BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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Writing eBay Listings That Sell — Titles, Photos, and Shipping

Titles, photos, pricing, and shipping for everyday eBay sellers

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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What's Inside

Everything in this guide, with page numbers. Skip to whichever chapter answers your question right now.

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THE 60-SECOND VERSION

1 The 60-Second Version

The whole idea, if you only have a minute.

Every eBay listing has to do two things: get found by the right buyer, and then make that buyer feel safe enough to buy. Everything in this guide serves one of those two jobs.

- Getting found is mostly the title and the item specifics — the words and boxes eBay uses to match your item to what people type and filter for.
- Getting the sale is mostly the photos, the honest condition, and a fair price you set after checking what the item actually sold for.
- Shipping is where many sellers quietly lose money — a few minutes with a scale and the right setting keeps your profit in your pocket.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can do all of this from the free eBay app on your phone. The app takes the photos, suggests the item specifics, weighs in with pricing guidance, and prints the shipping label. You do not need a computer or any special equipment to list well.

> *A listing that does not sell usually is not a bad deal. More often it is a good item that nobody could find, or one that left the buyer with a question you never answered.*

THE TWO JOBS

2 Getting Found vs. Getting the Sale

Why a listing is really two things at once.

It helps to picture how a buyer actually shops. They type a few words into the search box — say the brand and model of what they want. eBay shows them a wall of thumbnails. They click the ones that look right, skim the photos and details, and buy from the listing that answers their questions and feels trustworthy.

So your listing is competing twice. First it competes to appear on that wall at all, which is the job of your title, your category, and your item specifics. Then, once a buyer clicks, it competes to win the sale against the other listings they opened, which is the job of your photos, your condition, your description, and your price.

Why this matters for how you spend your time

Many sellers pour effort into a flowery description and skip the boring boxes. That is backwards. The title and item specifics are what get you seen in the first place, and a plain, honest description beats a fancy one. Spend your time where the buyer's eyes actually go.

> **TIP**
>
> Before you list, open eBay and search for your item the way a buyer would. The listings that come up top are your real competition. Notice their titles, their photos, and their prices — then aim to match or beat them.

WRITING THE TITLE

3 Titles Buyers Actually Search

Use every inch of space, and no fluff.

The title is the single most important line in your listing for getting found. eBay gives you about 80 characters, and your goal is to fill that space with the exact words a buyer would type — not with sales talk.

What belongs in a title

- Brand and model or product name, spelled the common way.
- Size, color, and key measurements where they matter (shoe size, shirt size, screen size, capacity).
- What the item actually is — the plain noun (jacket, drill, camera lens, cookbook).
- Condition in a word or two if it helps (New, Sealed, For Parts).
- A standout detail a buyer might search (model number, year, a special edition).

What to leave out

- Fluff words like L@@K, WOW, RARE, MUST SEE — nobody searches those.
- Punctuation clutter, rows of stars, or ALL CAPS screaming.
- Words that do not describe the item, which only waste your limited space.

Think of the title as a search magnet, not a headline. If a word would not help a buyer find or identify the item, it does not belong there. If you have leftover space, add another true, searchable detail rather than filler.

> *Write the title for the person typing into the search box, not for yourself. They do not search 'gorgeous vintage treasure' — they search the brand, the model, and the size.*

ITEM SPECIFICS

4 Filling In the Boxes That Power Search

The dull fields that quietly do the heavy lifting.

Item specifics are the labeled boxes eBay asks you to fill in — brand, size, color, type, style, and so on. They look like paperwork, but they are one of the most important things you do. When a buyer narrows their search using the filters down the side of the page, your item only shows up if you filled in the matching box. Leave it blank and you vanish from that search.

- eBay marks some specifics Required — you must fill these to list.
- Some are marked Required Soon, meaning they will become mandatory; fill them now and you are ahead.
- Recommended ones are based on what buyers are actually searching, so they are worth the extra minute.
- The more you complete, the better eBay can match your item, on eBay and on outside searches like Google Shopping.

The app makes this easy: as you list, it suggests the specifics for your category and even shows which ones buyers search most. There is a little meter that fills up as you complete them — aim to fill it.

