why (e.g. cards: PSA/SGC/BGS/CGC; games: WATA/VGA/CGC; autographs: PSA-DNA/JSA/  
Beckett)? Weigh buyer demand, turnaround, reputation. One pick + runner-up.
```

## 7. Pre-Cert Condition Self-Assessment

Use when: estimating the grade/tier before submitting.

### Condition Read

COPY ↓

```
Act as a grader for [category]. Based on this condition description  
[wear / flaws / completeness / originality], estimate the likely grade/tier, the  
#1 thing capping it, and whether the gap to the next tier justifies certifying.
```

C · AUTHENTICATION & DON'T GET BURNED

## 8. Fake / Reproduction Checklist

Use when: buying anything commonly faked.

### Fake Check

[COPY ↓](#)

Build an authentication checklist for [item]. Known tells of a reproduction/counterfeit/reissue (materials, marks, fonts, dimensions, finish, packaging). What a genuine one looks like. 10-point inspection list I can run in person.

## 9. Autograph / COA Authentication

Use when: considering a signed item.

### Auto Check

[COPY ↓](#)

I'm considering a signed [item] described as [PSA-DNA/JSA/Beckett / signed w COA / in-person]. Questions to ask the seller, which authentication to insist on, and why an unverified COA adds risk. Give a go / no-go rule.

## 10. Cert Verification Walkthrough

Use when: buying a graded/authenticated item from a stranger.

### Cert Verify

[COPY ↓](#)

Walk me through verifying this is real.  
Certifier [PSA/CGC/PCGS/WATA/JSA...] Cert # [number] Listed as [item + grade]  
What to check on the official lookup, what must match the holder/label/photo, and the red flags that mean walk away.

## D · BUY DECISIONS

## 11. Deal Evaluator — Buy / Pass / Negotiate

Use when: you need a fast, structured verdict.

### Deal Verdict

[COPY ↓](#)

Verdict: BUY, PASS, or NEGOTIATE.  
Item + condition [...] Asking \$[...]  
Sold comps [paste] Goal [flip / hold / collection]  
Justify in 3 bullets, give a target buy price, and name the one risk most likely to bite me.

## 12. Negotiation Script Generator

Use when: you want to counter without killing the deal.

### Negotiate

[COPY ↓](#)

Write a friendly counter. Their ask  $\$[x]$ , my target  $\$[y]$ , leverage [comps lower / flaw / cash now / buying multiples]. Reference sold comps. Two versions: one firm, one softer.

## 13. Trend / Nostalgia Speculation Screen

Use when: weighing a trend-driven bet.

### Spec Screen

[COPY ↓](#)

Screen [item / franchise / category] as a nostalgia/trend speculation. Bull and bear case. What catalyst drives it? What kills it? Sensible position size if high-risk? Be honest about odds, not hopeful.

## 14. Build-Me-a-Buy-List for \$X

Use when: you have a budget and a thesis but not targets.

### Buy List

[COPY ↓](#)

I have  $\$[budget]$  and a thesis: [e.g. flip vintage toys]. Suggest item TYPES / makers / lines that fit, how to split the budget, and what to prioritize. For each: what I'm betting on and the main risk. I'll confirm live prices.

## E · SELL & LISTINGS

## 15. Best Marketplace for This Item

Use when: deciding where to list for the most money.

### Channel Picker

[COPY ↓](#)

For [item, value  $\sim \$x$ ], where should I sell for the most money – eBay, Whatnot, a category specialist (e.g. Discogs), or an auction house (Heritage/Hake's/LiveAuctioneers)? Weigh reach, fees, and where the right buyers gather. One pick.

## 16. Listing Title & Description

Use when: listing an item and you want it found and trusted.

### Listing Writer

COPY ↓

Write a keyword-optimized title (~80 chars) and an honest, professional description for: [item, maker, year, variant, condition, cert]. Front-load search terms, note flaws accurately, build trust, clear shipping/returns line. List the item specifics to fill.

## 17. Best Time to Sell

Use when: timing a sale for maximum price.

### Sell Timing

COPY ↓

For [item + value], recommend timing. Consider the calendar (holidays, convention season, anniversaries) and any current catalyst for this category. Sell now or wait? Clear recommendation.

## 18. Best-Offer Counter Strategy

Use when: offers are coming in and you need a rule.

