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Comic Book Value Secrets

**How to Discover the Real Value of
Your Comic Books**

by

Sean Jones

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Dear Comic Book Fan,

If you want to find current, accurate value information and not get ripped off, this is the guide for you.

Knowledge by itself is fairly useless. But knowledge coupled with action can change the world. This book will give you knowledge, but unless you put it to use, experiment with the techniques, and make them yours, it will be wasted. Don't just read the book – act on it!

I am repeatedly asked and answer the same questions about comic books:

- How much is my comic book worth?
- What is the best way to sell my comic book?
- Where can I buy comic books at a reasonable price?
- How to I protect myself from crooked buyers or sellers?

This report will answer the first question and much more!

This book was written to help you find the current, accurate value of your comic books. I include exact instructions to get you started.

If you are a collector or want to start a collection, subscribe to the Comic Secrets Newsletter by visiting www.comicbooksecrets.com. You'll find the latest tips, news, and sales information delivered to you every month with special updates (if you signed up to get this special report via an e-mail opt in you are automatically a member and qualify for all benefits).

Thank you and Happy Collecting,

Sean

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE.....2

BEFORE YOU BEGIN..... 2

WHAT ARE THEY WORTH? HOW TO ACCURATELY APPRAISE COMICS.....2

STEP 1 – QUICK SORT.....2

STEP 2 - HOW TO GRADE A COMIC BOOK.....2

STEP 3 - RESTORATION – WHAT IS IT AND HOW TO FIND IT..... 2

STEP 4 – USING A PRICE GUIDE..... 2

STEP 5 - ONLINE RESEARCH AND FINAL VALUE.....2

STEP BY STEP EXAMPLE.....2

How to Use This Guide

This book contains a lot of information. Depending on your experience level you may want to skip around using the following guidelines.

This book has several "hot links" to various sites. If you are connected to the Internet you can click on the site name and you will be connected to the website. **I highly recommend you read this book at least once while connected to the Internet.**

Suggestion: In your Internet browser (I'll use Internet Explorer as an example) click on favorites and then organize favorites. Create a new folder and name it "comics."

When you open a website from this e-book click on "add to favorites" and save the site in your "comics" folder. Now you can visit the website quickly and keep up to date with the information.

Try it right now. [Click Here](#) to visit Comic Book Secrets. Make sure you have bookmarked this site so you can visit regularly for the latest updates.

Important: Many of the websites contain a lot of information and can be confusing for the advanced collector as well as the beginner. There is one source that sorts through a huge amount of data and gives you focused information – Comic Book Secrets E-News (I know, a selfless plug, but hey, I did write this book!).

Each issue of Comic Book Secrets E-News provides information for all levels of collectors, investors, speculators and any combination of the above to make the hobby more enjoyable and profitable. If you haven't already subscribed, please [click here](#) for more information and your **free** subscription.

Look for shaded boxes in the book for quick tips and suggestions to make your comic book selling easier!

Before You Begin

I've set up a special webpage just for you. You can access the special value seekers webpage at:

www.comicbooksecrets.com/valueseekers.html

On the page you'll find the latest information and resources. You'll also find links to how-to videos, audio, and special value websites.

Make sure you visit!

Now, on to step one....

What are they worth? How to Accurately Appraise Comics

If you are just entering the comic book hobby or have come across a comic book collection through a flea market, inheritance, estate sale, etc., this is the most important section of the book.

This chapter will save you hours of time and a lot of heartache (and headaches!). Knowing how to accurately value a comic book is the key to buying at the lowest or a fair price, and selling for a fair or high price without getting ripped off.

Like any other collectable, this is where most of the scams occur. A dealer may tell you the books are worthless then turn around and sell them for an unreasonable profit.

On the other hand, you may think your comic books are worth far more than they really are.

Here you'll learn how to avoid these mistakes.

If you are buying comics you may be told a comic is a surefire investment, a certain winner or some other promise, only to find out it's worthless.

