



VALUATION WORKSHEET

Determining your book's value on the market

This worksheet will help you to determine what value your book has, both monetarily and historically (or scholarly, depending on the book). Since this is mostly a guide to the websites and resources that you can use, most questions will be directed towards avenues to take rather than specific things to seek out.

Make sure that you have done, at the very least, the Discovery worksheet for the book you're trying to value. You can find it on the *For the Reader* page in the *Investigating the Book* website (www.investigatingthebook.com). The Biography worksheet, found on the same page, would be helpful too, though it is not always needed in order to complete a faithful valuation.

What You'll Need

1. The book you're valuing
2. A computer and Wifi connection (because most resources are online)
3. At least an hour, based on how giving the world is and how many resources are out there.
4. Patience (it's a virtue, and valuable)
5. Pen and paper (like this one!) or, if you prefer, Word or Pages, to document and compare values and findings

Remember: the market is a constantly fluctuating, almost alive, entity. Change in the market will reflect degrees of popularity, saturation, new information, literary criticism, or the death of authors or publishers. It is a completely man-made arbitrary system, like the stock market, and so requires study and careful attention. The book you have may not always have the value you first find on it, so it is useful to compare it against many different sources and to pay close attention to any changes that may affect its value (that is if you do indeed feel like selling it). This worksheet is intended to help you find the value it has now. And that value may not always be monetary.



1. Check the condition of your book. The Discovery worksheet should have helped you to do this. There is a heavy emphasis on condition in the modern market, so it is good to know, and be truthful, about the condition of your book. Based on the guide below, taken from [AbeBooks](#), give your book a grade. This will help guide your valuation and compare it to others on the market:

As New: The book is in the same immaculate condition as when it was published. This could be the description for a book that has been lost in a warehouse for years, never shelved, thumbed or even opened yet may still be some years old.

Fine (F or FN): A Fine book approaches the condition of As New, but without being crisp. The book may have been opened and read, but there are no defects to the book, jacket or pages.

Very Good (VG): Describes a book that shows some small signs of wear - but no tears - on either binding or paper. Any defects should be noted by the seller.

Good (G): Describes the average used worn book that has all pages or leaves present. Any defects should be noted by the seller.

Fair: Worn book that has complete text pages (including those with maps or plates) but may lack endpapers, half-title, etc. (which must be noted). Binding, jacket (if any), etc., may also be worn. All defects should be noted.

Poor: Describes a book that is sufficiently worn. Any missing maps or plates should still be noted. This copy may be soiled, scuffed, stained or spotted and may have loose joints, hinges, pages, etc.

Binding Copy: describes a book in which the pages or leaves are perfect but the binding is very bad, loose, off, or nonexistent.

Reading Copy: A copy usually in poor to fair condition that includes all text presented in a legible fashion. The copy is fine to read but nothing more.

Most booksellers label their books Fair or Very Good. Rarely will you ever find something that a bookseller deems As New unless it is fairly new to begin with. It all depends on what the book is. This will help you to compare against books of the same title in similar condition up for sale.

What grade is your book and what is to be noted about it:



2. Book descriptions, what is in it, what imprint or edition it is, is important to differentiating first editions and reprints and other varieties.

Edition: same print run; second edition means second run of the same book, with possible changes or edits.

Imprint: same printing without any changes; can be the same edition but a second imprint.

State/variant: slightly different text, slightly different binding, same book and possibly same edition (in text form).

Issue: dependent on the release date (usually referring to magazines or pamphlets).

Identifying what kind of description to give your book will help you to compare, just as condition does.

You are always looking for completeness (done best by checking author bibliographies. You can find most online), condition (writing individual faults in the description), content (a quick skim or even reading through the whole thing), and making sure to check for anomalies (on any part of it).

How would you describe your book?

3. Does your book have a dust jacket? If so, what kind of condition is it in? Is it faded, torn, or missing pieces? Dust jackets, since they are so ephemeral, can add considerable value to their book if they are in good condition. It must be determined, however, if your book would have had a dust cover at all. Comparing editions that you find (this is where the Biography worksheet comes in handy) will help you to figure this out.

4. Marks of ownership and marginalia can either add to a book's value or detract from it, dependent on how extensive they are. Marks of ownership, like bookplates, signatures, and notes of gift (i.e From Aunt Margaret to Dot Smith, 1943, etc) can be very useful for determining provenance and often add more value than they detract. Marginalia can be intrusive (like children's scribbling or writing over illustrations) or they can add to the book's information (notes in the margins that refer to the text). Identify which of these your book has and who the owners/authors of the



marginalia might be. The Biography worksheet can be useful in this vein too, as you may already have this information and the research will be easier to direct.

5. Now we can move to comparison of books on the market. Use the following websites, which are all useful in their own way, to search for your particular copy on the market (minus the marginalia and potentially ownership marks, as those are not commonly paired).

Advanced Book Exchange (ABE): www.abebooks.com

Biblio: www.biblio.com

International League of Antiquarian Booksellers: www.ilab.org

viaLibri: www.vialibri.net

Addall: www.addall.com

You can also use websites like Etsy and Ebay, where more beginner individual sellers sell, to determine what the lower market value may have on your book.

Other useful sites are auction websites, like Sotheby's and Christie's, that sometimes publish their sold lots descriptions and their starting prices and selling prices. There are also booksellers that specialize in certain types of books, and do sell both through their own websites and the websites above. Checking through as many as possible, based on the condition of your book, will give you the best determined value.

What price do you think your book could garner? Write the highest and the lowest for one in your book's condition.

6. Understanding rarity and its forms is also important as you move into valuing a book. Rarity can have more to do with the book's condition than with the actual frequency on the market, and rarity itself does not always equal value.

Absolute Rarity: any book printed in a small edition, so *surviving* number, not just available number, will be small.

Relative Rarity: only indirectly connected with the number of copies printed, rather based on the number that survive (and so how frequently they are found on the market; sometimes the demand is more rare than the book).



This is well represented in institutional collections, but not often in private collections.

Temporary Rarity: due either to an inadequate supply of copies in the market of a book only recently begun to be collected, or to a temporary shortage of copies of an established favorite.

Localized Rarity: books sought for outside of their original area of circulation or later popularity with collectors (important, desirable, or hard to get).

Artificial Rarity: book produced to be rare (purposefully printed in a small edition or with a particular kind of binding); i.e. collector's editions.

Can you determine how rare your book is, if at all?

Now that you have *everything* you could need, what do you think is the monetary value of your book? This is different than the fair price you would ask for your book, which is a price you wouldn't be embarrassed by charging (either too little or too much).

There are other types of values associated with the book: it may contain scholarly, historical, or personal value. These can be determined a variety of ways, but the best is by searching through a library institution's or museum's collections to see whether or not they hold a copy of your book, how many, and in what condition. There may be particular reasons why (as in marginalia or provenance). If your book has a particular kind of provenance, rarity, or something particularly singular, your book may hold value both for scholarship and for the market. Based on the biographies you find on *Investigating the Book*, what do you think your book may offer to scholarship or history? What can we learn from it?