### Counter Logic

COPY ↓

My BIN \$[x], true floor \$[y]. Best-Offer strategy: auto-accept and auto-decline thresholds, how to counter a lowball without losing the buyer, and when to just hold.

## F · SOURCING & MARKET

## 19. Sourcing Target List

Use when: planning what to hunt for at sales and thrifts.

### Sourcing List

COPY ↓

Give me a sourcing cheat-sheet for [category / categories]: the high-value items to grab on sight, common-but-worthless traps to skip, and the quick tells that separate a steal from junk. Format as a scannable hunt list.



## 20. Category Deep-Dive

Use when: learning a new category fast before you buy in.

### Category Tutor

COPY ↓

Teach me [category] like a pro in 10 minutes: the eras, the key makers/lines, what drives value, the grading/authentication norms, where to comp, and the beginner traps. What's overhyped vs underrated right now?

## 21. Trend / Demand Read

Use when: something's moving and you can't tell why.

### Trend Read

COPY ↓

Recent price action for [item / category]: [paste sold prices over time]. Heating up, peaking, or cooling? Likely driver (media, nostalgia, supply)? If I own it, sell into strength or hold? If not, buy or wait for the dip?

### G · PHOTO-BASED (UPLOAD A PICTURE)

#### NOTE

These use a multimodal AI that accepts images — the killer tool for sourcing. AI reads are a *first screen*, not gospel — confirm with sold comps and the cert lookup.

## 22. Photo ID & "What Is This Worth?"

Use when: you're standing in a thrift/estate sale with your phone.

### Photo ID

COPY ↓

[Upload a photo.] Identify this item: category, maker/brand, model/name, era, and any mark or variant you can see. Is it potentially valuable? Then tell me exactly what to search to find sold comps, and flag if it's commonly faked.

## 23. Photo Condition Read

Use when: you have a clear photo and want a condition take.

### Photo Read

[COPY ↓](#)

[Upload front + back/all-angle photos.] Assess this item's condition for its category: wear, damage, completeness, originality. Likely grade/tier and the single biggest issue. What a better-lit or angled shot would confirm.

## 24. Photo Listing-Photo Critique

Use when: prepping your own sale photos.

### Photo Critique

[COPY ↓](#)

[Upload my listing photos.] Critique as a buyer would. Are condition, marks, and key details clearly shown? What looks worse than it is due to lighting/glare? What extra shots would raise trust and reduce returns?

## H · PORTFOLIO STRATEGY

## 25. Inventory / Portfolio Review

Use when: you want a portfolio-manager's eye on the whole operation.

### Portfolio Review

[COPY ↓](#)

My inventory: [paste list: item, category, cost basis, current value, status]. Review like a portfolio manager: over-concentration (category, risk)? What's illiquid or sitting in the death pile? What's overvalued and ripe to move now? Prioritized action list.

## 26. Monthly Flipper Game Plan

Use when: you want a focused 30-day plan.

### Game Plan

[COPY ↓](#)

Thesis [...], budget this month \$[x], current inventory [summary]. Build a 30-day plan: where to source, what to hunt, what to list/sell into current demand, and the one discipline to hold to. Keep it tight.

#### SHARP TIP · CHAIN THEM

Power comes from chaining: #22 photo-ID → #2 comps → #5 grade/authenticate decision → #11 buy verdict → #16 to list. A full sourcing-to-sale workflow in five copy-pastes.

## Chapter 12

# The Resource Directory

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The links serious flippers and collectors use — to ID, comp, authenticate, source, and sell across every category. Bookmark this page. (The hobby moves fast; confirm current fees/standing before you transact.)

### ① VALUE & COMP TOOLS — WHAT THINGS REALLY SOLD FOR

#### eBay — Sold / Completed Listings

FREE

[ebay.com](https://www.ebay.com)

Filter to "Sold Items" for real prices across nearly every category. Your #1 free comp source.

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#### WorthPoint

PAID

[worthpoint.com](https://www.worthpoint.com)

The deepest cross-category sold-price database (~1B records) plus a marks/logos library — unbeatable for antiques, art, and obscure items.

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#### PriceCharting

FREE TIER

[pricecharting.com](https://www.pricecharting.com)

Prices and photo ID for video games, cards, comics, and sealed product, with trend comparisons.

