

Collect trading cards

Discover the fun of building your own collection to trade or enjoy.

Trading cards has been a popular hobby for more than 150 years, with baseball cards being one of the oldest types to collect. Other cards, including anime like Pokémon, have surged in popularity in recent decades. Collecting cards is a fun way to engage with a sport or interest you love. It can also build your organizational skills and connect you with other kids who collect and trade cards. Here's what you need to know to get started.

Get a starter pack

All you need to become a card collector is your first pack of cards. After you decide what type of cards you would like to collect, you can purchase a pack of cards from a local card shop, a big retail store, or a website with an adult's help. Whatever you choose, you're guaranteed to have fun opening it to see what cards are inside. You can also build your collection by buying single cards that are meaningful to you from card shops or online marketplaces.


Build your card collection over time.

Protect your cards

A popular way to organize your collection is with a three-ring collector binder with plastic sleeves designed to fit trading cards. You can easily flip through the binder to enjoy your cards while keeping them in good condition. You can also protect cards in individual plastic sleeves (often called penny sleeves) and store them in a container. If you collect more cards, you may have favorites, which you could showcase in a display case.

Share your enthusiasm

When you collect cards, you become part of a community of other collectors. You could ask a friend who also collects cards to make swaps so you can each build up your stash with favorite players or characters. With an adult, you can attend a trade event at your nearest card shop or go to an official card show. Bring your collection with the intention of trading or buying new cards.

Know the value

Some trading cards can be very valuable based on special details, such as an autograph or a certain serial number. You can check eBay and type in the details of the card to see what price similar cards have sold for. Or you can ask the owner of a local card shop to grade (estimate) a card's value. You also don't have to part with precious cards—the pride in building a collection is its own special reward!

More collectibles



In addition to trading cards, there are other items you may enjoy collecting. Here are a few.

Seashells Many public beaches permit collecting a small number of shells. Check the rules before you go, and make sure a shell is empty before taking it.

Music Vinyl albums and CDs (compact discs) are tangible ways to collect music. You can find them in local independent record shops, major retail stores, and online marketplaces.

Park patches You can find patches and badges at National Park visitor centers. Display them on a bulletin board, or iron or sew them onto a jacket or backpack.