This chapter will tell you what comic books have little or no value, and which ones **are valuable**.

Before we begin, I want to share two stories with you that highlight the importance of knowing the true value of your books.

In the early 1990's I was selling at a convention, and a new seller set up a table. I was positioned next to him when an old client of mine walked up and started looking at the "fresh stock" of my neighbor.

I saw him pick out a book, look it over and then start to haggle on a price. The buyer picked apart every flaw in the book, basically shaming the new dealer into letting it go for a very low price. The seller had no defense and let the book go for significantly less than his original asking price.

Later in the day the buyer showed me what he purchased, and it was a very scarce Golden Age World War II comic book. It should have sold for multiples of what he paid.

To add insult to injury, a few months later in a national magazine **this buyer wrote an entire article about the book he had "found"**, its scarcity and importance. It was sad to think of the brow beating the new seller had taken as this buyer purchased the book for a song.

The seller didn't realize the **true value** of his book. He let it go for hundreds too low.

I don't want this to happen to you!

The second story is a scenario played out time and time again at comic book stores and conventions across the country.

A collector arrives with his box of "hot" and "valuable" comics. He opens the box to reveal issues that were sold in the hundreds of thousands as "collectible" but are now almost worthless.

When the collector is told he will only receive pennies each, he is angry and accuses the dealer of trying to rip him off. The dealer isn't trying to rob him, the seller is misinformed about the value of his books. He fell for a trap. The "collectible" trap.

Again, I don't want this to happen to you!

The moral of these stories is you must know the current, **true** value of your comic books.

Accurate appraisal of a comic book is a multiple step process, with each step leading us up the staircase to the eventual value.

Your appraisal is broken into five steps:

1. Quick sort
2. Grade your comic book
3. Restoration check
4. Research in a price guide (if available)
5. Online research and final value

Let's discuss each step in detail, and then we'll walk through an example of determining the value.

Step 1 – Quick Sort

The quick sort is your first attempt at cataloging your comics and deciding which, if any, are valuable and need to be "broken from the pack" for individual sale. You'll understand the importance of this separation later when we discuss the actual sale of your comics.

To accomplish a quick sort you will need:

1. Pencil or pen, notepad (or computer spreadsheet if you're so inclined)
2. Your comic books
3. A price guide (either print or online)

Start by organizing your books by title. Obviously if you have a large stack this will take longer. If you only have a few it will go fairly quickly.

Write or input the title and issue number of each book. Once this is accomplished you'll look in your price guide. If you have multiple issues of the same title, you can just list the numbers below the title.

When you are finished you should have a list that looks like this:

Uncanny X-men 139
Incredible Hulk 153
Amazing Spider-man 238, etc.

Or

Uncanny X-men
139
140
141
153
160, etc.

If at all possible try to keep your list in alphabetical order - you'll appreciate it later. If you are using a spreadsheet you can run the alphabetical sort anytime.

Step 2 - How to Grade a Comic Book

Now that you have your list of comics by title and number, you can move on to the next major factor of value, the grade. Before you look for the value in a price guide or online website, you must know the grade.

Print and online price guides all list comics in the same way: the title, issue number and grade. Once you have

What is a grade? It's the condition of the comic book.

Grading comic books is the most controversial area in the hobby. It can take years of experience to accurately describe a comic, and your grading will still be critiqued. Experienced graders see the subtle differences between the grades that can lead to major differences in value.

An in-depth course is more than we can cover in this book, but I want you to do one thing after you read this section to give yourself some instant experience.

Go to the comic book section of E-bay, preferably the Gold or Silver Age section and **read some descriptions!**

After reading this section the grades and descriptions you see online will be much clearer, and you'll know what is being talked about.

If you're an **experienced collector**, read this section, then look at the descriptions on E-bay noticing accuracy compared to the picture the seller provides. Ask yourself how you would improve the description of the listing. What things do you notice in the pictures that the seller didn't mention? Is the seller way off in their grade or is it close?