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#### LiveAuctioneers — Price Guide

FREE

[liveauctioneers.com](https://www.liveauctioneers.com)

Auction results across art, antiques and collectibles from houses worldwide.

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#### Invaluable — Price Archive

FREE

[invaluable.com](https://www.invaluable.com)

A large auction-price archive for appraising fine art, antiques and collectibles.

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#### Google Lens / Reverse Image Search

FREE

[lens.google](https://lens.google)

Snap an unknown item to surface matches and listings — a fast first-pass ID in the field.

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### ② GRADING & AUTHENTICATION — BY CATEGORY

#### Cards — PSA · SGC · Beckett · CGC

[psacard.com](https://www.psacard.com) · [gosgc.com](https://www.gosgc.com) · [beckett.com](https://www.beckett.com) · [cgccards.com](https://www.cgccards.com)

The four card graders; PSA leads for sports resale.

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#### Comics — CGC · CBCS

[cgccomics.com](https://www.cgccomics.com) · [cbcscomics.com](https://www.cbcscomics.com)

CGC dominates comic resale; CBCS is the respected #2.

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## Coins — PCGS · NGC · CAC

[pcgs.com](https://www.pcgsc.com) · [ngccoin.com](https://www.ngccoin.com) · [caccoin.com](https://www.caccoin.com)

The two major coin graders, plus CAC quality verification.

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## Video games — WATA · VGA · CGC · PSA

[watagames.com](https://www.watagames.com) · [vgagrading.com](https://www.vgagrading.com) · [cgcvideogames.com](https://www.cgcvideogames.com)

WATA and VGA are the established names; CGC and PSA have entered the market.

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## Toys & action figures — AFA / CGA

[cgagrading.com](https://www.cgagrading.com)

The Action Figure Authority (AFA) and Video Game Authority (VGA) under CGA grade vintage toys and figures.

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## Autographs & memorabilia — PSA/DNA · JSA · Beckett

[psacard.com](https://www.psacard.com) · [spenceloa.com](https://www.spenceloa.com) · [beckett-authentication.com](https://www.beckett-authentication.com)

The three trusted autograph authenticators. Insist on one of these for signed items.

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## ③ MARKETPLACES & AUCTIONS — BUY & SELL

### eBay

[ebay.com](https://www.ebay.com)

The deepest buyer pool across every category; the default for most singles.

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### Whatnot

[whatnot.com](https://www.whatnot.com)

The dominant live-selling and breaks platform across collectibles categories.

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### Heritage Auctions

[ha.com](https://www.ha.com)

Premier auction house for high-end across cards, comics, coins, games, art and memorabilia.

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### Hake's Auctions

[hakes.com](https://www.hakes.com)

Specialist auction house for pop-culture collectibles, toys and memorabilia.

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### Mercari & Facebook Marketplace

[mercari.com](https://www.mercari.com) · [facebook.com/marketplace](https://www.facebook.com/marketplace)

High-volume general marketplaces — good for sourcing and mid-tier flips.

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### Etsy (vintage)

[etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com)

Strong for vintage and antique items to the right collector audience.

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## ④ SOURCING — FIND THE INVENTORY

### EstateSales.net FREE

[estatesales.net](https://estatesales.net)

Find local estate sales with photos — plan your weekend sourcing route.

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### ShopGoodwill FREE

[shopgoodwill.com](https://shopgoodwill.com)

Goodwill's online auctions — source mispriced items without leaving home.

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### AuctionZip FREE

[auctionzip.com](https://auctionzip.com)

Directory of local live auctions — estates, lots and variety.

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## ⑤ CATEGORY DATABASES & ID

### Discogs (vinyl) FREE

[discogs.com](https://discogs.com)

The definitive record database — pressings, variants, condition standards and a marketplace.

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### Trading Card Database (cards) FREE

[tcdb.com](https://tcdb.com)

Free checklists and set galleries for trading cards.

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### Grand Comics Database (comics) FREE

[comics.org](https://comics.org)

The definitive index of comic issues, printings and covers.

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### PCGS CoinFacts (coins) FREE

[pcgs.com/coinfacts](https://pcgs.com/coinfacts)

The U.S. coin encyclopedia — specs, mintages, populations and auction prices.

