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# UNDERSTANDING AND USING FEEDBACK

How do you know if the buyer or seller you're dealing with is legitimate—and will pay on time or ship in a timely fashion? The best way to check up on potential trading partners is to find out what your fellow eBayers think about them—which is pretty easy to do, thanks to eBay's feedback system.

## What Do All Those Stars and Numbers Mean?

Next to every buyer and seller's name on eBay are a number and (more often than not) a colored star. (Figure 3.1 shows my personal star and feedback number.) This number and star represent that user's feedback rating. The larger the number, the better the feedback—and the more transactions that user has participated in.

**FIGURE 3.1**

Check the feedback rating next to a member's name.



How are feedback ratings calculated?

First, every new user starts with 0 points. (A clean slate!) For every positive feedback received, eBay adds 1 point to your feedback rating. For every negative feedback received, eBay subtracts 1 point. Neutral comments add 0 points to your rating.

Let's say you're a new user, starting with a 0 rating. On the first two items you buy, the sellers like the fact that you paid quickly and give you positive feedback. On the third transaction, however, you forgot to mail the check for a few weeks, and the seller left you negative feedback. After these three transactions, your feedback rating would be 1. (That's  $0 + 1 + 1 - 1 = 1$ .)

If you build up a lot of positive feedback, you qualify for a star next to your name. Different colored stars represent different levels of positive feedback, as noted in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1** eBay Feedback Ratings

Color/Type	Points
Yellow star	10–49
Blue star	50–99
Turquoise star	100–499
Purple star	500–999
Red star	1,000–4,999
Green star	5,000–9,999
Yellow shooting star	10,000–24,999
Turquoise shooting star	25,000–49,999
Purple shooting star	50,000–99,999
Red shooting star	100,000 or more

Obviously, heavy users can build up positive feedback faster than occasional users. If you're dealing with a shooting-star user (of any color), you know you're dealing with a trustworthy—and extremely busy!—eBay pro.

**“Mike Sez”**

eBay regards its feedback system as the best protection against fraudulent transactions. I certainly recommend that, whether a transaction went swell or went south, you leave feedback about your partner in every transaction. I know that I check the feedback rating of every seller I choose to deal with; it really is a good way to judge the quality of the other party in your eBay transactions.

## Reading Feedback Comments—And Contacting Other Users

You can also read the individual comments left by other users by going to the user's Member Profile page. To access this page, just click the user's name or feedback number.

The Member Profile page, like the one shown in Figure 3.2, includes a lot of information you can use to judge the trustworthiness of other users. At the top of the page is the user's Feedback Score, followed by the Positive Feedback percentage. You'll also see the raw numbers—the number of members who left positive feedback, and the number who left negative feedback. Recent feedback ratings are summarized in the Recent Ratings table.

**FIGURE 3.2**  
A typical Member Profile page; hey, people like this guy!

**Member Profile: trapperjohn2000 (815 ☆) me**

<b>Feedback Score:</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>Recent Ratings:</b>	
<b>Positive Feedback:</b>	<b>100%</b>		
Members who left a positive:	816		
Members who left a negative:	0		
All positive feedback received:	999		
<a href="#">Learn about</a> what these numbers mean.		Bid Retractions (Past 6 months): 0	

Member since: Aug-22-98  
Location: United States

- [ID History](#)
- [Items for Sale](#)
- [Visit my Store](#)
- [Add to Favorite Sellers](#)
- [Learn more About Me](#)
- [View my Reviews & Guides](#)

[Contact Member](#)

**Feedback Received**   [From Buyers](#)   [From Sellers](#)   [Left for Others](#)

999 feedback received by trapperjohn2000 (0 ratings mutually withdrawn) Page 1 of 40

Comment	From	Date / Time	Item #
Excellent doing business with you.Thanks AAA+++	Buyer (142 ☆)	Jan-28-06 18:19	4577838306
Item delivered as promised. Great communication. Wonderful Seller!!!	Buyer (13 ☆)	Jan-26-06 18:36	6457774772
great item, quick ship, will buy again, AAA+++	Buyer (218 ☆)	Jan-26-06 04:47	6470222923
A+ Seller! THANKS!	Buyer (5119 ☆)	Jan-23-06 15:42	6470222905
Received book, very pleased with this transaction! Thank You	Buyer (51 ☆)	Jan-23-06 13:37	4565858769
AN A+ EBAY DEALER	Buyer (47 ☆)	Jan-22-06 18:46	6026653557

To the right of the Recent Ratings Table are links you can use to find out even more about this user—his ID History, current Items for Sale, a link to his eBay Store (if he has one), and a similar link to his About Me page (again, if he has one). Below these links is a Contact Member button; click this to send an e-mail to this user.

Below the summary information is a list of all the feedback comments for this user. You can click a tab to view All Feedback Received, just those comments From Buyers or From Sellers, or comments that this user Left for Others.



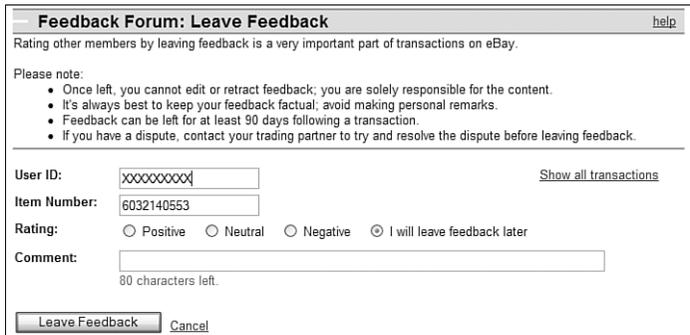
**tip**

You can also use the Member Profile page to read feedback comments about you—just click your own member name on any page. (Even more convenient: Go to your My eBay Feedback page.)