The Grading Scale

The comic book grading scale is similar to many other collectibles such as coins and sport cards. The most widely accepted system is a combination numerical and written grade.

For example, you will see comic books described as:

Uncanny X-men 139 VG 4.0

The first portion "VG" means Very Good and is a throwback to the previous grading system which had no numerical equivalents. In the past there were fewer "steps" in the grading scale, so one book described as Very Good could differ quite a bit from another Very Good. In other words, "Very Good" covers quite a range.

In order to more accurately describe the condition of a comic book, more steps between grades (the numerical scale) were added.

The letter portion, "VG", exists mainly to satisfy collectors who have been around for some time. It also gives you further latitude when describing your books.

To clarify how this all works, here is the complete scale of grades. After the scale I'll give a basic description of each grade. The grading scale will be displayed with the numerical grade first, the written grade and in parentheses the abbreviation.

Grading Scale

10	Gem Mint	
9.9	Mint	(M)

9.8	Near Mint/Mint	(NM/M)
9.6	Near Mint +	(NM+)
9.4	Near Mint	(NM)
9.2	Near Mint -	(NM-)
9.0	Very Fine/Near Mint	(VF/NM)
8.5	Very Fine +	(VF+)
8.0	Very Fine	(VF)
7.5	Very Fine -	(VF-)
7.0	Fine/Very Fine	(F/VF)
6.5	Fine +	(F+)
6.0	Fine	(F)
5.5	Fine -	(F- or FN-)
5.0	Very Good/Fine	(VG/F or VG/FN)
4.5	Very Good +	(VG+)
4.0	Very Good	(VG)
3.5	Very Good -	(VG-)
3.0	Good/Very Good	(G/VG)
2.0	Good	(G)
1.5	Fair	(FR)
1.0	Poor	(Pr)

Confused? Don't be. I'm going to simplify this scale and tell you **what you need to know**.

As you can see, there are a lot of variations, and with all the choices there is a lot of disagreement among grades. Grading has been described as an art, and like art, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, or in this case one person's VG is another's VG- or G/VG.

If you are new to the hobby and just looking to sell some books, don't worry about all of the in-between grading steps. Concentrate on the main grades – NM, VF, F, VG, G, and Fair/Poor

This will all seem overwhelming for the beginning comic book collector so I want you to concentrate on the **basic grades**. Don't worry about

the minor variations in grades yet, just look at the big picture. Concentrate your efforts on knowing the difference between the major breakpoints, Near Mint, Very Fine, Fine, Very Good, Good and Fair/Poor. We'll look at the rest later.

The first major grade you need to know is **Near Mint**. Near Mint (or NM for short) is a nearly perfect copy with only the smallest flaws. If a comic book is graded 9.4, you know it is a wonderful copy and newsstand fresh. You will need to look at it very closely to find a flaw.

The next major grade you need to know is **Very Fine(VF)**. A very fine comic book is considered "high grade" for older books (not modern comics). It has just enough small flaws to drop it out of the Near Mint category. People who are new to the hobby often mistakenly grade their Very Fine books as Near Mint. Be careful of this.

Next is **Fine**. A nice copy with an accumulation of small defects, usually stress marks on the spine or a very small corner crease. No major problems.

Very Good - This is your average old comic book. It has creases, looks worn, but is complete and structurally intact, bound correctly by the staples, and readable.

Good comic books are showing some serious problems. They are complete, but may have a loose staple or unbound (staples are gone). Expect to see some major creasing.

Finally we have **fair** and **poor**. Many of these comic books are not worth collecting because they can be incomplete and could be brittle. They have to be handled with the utmost care or they will fall apart!