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## ⑥ COMMUNITY & LEARNING

### Reddit — r/flipping, r/Antiques, r/whatsthisworth FREE

[reddit.com/r/flipping](https://reddit.com/r/flipping)

Crowd ID help, value checks, and reselling tactics across every category.

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### Category subreddits & forums FREE

[reddit.com](https://reddit.com)

Every niche has one — fast answers from people who know that corner cold.

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## ⑦ SUPPLIES & YOUR LOCAL SHOP

### BCW Supplies

[bcwsupplies.com](https://bcwsupplies.com)

Sleeves, toploaders, bags, boards, holders and mailers for every category.

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## Find a Shop or Show Near You

[CollectiblesFamous.com](https://CollectiblesFamous.com)

Use the Collectibles Famous network (incl. ComicStoresNearMe and CoinsNearMe) to find a local shop, show or dealer near you.

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# Your Deal Scorecard

Print this page (or the standalone PDF). Score the 6 drivers 1–10, do the all-in math, and let the verdict be a decision — not a feeling. Works on any collectible, in any category.

Deal Scorecard

Score every item before you buy · circle 1 (weak) → 10 (strong)

Item

category / maker / name / year / variant

1. Significance

first / iconic / sought-after example?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

2. Maker & Subject

brand · artist · player · character

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

3. Scarcity

production · survival · numbering · variant

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

4. Condition

grade/tier · complete · original · authentic

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

5. Availability

low supply/pop = higher score

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

6. Demand & Timing

heating up, steady, or cooling?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

THE MONEY MATH

Best sold comp

All-in cost

price + fees + ship + cert

Target buy price

Est. margin

GUT CHECKS

☐ Item ID'd precisely (maker/year/variant)

☐ Anchored to **sold** comps, not asking

☐ Authenticity / cert verified

☐ I can actually re-sell this (liquidity)

☐ Within my bankroll & death-pile limit

THE VERDICT



**BUY**

**NEGOTIATE**

**PASS**

*Rule of thumb: if two or more drivers score low and the margin is thin, that's a PASS. Edge lives where one driver — often significance or scarcity the seller missed — is underpriced.*

# Quick-Start & Glossary

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## Your first 30 days

- Pick **one thesis** (Ch 10) — specialist or generalist — and write it down.
- Set a **bankroll** and a **death-pile limit** you won't exceed.
- Paste the **Master Setup Prompt** (Ch 11) and make photo-ID + sold-comp checks a reflex.
- Source **one** item using Prompts #22, #2, #11 and the **Deal Scorecard** end-to-end.
- Verify a cert once so you know the drill (Ch 12).
- Set up **storage** and the **Collection Tracker**.
- Bookmark the **Resource Directory** and find your local shop or next estate sale.

## Glossary

**Comp** — a comparable recent *sold* price for the same item/condition.

**Sold listings** — completed sales (real prices), vs active asking prices.

**Grade / tier** — a certified condition rating from a third party.

**Slab** — the sealed holder a graded item lives in.

**Raw** — ungraded / uncertified.

**Authentication** — expert verification that an item (or signature) is genuine.

**COA** — Certificate of Authenticity; only as good as who issued it.

**Provenance** — documented ownership/origin history; adds value to memorabilia.

**Population / census** — how many of an item exist at each grade.

**Variant** — an alternate version (cover, pressing, color, parallel).

**CIB** — "complete in box" (games/toys); commands a premium.

**MOC / MIB** — mint on card / mint in box (toys).

**Death pile** — unlisted inventory piling up; a flipper's cash trap.

**Reproduction / repro** — a modern copy of an original; far less valuable.

**Restoration** — added/altered material; usually lowers value.

**Lot** — a group of items sold together.

**All-in cost** — price + fees + shipping + certification.

**Buyer's premium** — auction-house fee on the hammer price.

COLLECTIBLES FAMOUS

# Keep the edge coming.

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This playbook is the starting line. Every week we send sharp, no-fluff intel for collectors and flippers — market moves, new AI research prompts, sourcing tips, and which categories are heating up or cooling off.

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**1** · Subscribe free at [CollectiblesFamous.com](https://CollectiblesFamous.com) — weekly collector intel + new prompts.

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**2** · Grab your bonus [Deal Scorecard](#) and [Collection Tracker](#) downloads.

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**3** · Find a shop, show, or dealer near you through the Collectibles Famous network.

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