

GARAGE SALES

Are Baseball Cards Valuable?

There's a good chance, especially if you were a child of the 1980s and 1990s, that your attic or garage or storage shed contains boxes, binders or bins chock full of baseball cards.

You probably remember being told to take good care of them, that they'd be worth a lot of money in 20 years. Now a few decades have passed and they may or may not be worth that big money.

WHEN ARE CARDS WORTH MONEY?

All cards are likely to have some value, even if it's just a few cents. But it's likely that the bulk of your cards are from the 1980s and 1990s, when baseball cards experienced a resurgence in popularity.

As these kids grew up, they tried to sell the cards and flooded the market, the Chicago Tribune says, making the cards worth very little.

But cards from the 1970s and earlier, the paper says, are selling well and for higher amounts as Asian investors buy collectible cards and push up prices.



GRADING BASEBALL CARDS

To get top dollar for your cards, they'll need to be graded by a grading company. Grading companies usually charge between \$14 and \$17 per card, says collecting site

Dean's Cards, and it's usually only worth it if the card is very old or in near perfect condition. However, a good grade on a scale of 1-10, with a 10 being the best, can help you get top dollar for your cards.

AUTOGRAPHED CARDS

Verified autographed cards can also go for a decent amount of money. The Tribune says that during the 1990s and 2000s, famous players signed a handful of cards that were randomly

placed into packs. Those cards can go for upwards for a few thousand dollars. Have the signature authenticated by a reputable company, the paper says, and be on the lookout for phony authentication documents.

UNOPENED CASES

Full, unopened cases from the 1980s and 1990s may also be worth money. In 2019, a 1986 Fleer Basketball Wax Box with 36 unopened packs sold for \$50,000 and another case sold for \$77,000 in 2017. This set contains Michael Jordan's rookie card and is worth a little more than other sets.

MOST VALUABLE CARDS

That's not to say all 1980s and 1990s cards are worthless. Some, like the 1990 Topps #414 Frank Thomas Rookie Card without his name on the front — a printing error — can be worth up to \$50,000.

Another error card, the 1987 Donruss Opening Day Barry Bonds card that actually shows a picture of teammate John Ray, is worth around \$3,000.

The 1993 Upper Deck Derek Jeter Rookie Card Foil #279 shows why grading is so important.

There are only around 20 grade 10 cards in circulation and has fetched in excess of \$100,000 at auction.

BACKGROUND © ADOBE STOCK. BASEBALL CARDS: WIKICOMMONS

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BUYER'S TIP

Beware of Fakes and Forgeries

Beware of any fakes and forgeries on the marketplace. Look for grades and authentications issued by reputable houses such as SCG, Beckett and others. Good sellers will also give you a 30-day return window to have cards and autographs authenticated independently.

AD SPACE