If you have a very old comic or group of comics from the 1930's to 1940's that is incomplete or coverless they can still be quite valuable. Try to figure out the Title and Issue number. A coverless Action #1 could go for thousands of dollars! Also, many collectors are looking for these issues to connect with their own poor copies to make a complete

There are two major mistakes that novices tend to make when describing the condition of their comic books. They are over grading and under grading. Most collectors think novices only over grade, but that is not true. **Many people also under grade.**

Over-grading is calling a comic book “new” or “Near Mint” when it is far lower. This is very typical. Keep in mind, a near mint comic book is almost perfect. It is a book that is in better condition than many you find on the newsstand. Try not to over grade.

I also see many novices under grade. It isn’t as common, but it still occurs. The most common under grade is describing your comic as looking “very good.” People are trying to be modest and will literally say “I don’t know much about comic books, but these look very good to me.” Remember, in comic book terms “very good” is not good at all! Don’t under grade and give someone a great deal. Be accurate and use the correct terminology.

Now you need to get some experience! If you want in-depth descriptions with numerous pictures a great resource is the [Overstreet Grading Guide](#).

Overstreet contains hundreds of pictures to help you, as well as detailed descriptions of the flaws allowed in each grade.

Also visit E-bay and read the descriptions. This will give you more experience to describe and grade comic books accurately. Take a look at the pictures the seller has posted and compare them with the grade they have assigned. You will probably find several that are way off!

Step 3 - Restoration – What is it and how to find it

Restoration is an advanced concept, so if you are a beginner this may be a little overwhelming. If you want to move to the next section it’s

okay, but if someone looks at your comics and tells you they may be restored, just remember this section and come back and review.

Why do you have to worry about restoration? Because if one of your books is restored you will get significantly less money for it than if it were not restored.

Do you need to worry about restoration?

The older the books the more you need to worry about it. If most of your books are from the 1980's to the present, you can probably skip this section (although this information is important if you will be working with older comics in the future).

If you are working with early 1970's books back to the 1940's, you need to read this section. **The older the books, the greater the chance of restoration.** If you have 1930's or 1940's books, make sure to read this section and do a check.

Restoration in one of the most common, but missed and unreported problems with comics offered for sale.

What is restoration?

Restoration is anything done to a comic book to enhance or restore the condition to its original state.

Other collectors may disagree with some of this, but the basic idea is the comic has been altered in some way from "as is" condition.

Comic book restoration mainly consists of:

- Tape repairs
- Color "touch up"
- Seal repairs (with glue)
- Trimming the edges
- Cleaning the cover with various methods
- Spine roll removal
- Crease removal

When a comic book is restored it looks better than it did before the procedure and is given an "apparent" grade. This lets the buyer know

it has had work done to fix problems, and wasn't in this grade originally.

If you're only looking to sell some comics you have found or been given, and aren't looking to become a comic book collector, look at the definitions below so you can tell at a quick glance if your books may have some restoration. If they do, add that fact to your description.

If you are serious about comic book buying and selling, one of the most important tools you can use to help find restoration is a black light. I have a portable model that I use on all of my books. If you do an Internet search you can find them reasonably priced online.

This small investment (I paid about \$10 for mine) can save you hundreds if not thousands of dollars over time! If you are only a casual collector don't worry about this, just follow the suggestions below to conduct a basic restoration check.

Comic books with restoration sell for a fraction of the amount as books with no restoration.

This means an Apparent 8.5 won't sell for nearly as much as a comic book that is an unrestored 8.5. This is important. If you have a book that looks Very Fine but has restoration, don't expect to get the Very Fine price for it.

A similar pricing situation occurs in the car market. An original, unmodified Corvette with matching numbers in perfect condition will sell for more than a "restored" Corvette that looks just as good, but has body work, different parts, a new paint job, etc. It's the same with comic books.

Let's look at the various repairs, what the problem is, and how to detect it.

