

Auctions are unique — in experience, in sound, in practice.

Many auction attendees find the experience addictive. They report that there's nothing quite like the thrill of finding something they want and then bidding against others who want the same thing.

But you don't have to be a seasoned auction attendee to be able to experience the thrill of auctions. Auctioneers across America are glad to welcome new bidders to their auctions. And though almost everyone has heard the old story about the person who attended an auction, scratched his nose and came home with an item he'd not intended to buy, pay no heed to that myth.



"People who have never been to an auction before should certainly give it a try," said John Roebuck, CAI, AARE. "Don't be intimidated - go and have fun!"

Feel free to just get your feet wet - don't think you have to go to your first auction ready to bid. Attend an auction or two in your area to get a feel for how they are conducted. Watch and listen, then move on to bidding if that makes you comfortable.

Many auctioneers spend some time addressing commonly asked questions and explaining how the auction is going to work. Some even conduct pre-auction or practice sessions, or brief tutorials, about the auction process. If you're interested in going to your first auction, check with local auctioneers to see if they offer such a service.

Always remember that at an auction you're free to ask a question if you don't understand something. Auctioneers and their staffs want people to continue to come to their auctions, so they'll do all they can to encourage repeat business! Ask a question of a member of the auctioneer's team, and they'll find the answer for you.

When you arrive at an auction site, register for a bidder number and read the rules printed on or displayed on posters, brochures or handouts. Again, ask questions if you don't understand a policy. Inspect the merchandise you're interested in, as most is auctioned on an "as is, where is" basis. This means it is not guaranteed. When you buy an item, you become responsible for it. And, keep in mind that you'll pay for the items you purchase before you leave the auction, even if you aren't taking everything with you that day.

In order to bid at an auction, you need to make contact with the auctioneer or the ringperson. A ringperson is someone who takes bids from the audience and then passes those on to the auctioneer. To bid, hold up your bid card, your hand or shout "yes." The auctioneer or ringperson will make eye contact with you, take your bid and immediately turn and seek another bid. You can remove yourself from the process at any time by shaking your head "no" or saying "no" if the auctioneer or ringperson turns your way. Should an auctioneer or ringperson misinterpret any of your signals, simply report the mistake right away.

Source: National Auctioneer's Association