Pick the right category too

Choosing the correct category is part of the same job. The category decides which filters and specifics a buyer sees, so a wrong category hides you from the right shoppers. When you start a listing, eBay usually suggests a category from your title or a photo — glance at it and make sure it fits.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If you are unsure what a specific means, fill it in anyway with the honest answer. Buyers filter by these constantly, especially on phones, and a filled-in box is the difference between being found and being invisible.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

TAKING THE PHOTOS

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Photos That Sell From a Phone

Your phone is plenty — it is light and angles that matter.

Photos are what turn a found listing into a sale. They give the buyer the confidence to buy and, just as important, they cut down on returns because the buyer knew exactly what they were getting. Your phone camera is more than good enough — what matters is light, background, and showing every angle.

1. Set the item on a clean, plain surface near a window. A neutral or white background makes it stand out.
2. Use bright, natural light. Turn off the flash and skip filters — they distort the true color.
3. Fill the frame with the item and make your first photo your best shot, since that is the one buyers see in search results.
4. Walk around it: front, back, both sides, top, bottom, and any labels or model numbers.
5. Take close-ups of any flaw — a scratch, a stain, worn edges — so there are no surprises.

eBay lets you add up to 24 photos per listing, so there is no reason to be stingy. More honest photos mean fewer questions and fewer returns. Photograph each item on its own, even if you are selling several similar things.

The free photo tools in the app

The eBay app has built-in photo tools that clean things up for you. A background-removal tool can drop in a plain white or studio-style background so your item pops, even if your kitchen table is cluttered. Use these to tidy the look, but do not add text, logos, or watermarks on top of your photos — that can actually keep your pictures out of outside search results.

WATCH OUT

Showing the flaws is not a weakness — it is protection. If a buyer opens a return claiming the item was not as described, clear photos of the exact condition are your best defense, and honest photos draw the buyers who are fine with the flaw.

CONDITION & DESCRIPTION

6 Honest Condition, Clear Description

Say what it is, warts and all.

eBay asks you to pick a condition, and then gives you room to describe the item in your own words. The golden rule for both is simple: be honest, be specific, and never make the buyer guess. An accurate 'Good, with a scuff on the base' sells better and returns less than a vague 'great shape' that disappoints.

Condition	What it signals to a buyer
New / New with tags	Unused, original packaging or tags
Open box / New other	Unused but packaging opened
Used - Good	Works fully, normal light wear
Used - Acceptable	Works, but clear cosmetic wear
For parts / not working	Sold as-is, not expected to work

Writing the description

Keep it plain and useful. Lead with what the item is and that it works. State the condition in detail, list what is included (and what is not), give measurements if they matter, and note any flaw you can see. Short sentences and a few bullet points beat a wall of text. You do not need to repeat the whole title — you need to answer the questions a buyer would otherwise have to ask.

GOOD TO KNOW

A good test: read your description and ask, 'If I were buying this sight unseen, what would still worry me?' Then answer that worry right in the listing. Every question you answer up front is a sale you do not lose to silence.

> *Honest beats glossy every time. The buyer who knows about the little scratch before they buy is a happy buyer. The one who finds it in the box is a return and a bad rating.*

RESEARCHING PRICE

7 What It Really Sold For

Five minutes of homework beats a lucky guess.

The best way to price anything on eBay is to see what the same thing actually sold for — not what other sellers are asking, but what buyers really paid. eBay keeps this history and it is free to look at.

1. Search for your exact item (brand, model, the works).
2. Scroll down the filters on the left and turn on 'Sold items'.
3. Now you see real, completed sales with the price each one brought.
4. Ignore the outliers and look at the cluster in the middle — that is your realistic range.
5. Match the condition: a sealed one sold for more than a worn one, so compare like with like.

Asking prices can be fantasy — anyone can list a common item for $500 and never sell it. Sold prices are the truth. If you want to sell quickly, price at or just below the middle of the sold range. If you are patient, you can aim at the higher end.

GOOD TO KNOW

eBay's Seller Hub includes research tools (built on Terapeak) that show sold prices and demand trends over time. For a casual seller, the simple 'Sold items' filter is usually all you need, but the deeper tool is there free if you get curious.

