

How to Get Rewarded for Your Back-to-School Shopping

These back-to-school shopping tips for educators can help you cross off your list for less while earning rewards.

By NEA Member Benefits

Educators are experts at making every back-to-school dollar count. This year, you can make that money go even further by taking advantage of customer rewards, shopping apps, special deals for educators and expert savings strategies.

As you head out (or stay in and shop online!) to buy classroom supplies, clothes, shoes, bags and electronics—everything you need for the upcoming school year—keep these shopping tactics and tips in mind. Many can even help you recoup what you spend in the form of special rewards.

Use your NEA Member Benefits

- **Shop through [NEA Discount Marketplace](#)**, powered by Rakuten, to find special discounts—including some that are negotiated specially for NEA members—and earn cash back while you shop for brand-name clothing, shoes, bags, computers, office supplies and just about anything else you need to start the school year right. (Find out more about [how the shopping program works](#).)
- **With [ODP Business Solutions™](#)** (formerly Office Depot®/OfficeMax®), you can get member-only discounts on classroom supplies, electronics, printing and lamination services, classroom hygiene supplies and more.
- **Use your [Costco Membership](#)** to save money on food, health and beauty items, clothing, electronics and thousands of other items you need for home or school. Bonus: NEA members who are new to Costco receive a \$30 Costco Shop Card.
- **Scour our huge [Teacher Discounts list](#)** to easily find special deals on books and magazines, clothing and jewelry, classroom supplies and teaching aids, electronics, food and much more.
- **Use the [NEA® Customized Cash Rewards Visa Signature® credit card](#)** to get rewarded by earning cash back on your purchases, including everything that's already on your back-to-school shopping list. So take some time to evaluate your back-to-school wardrobe, dream about a perfect new classroom layout and make lists for school supply runs for you and your family. All of your purchases earn cash rewards. And now, you can maximize your rewards by earning 3% cash back in the category of your choice: gas, online shopping, dining, travel, drug stores or home improvement & furnishings. You'll automatically earn 2% cash back at grocery stores and wholesale clubs, and 1% cash back on all other purchases. Earn 3% and 2% cash back on the first \$2,500 in combined purchases each quarter in the choice category, and at grocery stores and wholesale clubs, then earn unlimited 1% thereafter.

Let online tools do the legwork for you

As the summer break winds down, you're too busy prepping lesson plans, classroom layouts and more to be running all over town (or the Internet) to hunt down back-to-school deals. Use these smart shopping tricks to make it easy to locate discounts and coupons, and even get notifications delivered right to you.

- **Sign up for loyalty programs.** Typically when you sign up for email or text-message notifications directly with retailers, they will send you special coupons and alert you to limited-time discounts.
- **Get paid for spending.** Let shopping rewards and cash-back apps make money on the money you spend. Use cash-back apps such as [iBotta](#) and [Rakuten](#). (As an NEA member, be sure you attach your account to our NEA Discount Marketplace so you can access the special NEA-only deals, too.) Compare rates offered by cash-back apps at sites such as [BeFrugal](#), [Extrabux](#) and [CashbackHolic](#) to maximize your bonus income.
- **Earn rewards for shopping.** For example, [Shopkick](#) is a location-based smartphone app that lets you earn reward points called "kicks" on a variety of activities, such as walking into participating stores, scanning products, paying with a linked credit card, submitting receipts and inviting friends. Shopkick Grocery rewards you for making shopping lists, saving recipes and more. Redeem kicks for gift cards at your favorite stores.
- **Find coupons online.** Save on everything from school supplies to a haircut with [Coupon Sherpa](#), a mobile app that helps you find online [promo codes](#), [printable coupons](#) and [other discounts](#) on thousands of products and services.
- **Capture discounts effortlessly** with [Honey](#), a browser extension app that finds the best coupons and deals available while you shop online for thousands of sites. Honey works on most major browsers including Chrome, Firefox, and Opera on Mac or Windows, as well as Safari on Mac and Microsoft's Edge on Windows. The Droplist feature alerts you when prices have dropped at select stores.
- **Use price comparison tools** like browser extension [PriceBlink.com](#) (for Firefox, Chrome or Safari) to shop around before you buy school supplies and other items on your list. PriceBlink finds the best deals, free shipping offers and coupon codes to save you money on everything from highlighters and paper to printers and laptops.

Plan where and when you shop for maximum savings

You don't have time to waste now, so do a little research to figure out the best times to shop at stores that will give you the best returns on your investment.

- **Time your shopping** to take advantage of tax holidays for teachers and back-to-school deals in late July through early August. Check dates, participating states and details at [Back to School Tax Free Weekend](#). At least 15 states plan to offer a tax-free weekend during summer 2022.
- **Hit the local dollar store** so you can avoid paying a premium on educational posters, wall borders, teacher crafts and other classroom items.

- **Scout sites that specialize in school supplies.** The [School Supply Deals & Coupons](#) section of Offers.com lets you shop retailers where you can stock up on “everything you need for any grade level.” [Passion for Savings](#) helps you find all the best sales, deals and coupons for back-to-school shopping. You can also download and print their free school supply price list and find more tips to help you save on your back-to-school shopping.
- **No matter where you shop, always mention you’re a teacher!** Even if the store doesn’t have a specific teacher discount program, sometimes salespeople will give teachers a discount because they have a family member who is a teacher or because they simply have a lot of respect for the work you do.

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