

# Barter is Better

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Congratulations, and thank you for making the decision to purchase a winning School Theme production. We know you will find “Barter is Better” a great bonus addition to your library.

You’ll find it’s a valuable resource as you consider opportunities to exchange teaching, tutoring or counseling services for additional cash income or many other products and services.

**Introducing:**

- Barter is Back (exchange what you want for what you have)
- Products, services, real estate, computers and more
- Real people, real opportunities (avoid online scams)
- Keys (and tips) to smart bartering
- The 7 best bartering sites
- FREE for teachers
- What the IRS says about Bartering

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**Build School Spirit**

**After all.... It’s all about the kids**

The barter system is back. Well, really it never left. But it does tend to get put on the back burner until times are tight...like right now. So where does a person begin to trade what they have for what they want?

As the economy continues to slump, the swap business booms.

Watches, baseball cards, cupcakes and cookies, artwork, a journal entry, a bike, and even a dog all found new homes last month at Main Street Family Dentistry in Tupelo, Miss. Dentist Harry Rayburn and his staff accepted the tokens as a barter from 60 patients on a single day in May in exchange for fillings, extractions, and cleanings, mainly from uninsured [patients](#). "A lot of them were extractions that had been hurting for two or three months and they hadn't been able to get to a dentist because of the cost," Rayburn says.

As spare cash becomes harder to come by for many families, bartering is an increasingly attractive alternative to putting expenses on a credit card.

Here's a guide to the low-cost world of bartering.

### **A few tips on bartering online:**

- **Review How Bartering Works:** Get to know what [bartering entails](#), and all the pros and cons so you're aware of what to expect. Also review the tax implications of trading.
- **Be detailed:** Get specific about what it is you're looking for and what it is you have to offer so that you're not pinging interested people for days only to find out it's not a good trade.
- **Consider the value of the trade:** What's the market value of what you have to offer or what you're seeking if it were being sold for money. You'll want the trade to even out. And on the flip side, what is the value to you? If it feels like you're making a great trade—even if the monetary values don't align—then it's probably still a fair trade.
- **Don't get stuck on things:** Experiences can also be traded. If you're looking to go on vacation, see if the cute little hotel or B&B would like your creative writing skills to spruce up their advertising literature. Think about bartering as the primary solution to your needs, not as an alternative, and it'll let loose the possibilities.

- **Be Aware:** While bartering brings back the feelings of connection and trust with other people that can get lost when only cash talks, there's definitely the possibility you could get a raw deal. Be aware about the terms of the trade, and for larger trades or service trades, you might even want to consider drawing up a contract.

**Save money.** "Instead of buying your kid that new video game, you can trade for a new one," says Jessica Hardwick, cofounder of the Cupertino, Calif., bartering website [SwapThing](#), which charges \$1 per swap to its 130,000 active members. As of last check, the website had 1,721,179 things listed as available, including antiques, comic books, and electronics. "Our growth is inverse to the [economy](#)," Hardwick says. "As people start to spend more money to put food on the table and gas in the tank, they find other ways to save money."

**Be specific.** A New York attorney offering to prepare a simple [will](#) and healthcare proxy in exchange for the services of an experienced floor sander or painter. A San Francisco parent interested in trading two sets of luggage for beer or wine for her son's baptism party. A painter in San Francisco willing to proffer his services for a Harley. These are just a few of the recent offerings on [Craigslist](#), which reported 130,243 barter posts in May. That's twice as many as last year. "Some people will give a laundry list of items they are willing to trade or services they know how to provide and ask people to send them similar lists they are able to trade," says Craigslist CEO Jim Buckmaster. "Others list a single thing they are able to provide or a single item they are looking for. A key is to always be specific so that people know what you have and what you want."

**List details.** "The more information you can put in the ad, it cuts down on phone tag," says Debbie DeSousa, the CEO of [Barter Bucks](#) in Concord, Calif., which boasts 50,000 business owner and manufacturer members and charges a 10 percent fee. "Because we are international, you need to say what distance you are willing to travel." DeSousa herself has bartered for eyeglasses, dinners out, dental work, and auto repairs. If you're mailing a package, you must also decide who will pay for shipping. And consider posting a picture. Ads with photographs tend to get more responses.

**Assign value.** Americans are used to giving merchandise a dollar value, so determining exactly how many DVDs a dental filling is worth can be tricky. "The newer the content in terms of popularity, like the latest movie or CD, the faster it moves. And classics will go, too," says Robert Alvin, president of the CD-, DVD-, and game-trading website [BarterBee](#). On some barter websites, including BarterBee, you assign your merchandise or service a point or credit value. Once you accrue points by selling something into the system, you can buy other items with them. In most cases, one point is roughly equivalent to \$1. Like with online auction giant eBay, the comments left about an [account](#) can also help you avoid the possibility of other people not delivering on their end of the bargain. "You have to list the condition [of your merchandise] appropriately," Alvin says. "If it's reasonably listed and you don't overprice it, stuff goes fast."

**Get creative.** "This summer people are doing a lot of house swaps just to be able to afford to go on vacation," says Hardwick of SwapThing, although she'll stick to swapping books this year. Furniture, computer services, hypnosis, cabinetry, hair cutting and color services, and riding lessons have all been bartered online, in addition to the more typical movies and CDs, without the need to put expenses on your credit card. "The barter category is sort of adventuresome. People like to think outside the box more than in other categories," says Buckmaster of Craigslist. "It is a little more creative than cash [transactions](#), and people do let their imagination run wild."

## **Bartering For Great Deals - The Best Online Barter Exchange Websites**

When cash is low, barter is better.