Tape Repairs – This is the most obvious to see and it isn't always considered restoration. This is usually done to keep a comic book from falling apart or to seal a tear so it won't get worse. "Scotch" tape or a similar product is considered amateur repair and it's difficult to remove. Some of the lower grade books (Very Good and below) may have tape on them and it's not considered restoration.

Color Touch Up – This is done with various inks to restore the original art to a comic book. There may have been ink removed, scrapes, etc. that damaged the book and this is an attempt to cover the problem.

How do you find it? If it is poorly done with marker or doesn't match, it is obvious by looking at the book. A good or excellent color matching job will take more investigation.

Your first step is to open the comic book and look at the inside of the front and back cover. Do you see ink that has "bled through"? If so, this indicates color touch – and a poor job with bad ink. This will look like the back side of a white sheet of paper if you used a marker on the other side. You can see where the ink has come through the paper.

Next, look at the front and back covers. Hold the book up to a light look at the cover at an angle. Look for the light reflecting off the book while searching for any imperfections in the paper that may be color touch. Color touch usually shows up as a difference in reflectivity.

The final check is to look at the cover in a dark room with a handheld black light. The black light will make the areas that are color touched "glow" or look different than the rest of the cover. **If you aren't a collector don't worry about this step.**

The black light also works great to uncover glue. We'll talk about that next.

Seal Repairs and Glue

If a tear is fixed with tape it's obvious. On the other hand, glue can be difficult to find without a black light, but we'll cover the basics.

There are a few techniques to help find a tear. First, look along the edge of the book, with a slight glare from room light or a lamp illuminating the cover. Look at the cover edge-wise and see if there are imperfections or places on the cover that have a different "sheen"

or gloss. Repairs will show up as dull spots, or have a different gloss than the rest of the cover.

If you find a dull spot or difference in gloss, this doesn't necessarily mean there has been a repair, but you need to examine further. If you have a loupe or magnifying glass you can look at the area of concern under magnification.

You are trying to find a line that was once a tear. It will be semi-obvious once you see it. Remember to look at both the outside and inside cover. Many times the repair is easier to find on the inside.

Trimming

Trimming is the cutting of the outer edges of the cover or interior pages to hide tears or other damage. This should never be done since it is irreversible! Also, trimmed books tend to sell for the lowest price since this is such a destructive process.

Trimming may be done in three ways: cover only trimming, interior page trimming, or a combination.

Cover trimming is the most difficult to spot. You really need some sort of magnification device (a loupe or magnifying glass) to be accurate, but if the trim was not done properly you'll be able to find it with the naked eye.

The easiest type of cover trim to find is one done with a razor/hobby knife. Look very closely at the angles of the cover edge. If you see variation in the angles (it is not straight) then there has been some trimming. The cover edge may look "wavy" and not "true" and flat. Also look for a ripple along the cover; this is caused by the paper not being held firmly when the cut was made.

If a paper cutter was used, the right, upper or lower edge will be a consistent straight line, but there may be a slightly different angle than the interior pages. Also look for the waviness talked about above caused by the paper not being held firmly. If it is a cover only trim, more "white" from the interior pages may also be showing when you

look straight at the book. In other words, the cover doesn't hide the interior pages along the right, top or bottom edge – they are exposed.

Now you're familiar with the most basic types of restoration and how to check for them. You're now ready to move on to the next step and find out the true value of your comic books.

Comic Book Cleaning

I don't want to get too in-depth here, so I will give you one basic thing to check. Most amateur cleaning is done with an eraser or and dry erase bag. Look for eraser marks, lighter colored parts on the cover, or residue from an eraser. The residue is very similar to a pencil eraser.

Spine Roll and Crease Removal

Both of these repairs are **almost** impossible for even the pros to find, so don't worry about them here. It is beyond the scope of this book.

Step 4 – Using a Price Guide

Before we begin this section I want to give you a quick tip.

If you have a lot of comic books, I recommend getting a copy of the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide. This will help you in your quest and save a lot of time.

