

antiques

antiques [antiques] Some people say that anything over 50 years old can be called an antique, while others say an antique must be over 100 years old. The term is usually applied to objects that are valuable because they are rare or are of high quality. In the US the word antique can also describe any object that is old enough to be interesting and unusual, or was made by hand in the days before factories. Antiques include furniture, carpets, clocks, ↑china, glass, silver, jewellery, ↑embroidery, and even toys. Any extra information about an antique, such as the maker's bill or a letter of provenance (= a letter referring to an object's history and origin) increases its value. Other items that people may collect are called collectables. They may be of any age and include things like the picture cards that used to be given away in cigarette packets, metal signs and ↑beer mats. Many people in Britain are interested in antiques, even if they do not own any. Antique-collecting became especially popular in the late 1980s and 1990s, and towns such as ↑Warwick and Hungerford are famous for their antique shops. People also look in junk shops and second-hand shops in the hope of finding a ↑bargain. Antiques fairs are held occasionally in hotels or conference centres. Auction houses, such as ↑Christie's and ↑Sotheby's, hold sales which are attended by members of the public and by dealers. In the US antiques are especially popular with older people. Antiques can be bought in antique shops in large cities, in small shops in the country, in flea markets (= markets selling old and used goods cheaply) or at ↑garage sales. ↑New England is a popular area for antique hunting (AmE also antiquing), and many people spend weekends driving through small towns hoping to find something special. Antiques that originate in the US include Shaker furniture, made in a very simple style. Some people are interested in Americana, objects associated with US history such as letters written by George ↑Washington, silver objects made by Paul Revere or early versions of the American flag. ↑Antiques Roadshow has encouraged many people in Britain and the US to take an interest in antiques.

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