GARAGE SALES

What to Say in Your Ad

Words and Phrases That Draw Serious Shoppers

You've picked a date, sorted your items and planned your setup — now it's time to spread the word. But if your garage sale ad is vague or generic, you could miss out on your best customers. Whether you're posting online or placing an ad in your local newspaper, the way you describe your sale can make a big difference in turnout.

Good advertising doesn't have to be complicated — it just needs to be clear, honest and a little bit specific. Here's how to make your ad work harder for you.

START WITH THE BASICS

Every ad should include your address, dates, start and end times and whether the sale is rain or shine. These are the details buyers look for first. If your house is hard to find, add a note like "follow the neon signs" or "look for balloons at the driveway."

If you're advertising in a newspaper's classified section, double-check the deadline and follow any space or word-count guidelines. Local print ads remain one of the most reliable ways to reach active garage sale shoppers.

LIST A FEW KEY ITEMS

You don't have to name everything you're selling — just pick a handful of categories or standout items to give buyers a reason to stop. Focus on what tends to draw traffic: tools, furniture, kids' gear, collectibles, seasonal decor, sports equipment, name-brand clothing or electronics.

Try wording like: "Huge multi-family sale: tools, toys, vintage kitchenware", "Saturday only — kids' clothes, furniture, holiday decorations"

Avoid vague phrases like "miscellaneous" or "something for everyone." These don't give shoppers anything to go on.

USE WORDS THAT CREATE URGENCY

If your sale is just one day or has a unique angle, make it clear. "One-day only," "priced to sell," or "everything must go" can encourage buyers to come early. If you're offering bundled deals or discounts, say so: "Fill a bag for $10" or "Half-price after noon."

If your sale supports a cause, include a short note like "Fundraiser for school trip" or "Proceeds go to medical expenses."

TAILOR THE MESSAGE TO THE PLATFORM

If you're posting to a social media group or app, include a few photos with your description. A clear shot of your tables, racks or larger items helps your post stand out.

For print ads, stick to clean wording with plenty of white space. Capitalize key items for easier scanning: "GARAGE SALE: Friday & Saturday, 8-2. 456 Maple St. Furniture, TOOLS, Baby Gear. Rain or shine."

Use consistent phrasing across platforms so buyers recognize the ad when they see your signs or listings in multiple places.

KEEP IT HONEST AND SIMPLE

Don't overpromise. If it's a small sale, say so. People appreciate transparency and are more likely to stop by if your ad feels truthful. Overselling or being untruthful can lead to disappointment — and fewer sales.

An ad doesn't have to be flashy to be effective. It just has to help the right people find you, at the right time, with the right expectations.

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SELLER'S TIP

Include a Few Specific Items

Mentioning one or two standout items — like "tools," "baby gear" or "antiques" — in your ad helps attract serious shoppers who are searching for exactly that.