You can get a copy of the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide here:

<http://www.comicbooksecrets.com/overstreetpriceguide.html>

If you only have few copies to look up, I don't think you need to make the investment. I'll show you how to get the values using other free sources and save some money.

You now have your comic books organized by title and number, and you have established a basic grade. You also know if there was any restoration on the books.

At his point your list should look something like this:

Uncanny X-men 138 NM

The next step is to decide on a value.

The first and most obvious place to look is in a major print price guide.

Don't move so fast! I want to tell you a **dirty little secret** about price guides.

Print price guides can be highly inaccurate!

Now before we go any further I want to make something clear. I own the major price guides (actually I have a collection) and I'm a big fan. But they have their purpose and it's not necessarily to value comic books. I actually think it is one mandatory item you need to buy, but I'm going to show you how to use it. If you have a lot of comic books it will definitely come in handy and save you time getting a "ball park" idea of value.

Putting together a price guide is very difficult work. There is a lot going on in the marketplace and it's next to impossible to verify all of the information that comes in. Also, several major contributors to price guides are dealers, and they don't have anything to gain if prices go down. How do you separate the good from the bad?

You need to use judgment.

Prices can swing rapidly from week to week, and the lag time is a factor you have to take into consideration when you read the guides.

I'm not putting these guides down I'm just stating a reality.

In some case books are **overvalued**, and in some cases they are **undervalued**. You have to decide which – and I’m going to give you some tools to help.

You should purchase a price guide for two reasons (especially if you are going to become a collector):

1. Research
2. Ballpark idea of value

The price guide I recommend you purchase first is the latest print or digital version of the [Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide](#). You can also find a link at the special [value seekers resource page](#).

Comic book price guides list comics by title and issue number. Each issue number will be further broken down into values based on condition. It will also include important information about specific books.

Make a note of the value for your specific comic book according to the issue and condition.

Now your list should look like this:

Uncanny X-men 138 NM \$23.00

Or

Amazing Fantasy 15 VG (First Spider-man) \$XXXX.XX

Worthless Comics

If you take your comic books to a local dealer and they tell you “they’re worthless” the dealer may not be trying to rip you off, it may be true.

How do you know?

In any of the major price guides you will see values of several books printed as “cover price or less.”

If your books say this, they are worth less – **far, far less!**

For all intents and purposes they are **worthless**. They typically end up in a comic store or convention dealer’s twenty five cent box.

Expect to get 5 cents apiece or less for these books, if the dealer will take them at all. Don’t be insulted, it’s just the way it is.

What books typically fall into this range? Books published from about 1980 to the late 1990’s, with some exceptions. We’ll discuss how to find the exceptions in under the next heading.

If you have **1970’s and older books** you can expect to **get more than a nickel** each unless they are in terrible (fair/poor) condition. You will get a higher price, so don’t let these go for pennies.

How to Find Winners

As a general rule, the older the comic book the more you will get for it. The newer comics are almost worthless, but there are some exceptions.

How do you find them?

This is where you need the price guide – for research.

Here’s what to do:

1. For each book in your list, look for comics with a value that significantly exceeds the cover price.

2. If a specific issue significantly exceeds the cover price, look at the notes associated with that issue. It could be a first appearance, origin, new writer on the title, new artist, or some other important fact. If one of these items is listed it's what is referred to as a "key" issue.
3. Separate these "key" issues from the "commons", either in a different stack or on top of the stack.

Once you have your key issues separated, look at them more closely and assign a grade again. Since these are key issues and more expensive, try to be accurate to get the highest price.

Now you have two groups of comics, the low price "common" issues and more valuable key books. Your sorting is complete and now you're ready to find the retail value of your books.

STOP!

Now you know the two biggest, mind blowing secrets that will give you the best chance of selling your comics for a decent price.