## How to Leave Feedback

You can leave feedback from any item listing page; just click the Leave Feedback link. When you see the Leave Feedback page, shown in Figure 3.3, you can choose to leave Positive, Negative, or Neutral feedback, along with a brief comment (80 characters maximum).

**FIGURE 3.3**  
Leaving feedback comments for a transaction partner.



**Feedback Forum: Leave Feedback** [help](#)

Rating other members by leaving feedback is a very important part of transactions on eBay.

Please note:

- Once left, you cannot edit or retract feedback; you are solely responsible for the content.
- It's always best to keep your feedback factual, avoid making personal remarks.
- Feedback can be left for at least 90 days following a transaction.
- If you have a dispute, contact your trading partner to try and resolve the dispute before leaving feedback.

User ID:  [Show all transactions](#)

Item Number:

Rating:  Positive  Neutral  Negative  I will leave feedback later

Comment:   
80 characters left.

Make sure your feedback is accurate before you click the Leave Feedback button; you can't change your comments after they've been registered.

## Figuring Out What Kind of Feedback to Leave

You should leave feedback at the end of every auction—whether it was a positive or a negative experience for you. Don't miss your chance to inform other eBay users about the quality of the person you just got done dealing with.

Table 3.2 offers some guidelines on when you should leave positive or negative feedback—and the types of comments you might use to embellish your feedback.

**Table 3.2** Recommended eBay Feedback Comments.

Transaction	Feedback	Comments
Transaction transpires in a timely fashion.	Positive	“Great transaction. Fast payment/shipment. Recommended.”
Transaction goes through, but buyer/seller is slow or you have to pester the other user to complete the transaction.	Positive	“Item received as described” or “Payment received,” accompanied by “a little slow, but otherwise a good seller/buyer.”
Transaction is very slow (over a month to completion).	Neutral	“Very slow payment/shipment;” if you’re buying, follow by “item received as described.”
Other user backs out of transaction, but with a good excuse.	Neutral	“Buyer/seller didn’t follow through on sale but had a reasonable excuse.”
Other user backs out of transaction without a good excuse, disappears off the face of the earth before paying/shipping, or bounces a check.	Negative	“Buyer/seller didn’t complete transaction.”
Transaction goes through, but item isn’t what you expected or was damaged in transit; seller refunds your money.	Positive	“Inaccurate description of item” or “Item was damaged in shipping,” followed by “seller refunded money.”
Transaction goes through, but item isn’t what you expected; seller won’t refund your money.	Negative	“Item not as described and seller ignored my complaint.”

As you can see, there’s a proper feedback and response for every situation. Just be sure to think twice before leaving *any* feedback (particularly negative feedback). After you submit your feedback, you can’t retract it.



tip

If you must leave negative feedback, avoid leaving personal comments. Keep to the facts as much as you can—you’re only commenting on the transaction, not on the buyer/seller himself.

## Dealing with Negative Feedback

Many eBay users are zealous about their feedback ratings. Although it's a good thing to want to build up a high rating, some users get quite obsessive about it.

For that reason, you want to be very sure of yourself before you leave negative feedback about a user. Some overly zealous users might retaliate by leaving negative feedback about you—even if it wasn't warranted.

Unfortunately, there's not much you can do if you receive negative feedback; under normal conditions, feedback comments cannot be retracted. (There have been some exceptions, when the feedback has been obscene or slanderous in nature.) What you *can* do is offer a response to the feedback, which you do by going to your Feedback Forum page then scrolling down to and clicking the Reply to Feedback Received link. When the feedback comments list appears, click the Reply link next to a particular comment and then enter your response, as shown in Figure 3.4. Your new comment is listed below the original feedback comment on the Feedback Profile page. Just try not to get defensive; the best response is one that is calm, clear, and well-reasoned.



“**Mike Sez**”

Don't get too upset if you receive the occasional negative feedback; it happens to the best of us—especially those who run a *lot* of auctions. You can't please everyone all the time, and sometimes you make mistakes that justify a negative feedback response. Just try to work out as many issues with other users as you can, and don't let the occasional negative feedback get to you.



If you and the other user work out your issues, you can agree to mutually withdraw any negative feedback. Complete the form at [feedback.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?MFWRrequest](http://feedback.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?MFWRrequest) to initiate the removal process.

FIGURE 3.4

Replying to feedback left about you.

### Feedback Forum: Reply to Feedback Received

An important part of the Feedback Forum is sharing with the community your experience with other members. In addition to leaving feedback, there may be occasions when you want to reply to a comment another member has left in your member profile; it will appear directly below that comment in your member profile.

Please note:

- You can reply only once to a comment. You cannot edit or retract your reply.
- It's always best to keep your feedback factual; avoid making personal remarks.
- Leaving a reply does not affect your feedback score or number of ratings.
- If you have a dispute, contact your trading partner to try and resolve the dispute before replying.

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**Buyer:** [\[redacted\]](#) ( 142 ☆ )

**Item:** [Making a Living from Your eBay Business - Autographed!](#) (4577838306)

**Date/Time left:** Jan-28-06 18:19:37 PST

**Feedback:**  Excellent doing business with you.Thanks.AAA +++

**Reply:**

80 characters left.

## THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM

Here are the key points to remember from this chapter:

- You can use feedback ratings and comments to judge the trustworthiness of other eBay users.
- For quick reference, different levels of feedback ratings are indicated by a different color and type of star.
- You can view other users' feedback by clicking on the feedback rating numbers next to their user names.
- At the end of every auction, you should take the time to leave feedback about the other user—although you should be cautious about leaving negative feedback.

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