TIP

When you create the listing, eBay often suggests a price based on recent sales of similar items. Treat that as a helpful starting point, then adjust up or down for your item's exact condition.

PICKING A FORMAT

8 Buy It Now vs. Auction

Two ways to sell, and when each one wins.

eBay lets you sell two main ways. A fixed price (Buy It Now) sits at one set price until someone buys it. An auction runs for a set number of days and sells to the highest bidder. Most everyday items do best at a fixed price; auctions shine for the rare or the hard-to-price.

Format	Best for	Watch for
Buy It Now	Common items, steady value	Set a fair price or it sits
Auction	Rare, collectible, hard to price	Can end low if few bidders

With a fixed price you can also turn on the free 'Allow Offers' setting, which lets buyers propose a price you can accept, decline, or counter. That gives you some of the give-and-take of an auction without the risk of ending too low.

A simple rule of thumb

- You know roughly what it is worth and want a fair, steady sale: Buy It Now.
- It is rare, collectible, or you truly cannot tell what it will fetch: an auction lets the market decide.

- You want fixed-price certainty but room to haggle: Buy It Now with Allow Offers turned on.

> **WATCH OUT**
> Starting an auction at a very low price to 'draw bids' is a gamble. If only one or two people show up, it can end for far less than the item is worth. If a low final price would upset you, use a fixed price instead.

SHIPPING RIGHT

9 Weigh, Measure, and Don't Overpay

Where casual sellers quietly lose money.

Shipping is the part that trips up the most sellers, because guessing wrong costs you real money. The fix is simple: weigh and measure the packed item before you list, and let eBay calculate the exact cost for each buyer's address.

1. Pack the item as you will actually ship it, box and all.
2. Weigh it on a kitchen or postal scale and note the pounds and ounces.
3. Measure the box: length, width, and height.
4. In the listing, choose 'Calculated' shipping and enter that weight and size.
5. eBay then shows each buyer the real cost to their own address — no guessing, no eating the difference.

Calculated vs. flat shipping

Calculated shipping figures the cost from the weight, size, and distance, so a far-away buyer pays more and a close one pays less — and you are never short. A flat rate (one price to everyone) is simpler and fine for light items that cost about the same to send anywhere, but on heavier things it can leave you paying out of pocket.

> **WATCH OUT**
> A cheap postal scale pays for itself fast. Guessing 'about two pounds' when it is really three can wipe out your profit on a single sale, and it happens over and over if you never weigh.

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LABELS & PACKING

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Free Shipping, eBay Labels, and Packing

The discount, the psychology, and the box.

Two shipping choices shape how well your item sells and how much you keep: whether you offer 'free' shipping, and how you buy your postage.

The free-shipping trick

Buyers love seeing 'Free shipping,' and it can help your listing stand out. The honest truth is that nothing is really free — you simply build the shipping cost into the item price. For small, light items this works beautifully, because a single total price feels simpler and more appealing. For heavy items, charging calculated shipping separately is usually smarter so the price does not scare buyers off.

Buy postage through eBay Labels

When your item sells, buy the shipping label right on eBay rather than standing in line at the counter. eBay Labels gives you pre-negotiated, discounted rates from USPS, FedEx, and UPS — often cheaper than you would pay retail — and it prints a label with tracking already attached to the order. Tracking protects you as much as the buyer.

Packing so it arrives whole

- Use a sturdy box or a padded mailer sized close to the item.
- Wrap fragile things well and cushion empty space so nothing shifts.
- Tape seams firmly and cover or remove any old shipping labels.
- Put a slip with the order info inside in case the outside label is damaged.

GOOD TO KNOW

Ship promptly, within your stated handling time, and upload the tracking. Fast, tracked shipping earns good ratings, and good ratings lift you in search — shipping well is also a way of getting found.

OFFERS & RETURNS

11 Handling Offers and Returns

Staying calm and keeping your rating clean.

Once you are selling, two things come up again and again: buyers making offers, and the occasional return. Handled calmly, neither is a problem.

When a buyer makes an offer

If you turned on Allow Offers, buyers can propose a price. You have three choices: accept, decline, or counter with a number in between. Decide in advance the lowest price you are truly happy with, and do not let a lowball offer rattle you — a polite decline or counter is perfectly normal, and many buyers come back at a fairer number.

