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Baseball Art Prints



Resources for Identifying and Pricing an Unknown Card

So you've found what appears to be an old baseball card, but you have no idea how to identify to which set it belongs, or how much it's worth. Answering these questions is really a multi-step process. In no particular order, the following need to be completed:

- Identify to which set your card(s) belongs
- Verify that the card is genuine and not a reproduction
- Evaluate condition and realize the impact this has on value
- Find similar examples of your card, and estimate value

In your effort to identify the make of your card, there are several great resources to aid you:

Old Cardboard	A wonderful vintage baseball reference site covering all cards made prior to 1950. With descriptions and image examples from hundreds of sets, chances are your set will be found here.
The Encyclopedia of Baseball Cards	Low Lipset's three book collection, now consolidated into a single volume. Contains detailed information on pre-1900, and early tobacco, gum, and candy cards. Search for it on eBay
The Standard Catalog of Baseball Cards	Edited by Robert F. Lemke, this volume weighs in at over 1700 pages. Contains many images, and values for over 500,000 cards. \$39.99 from Krause Publications :: Search for it on eBay :: From \$9.50 on Half.com
Warman's® Baseball Card Field Guide	Containing over 500 full color images, this pocket sized book is a quick glance guide for identifying many cards, 1886 to present. \$12.99 from Krause Publications :: Search for it on eBay :: From \$3.50 on Half.com
The Virtual Card Collection	An incredible collection of images from dozens of vintage sets. A fantastic reference for vintage collectors.
Vintage Baseball Collecting Forum	Be sure to search old posts prior to asking about your specific card. There is a wealth of information in these posts, and chances are your specific set was covered at some point. Note: this forum concentrates on pre-WWII baseball items.
The PSA Set Registry	A reasonably complete cross-section of baseball card sets, vintage to modern. One con to this resource is that not all collectors post images of their cards.
eBay	If all else fails, eBay is a great place to find a card similar to yours. With millions of cards for sale at any given time, a simple search may prove successful. Keep your search simple at first, for example use only the player's last name if it is found on the card.

AUTHENTICATION

Whether created for good reasons or bad, an incredible number of vintage reprints exist today in the hobby. Properly educating yourself will help insure the card you are holding is the "real deal". Many of the above listed books will help you in authenticating your card, but if you wish to further research, the following may be of assistance:

Cycleback.com	"Judging the Authenticity of Early Trading Cards". Perhaps one of the most well written and informative articles on this subject.
Sportscard Counterfeit Detector	Now out of print, this book by the author of the Standard Catalog of Baseball cards provides an in depth look at reprints and counterfeit cards. For a vintage collector, any edition of this book is a smart buy. Search for it on eBay :: From \$8.95 on Half.com (1994 Edition - most recent)
Fritsch Cards Reprints	Larry Fritsch Cards, Inc carries many reprints of popular (and otherwise) sets. Compare your card with images found on their site or purchase a

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set to compare up close with your card.

[PSA](#), [SGC](#), [GAI](#)

Don't feel like taking the time to research and authenticate your card? Send it off to one of these respected third-party grading companies. For a fee that may be relative to the time you spend researching, they'll properly identify and grade it for you.

CONDITION / GRADING

Evaluating condition is an extremely objective process. Chances are not everyone will agree with an assigned grade, but following established guidelines can at least give you a ballpark estimate of how your card would be viewed by others with a trained eye for such things.

Though not all collectors prefer cards graded and "slabbed" by third parties, few can disagree that such companies have helped set relative standards for card grades. Of the many grading companies out there, three are most trusted by vintage collectors: [PSA](#), [SGC](#) and [GAI](#). For your convenience, the grading standards of all three are placed side by side [here](#).

Remember, because of the objective nature of grading, you may find that you have overgraded or undergraded your card in the eyes of others. The important thing to remember is condition plays a HUGE part in properly assigning value to a card. Although a 1933 Goudey Babe Ruth will always be worth "something", an EX-MT example will command a considerably higher price than a G-VG example.

We should be clear that while condition plays an incredibly important role in value, many other factors do as well, scarcity being one. Whether scarce or not, a card in poor condition will always be worth less than a high grade example of the exact same card.

VALUE

To assess value, [eBay](#) is arguably the best gauge for what price an item might sell. Though several of the books above will be helpful, eBay has several advantages:

- Sheer volume. With millions of cards changing hands daily, unless your card is considerably rare, chances are one like it has been recently sold (and sometimes in multiples)
- Prices are recent, and reflect what a card might be worth "now" in comparison to an outdated price guide.
- Knowledgeable sellers and bidders set an accurate "market" value
- Accessibility and ease of use. 100 million members can't be wrong, and searching auctions is quite easy, even if you don't know exactly for what you are looking.

Below are completed auction searches for several common vintage baseball issues. If you do not see your set listed, please use this link to go directly to an eBay completed auction search page.

Note: You will need to be signed in to [eBay](#) to access these listings. If you do not have an eBay ID, you will need to first [register](#) (free).

1911 T201	1911 T205	1909-11 T206
1914/15 Cracker Jack	1933 Goudey	1934 Goudey
1952 Topps	1953 Topps	1954 Topps
1948 Bowman	1949 Bowman	1950 Bowman

For eBay searches of live auctions in these categories and many more, please see our [Searches](#) page.

If you have any suggestions for making this reference page more useful, please [e-mail me](#). Thank you!

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