More people are turning to online barter exchange these days in lieu of purchasing items with cash.

When you barter, if you have something laying around you can get rid of (or perhaps a service you can perform), you simply do that in exchange for items you need.



Here are the best bartering sites and a little about the basics of bartering for newbies...

<http://www.u-exchange.com/>

Allows you to trade anything. The website facilitates person-to-person trades and does not charge fees or take commission on trades. U-Exchange allows you to browse through posted trades and to post your own items. You become a member by posting your first trade and at that point, you can send and receive messages through the site's anonymous email system, put up hyperlinks to your website, post on the message board, and more. Like e-bay, you can also bookmark items that appeal to you – so you can revisit them later. You can also opt to place a premium listing on the site.

Example listings from U-Exchange: (state of Idaho)

| Name   | City          | Offering  | Seeking   |
|--|---------------|---|---|
|  Victoria | New Meadows   | Organic Compost Boer Goats, does and Bucks Pack...  | Medical services Fencing Construction Materials ...   |
|  Whpple   | Boise         | Landscape services...                               | open to offers...                                     |
|  Jason   | Coeur D Alene | Trek 1000 Road Bike, 2007 model. Great condition... | Comparable mountain bike in terms of value...         |
|  Tamra  | Twin Falls    | Beautiful new home. 3000 square feet. 3 bedroom,... | Looking for a small beach house on the Oregon, Was... |
|  Rex    | Ammon         | Web Development, Graphic Design, Marketing Consu... | 4 Wheeler, Piano, Shingle Roofing Repair or materi... |

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<http://www.swaptree.com/>

Swaptree sticks to a small niche of luxury items such as books, music, DVD's and video games. It allows you to trade items you have already used and no longer need for new items. This is important in the book, movie, video game industry, because most books are only read once, and video games have a low shelf life. It's great these items can be traded for something else (new) after a few months. To arrange a barter agreement on Swaptree, you just post the items you no longer want and allow the site to seek out items that you can get in exchange. You then pick the items you want an trade, paying only the price of postage. This website is free to use.

<http://www.trashbank.com/>

Trashbank is a premier free, full-service bartering site. Unlike other similar bartering destinations, Trashbank provides a comprehensive range of categories that truly allows members to trade anything they have for anything they want, be it a product, a service or even cold, hard cash.

It's free. No processing fees. No hidden charges. No kidding!

Antiques, cars, books, cameras, clothing, collectibles, computers, games, home & garden, jewelry, toys. Every conceivable [consumer product](#) is represented. And so is every conceivable [service](#). Have a talent or a service you know is worth something? Trashbank is the place for you. Whether you're a home repair guru, a musician, a massage therapist or just a hard-working person willing to mow someone's lawn all summer in return for a ride back to school in the fall, you are sure to find someone here willing to trade with you.

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<http://www.swapace.com/index.php>

Over 80,000 items, 200,000 members, 150 countries - Totally free to use. Enter your search term or keyword (click on "How it works" to learn more).

Items such as books, dvds/CDs games electronics, fashion cars, services (tutors).

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<http://www.craigslist.org/>

[Craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org) has a section for bartering where you can offer your own resources for things you need. You can also offer or request services. So say you need a new washing machine but all you have to offer is your techy know-how with computers. You could trade computer repair services for that washer. Or vice versa.

There is also a section on there for free stuff. If you have things you need to give away, list them here. And this can be the first place you look when you need a particular item.

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<http://www.caretotrade.com/>

[CareToTrade](http://www.caretotrade.com/) has sections for swapping items, bartering services, and exchanging real estate. You can buy items directly or trade them for items or services. There is a posted value so you are aware of what is expected in exchange value, and also an escrow system for trades that aren't done in person.

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<http://www.peopletradingservices.com/>

If you're looking to trade services, try [PeopleTradingServices.com](http://www.peopletradingservices.com/). You have to sign up as a member, but you can then sort through what services other people are seeking and what they have to offer to find a great trade.

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<http://www.barterquest.com>

BarterQuest is a trading platform for the individual consumer. BarterQuest supports trading in all types of goods or services (including the use of real estate), from anyone to anyone, anywhere in the world. By actively matching HAVES and WANTS, it allows people like you to realize the possibilities of getting stuff for stuff, of excluding the middle man, of avoiding the need for money to get what you want.

Trade your New & Used Goods, Services, and Real Estate including electronics, cars, apparel, collectibles, sporting goods, timeshare, professional & more.

**Free stuff for teachers** <http://www.iloveschools.com>

iLoveSchools.com works with teachers, schools and districts, encouraging kids to stay in school while helping them gain a lifelong love for learning. We match America's school teachers with individual, group and corporate donors of new, used or in-kind classroom resources. Donors select the classrooms receiving their donation as well as tell us how much we can use to cover our administrative costs. We're working with America's teachers and classroom supporters to put our schoolchildren first.

**IRS rules** about Barter Exchanges

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=113437,00.html>

**Consider taxes.** [Income](#) from bartering is taxable, and bartering exchanges are required to report transactions to the Internal Revenue Service. Businesses or trades people can deduct costs incurred to perform the work that was bartered. But small, informal, and noncommercial arrangements generally slide under the radar of the IRS. "The consumer end of it has always been a very gray area because there is no reporting that takes place, so the IRS has no way of tracking those transactions and the people themselves probably don't have a receipt," says Tom McDowell, executive director of the National Association of Trade Exchanges. "If you make a profit, then it would be a taxable event. If you sell it for less than you paid for it, then it would not be a taxable event because you are not making money."