When a buyer wants to return

Returns are part of selling, and eBay leans toward the buyer, so it is usually easier and better for your rating to accept a reasonable return gracefully. State your return policy clearly in the listing up front. If you accept returns, handle them promptly and pleasantly; a smooth return often turns an unhappy buyer into a repeat one.

GOOD TO KNOW

The best defense against returns is everything earlier in this guide: honest condition, clear photos of any flaw, and a complete description. Most returns come from surprises, and you can prevent surprises.

> *I tell folks not to take an offer or a return personally. It is just business moving along. Answer kindly, keep your records, and move on to the next sale.*

STAYING SAFE

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Spotting and Avoiding Buyer Scams

Rare, but worth knowing the few tricks.

The vast majority of eBay buyers are honest people who just want the thing they bought. But a few tricks come up often enough that every seller should recognize them. The common thread in staying safe is simple: keep everything on eBay.

- Pay-outside-eBay scam: a 'buyer' asks you to deal by email, Zelle, gift card, or wire to 'save fees.' Never do it — off-platform payments have no protection. Say no and report it.
- Ship-somewhere-else scam: a buyer asks you to ship to a different address than the one on the order. Always ship to the address eBay shows, or you lose your seller protection.
- Item-not-as-described abuse: a buyer claims a fault that is not real to get a partial refund. Your dated photos and honest description are your defense.
- Empty-box or swap return: a dishonest buyer returns a different or broken item. Photograph and record what you ship, and inspect returns on camera.

None of this should scare you off. These are the exceptions, not the rule. A seller who keeps every step on eBay, ships only to the order address, and documents with photos is well protected.

WATCH OUT

If a message pushes you to move fast, move off eBay, or send money, treat it as a red flag no matter how friendly it sounds. Real buyers do not need you to leave the platform. When in doubt, use eBay's reporting and ask their support.

THE FEES

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What eBay Takes, in Plain English

So the payout never surprises you.

eBay is free to list for most casual sellers, and you only pay real money when something sells. Knowing the pieces ahead of time means the payout never catches you off guard.

- Listing (insertion) fee: most months you get a large number of free listings — about 250 — so casual sellers usually pay nothing to list. Past that, there is a small per-listing fee (around 35 cents).
- Final value fee: when the item sells, eBay keeps a percentage of the total, plus a small per-order fee. For most categories that percentage is in the low-to-mid teens; it varies by category, so confirm yours.
- Optional upgrades: extras like a subtitle or an auction reserve cost a little and are charged whether or not the item sells, so skip them unless they earn their keep.

One point surprises new sellers: the final value fee is figured on the whole amount the buyer pays — the item, the shipping, and the sales tax — not on the item price alone. That is why building shipping into a 'free shipping' price does not dodge the fee; eBay counts it either way.

WATCH OUT

Exact fee percentages change and depend on your category, and an eBay Store subscription changes them again. Always confirm the current numbers on eBay's own Seller Center fees page before you count on them. Last verified: November 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

A good habit before listing: look at a recent sold price for your item, subtract roughly the final value fee and your shipping cost, and that is about what lands in your pocket. If that number is worth your time, list it. Payouts reach your bank within a couple of business days of the sale.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

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A Simple Listing Routine

The same calm steps, every single time.

Once you have a routine, listing an item takes just a few minutes. Here is the whole thing in order — the same steps that make every listing get found and get the sale.

1. Research first: search Sold listings for your item and note the realistic price.
2. Photograph it on a clean background in good light, several angles, flaws and all.
3. Write a title packed with brand, model, size, and type — no fluff.
4. Fill in every item specific and pick the right category.
5. Describe it honestly, choose the condition, and set your price and format.
6. Weigh and measure, set calculated shipping, then pack it and print an eBay label when it sells.

That is the entire craft. Do those steps each time and your listings will stand out from the half-finished ones that never sell. None of it is hard; it is just a matter of not skipping the quiet parts.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you would like a hand getting started, I am glad to sit down with you, set up the eBay app on your phone, and walk through your first few listings together — titles, photos, pricing, and shipping — until it feels easy and you can do it on your own.