1. An accurate Description (title, issue and grade)
2. Your key issues separated from the common issues

This is huge. If you walk into a comic book store, convention, send out a list, sell on E-bay, Craigslist – it doesn't matter! People will assume you know what you are doing! This is probably the biggest secret in the book and the combination that will save you the most time and money.

Not only will you look like a pro (or at least informed), but you should get better offers. Almost all collections have a mix of key issues and commons. Buyers don't like to sift through them. Since you have done the most difficult part your offers should go up significantly. This also serves a warning that you won't be take advantage of.

Keep this in mind because we will mention it again later in the book!

Step 5 - Online Research and Final Value

Online price guides and auction sites are the last check to decide on your comic book's value.

At this point you now have:

1. Picked out potentially valuable comics
2. Decided on a grade
3. Determined if the comic is restored
4. Determined an initial "ballpark" value

Our final check will give us a more precise idea what a comic book in the grade you have is selling for.

Wait! You can get instant links to the sites listed below at:

<http://www.comicbooksecrets.com/valueseekers.html>

There are free sites and pay sites online to find the value of your books.

The free sites I recommend you look at are Comic Book Price Guide, Nostomania and E-Bay. The first two require a user account to access their information (it's free), and E-bay doesn't.

At a minimum check E-bay. **Always check E-bay**, it is too popular to leave out.

Go to the website of your choice and use the search function to find the title and number of the comic book you are appraising. CBPG and Nostomania will show the title and the various grades. Find the grade of your book and look at the value. Write this down.

E-bay is a little trickier for two reasons.

First, you will need to find a comic in the same condition as your copy. You may need to read the description to find the grade. If you don't see a book in exactly the same grade you will have to make an educated guess. One thing in your favor is most listings include a picture so you will be able to compare it to your copy and make a

decision if your comic is in better or worse shape. You will then be able to decide if your book should sell for more or less.

Second, E-bay will only show current auctions. This limits the number of books you see and the price isn't final since the auction is still running.

In order to look at completed auctions you will need an E-Bay account. The good news is it's free! **You need to have an E-bay account – this is a must!**

If you don't have an E-bay account, [click here to sign up](#) for **free**.

Now let's talk about pay sites.

There is one great pay website: [GPAnalysis](#).

GPAnalysis lists values for **professionally graded comics only** and they get the results from different sources. They use E-bay results and other auction house sales such as Heritage.

If you are really serious about making money with your comics you should have a subscription to this service.

Now you need to take the data you've collected from the price guide and your online sources. This will give you a price range. The online sources will help you decide if the price guide is accurate, high or low.

Before we go through an example, I want to mention one more thing about restored comic books.

How to Value Restored Comic Books

To put it bluntly, the value of restored books is all over the map.

I will give you a few general rules.

For the most part, the value of restored books seems to migrate to the Very Good price shown in the price guides.

Why? You'll get many answers, but my opinion is this occurs because most buyers assume the book was in "Good" or "Very Good" condition to begin with and is now in a better apparent condition.

You are also dealing with another problem. A significant number of comic book buyers won't touch a restored book. So if a book is restored and looks like a Very Fine, don't expect to get near that price.

There are exceptions to this rule, but usually only for the mega-keys. These are books such as Action #1 (First Superman), Detective #27 (1st Batman) and others. These books are in such high demand that there is no way of knowing what they will bring until put up for sale.

Step by Step Example

For our example we'll look at one comic book in particular, Strange Tales #110. I picked this book to highlight a few key points we discussed earlier in this book.

Step 1 – Quick Sort

We'll assume we had a stack of comics and looked through them. We've written down the title and issue number of each book. We look in our price guide (or online) and see if there are any "gems" in this collection.

Strange Tales #110 doesn't seem to fit any criteria a novice would easily see. It isn't a #1 issue, it isn't a well know character such as Spider-man or Superman. But since you have read this book, you know the importance of some basic research.