> *Selling on eBay well is not about being clever. It is about doing the plain, honest steps in order, every time. Do that, and the sales take care of themselves.*

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this page handy. It points you straight to what to do for each task.

I want to...	Do this...
Get found in search	Put brand, model, size, and type in the title; fill every item specific
Build buyer trust	Clear photos from several angles, flaws shown, honest condition
Price it right	Search Sold listings for the same item; price to what it really sold for
Pick a format	Buy It Now for steady value; auction for rare or hard-to-price items
Ship without overpaying	Weigh and measure, use calculated shipping and an eBay label
Stay safe	Keep it all on eBay, ship to the eBay address, document with photos
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

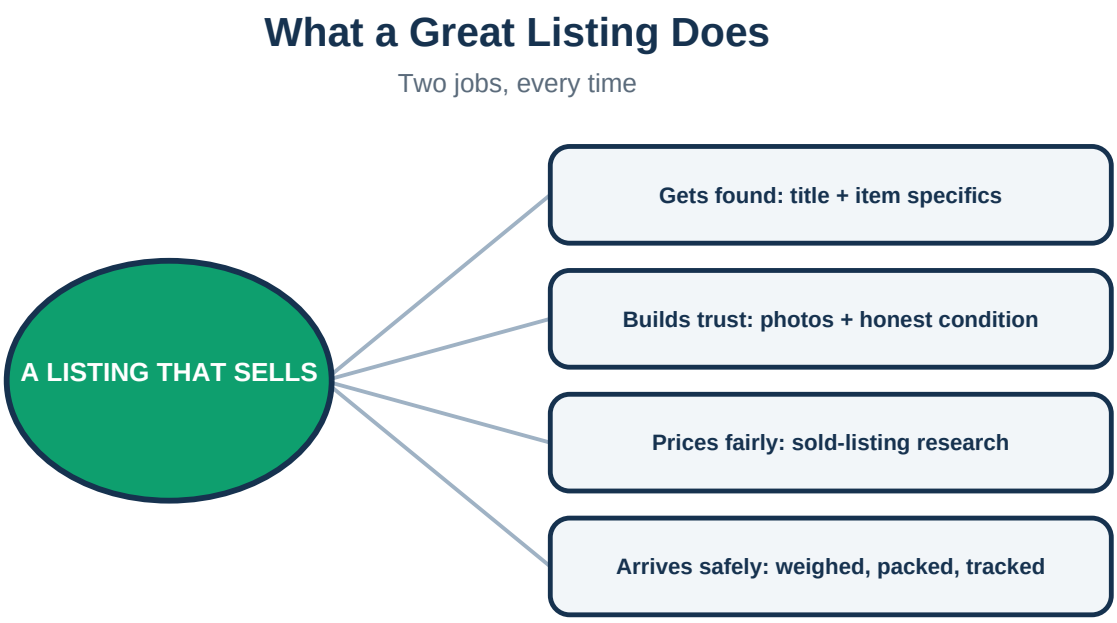


Illustration — a schematic. Set-up screens differ; each takes only a few minutes.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

From Closet to Sold

The whole trip of one item

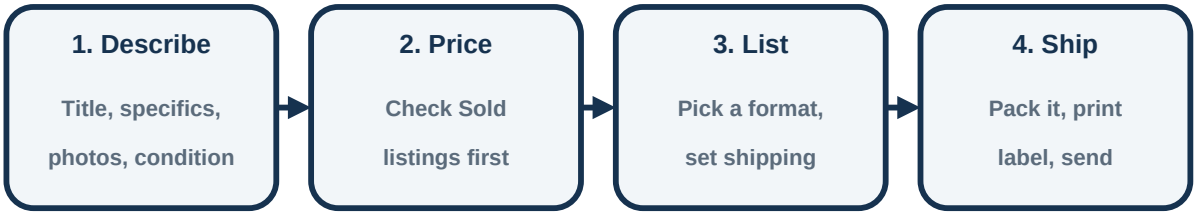


Illustration — a schematic. The order is a suggestion; do one box at a time.

A schematic of the plan — company steps vary; the order does not have to.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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