Strange Tales #110 is **potentially** very valuable. If you do your research you will quickly find this issue is the first appearance of Doctor Strange, a well known character in the Marvel Universe and popular with collectors. Now we'll concentrate on this issue and do some more research.



Step 2 – Grade Your Comic Book

Find a clean, well lit area and lay the comic book down flat. Take a quick look at the overall appearance of the comic book, both front and back, noting major defects.

I open the comic book carefully and check to see if all of the pages are intact. If there is a problem I make a mental or written note.

At this point you can make a preliminary grade. In our example the book appears to be a VG due to several defects. Let's look at a few.

First, the overall condition of the book is well-read. It looks like an old comic you find at stores, flea markets, garage sales, etc. It's not ripped to shreds and is complete. It looks like the owner enjoyed the book, read it many times, and it has weathered a lot of years.

Some of the defects we see immediately are:

Spine Stress and Blunted Corners:



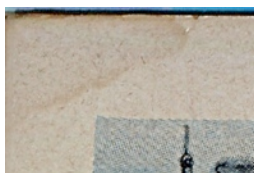
Corner Creases:



A Store Stamp:



Stain on the back cover and yellowing:



At this point I will give the book a basic grade of Very Good (VG). If I plan on keeping it "raw" or ungraded I would use this grade when I sell.

Before we settle on this grade we need to do one more step, the restoration check.

Step 3 – Restoration Check

Now we'll look for any restoration. I look for obvious things first. Any tape, glue that is obvious, bleed-through the front or back cover.

Next I look at the staple holes and centerfold for replaced staples or evidence of a disassembly.

As a final check I take the comic into a dark room and examine it with a black light. (Remember, this is only for serious collectors)

Good news! Our comic book is clean.

Step 4 – Price Guide Check

We know from our quick sort that this issue is worth anywhere from \$200 to \$250 at retail.

We also know that we have a copy in VG condition. We are estimating it to be a VG 4.0.

Step 5 – Online Research and Final Value

Now I visit my favorite sites. First I go to E-bay.

In the search box I type "Strange Tales 110". I usually do a search with and without quotations. If you include the quotations you will limit your search to those items that have your search terms in the correct order.

For example, if you enter "Fantastic Four 1" you will get books that say Fantastic Four 1 but not books that say "Annual 1 Fantastic Four". If you type in Fantastic Four 1 without quotations, Annual 1 Fantastic Four will show up on your search results.

I look through the open and finished auction descriptions and find a copy that sold for \$131 in the similar condition (a lot less than the print price guide!).

Next, I go to CBPG or Nostmania as well as GPAnalysis. I can't publish their results in this book due to copyright, but the idea is I use the values from those sites to arrive at a value range.

One other note I make is the sales trend on GPAnalysis. Has the book been increasing or decreasing in price? I use this information to arrive at a final value.

In this case I find the book has been selling for almost \$100 dollars more than a "raw" copy on E-bay and remaining steady to slightly up-trending.

If this happens to you, it's obvious you have an important decision to make. Should you send in your book to be professionally graded and

capture the additional profit? It's outside of the scope of this book, but make sure you take it into consideration.

For our example, I sent the book into PGX to show you how a professional grading company compares.

Here is the final result, a 4.5 (or VG+):



This is the end of our grading and value example so now we need to figure out how we're going to sell the comic book.

Now you know if the value of your comic books.

Are you interested in selling them to make some extra cash?

If you want to sell your comic books you are entering a new land of "gotchas" that can seriously hurt your pocketbook.

If you are thinking of selling (or are definitely going to sell), I recommend you get one of the following resources:

The first is a [complete selling system](#) written by Alan Collins. He has a great book on selling inexpensive or worthless comic books for the best price. He includes E-bay secrets and much, much more. This is a complete system and you can read more about it [here](#).

The second is written by myself and gives you a no nonsense guide to getting the best possible price for your comic books. It is a concise guide (not a system) and it sells for less. [You can read more about it here](#).

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