

**REVIEWED**

Back to School (marketing)

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Tips and tricks to help you save money on back-to-school shopping

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Reviewed

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With inflation driving the price of school supplies up 23.7% over the past two years, the need to find affordable school supplies is felt now more than ever. As part of its annual back-to-school shopping survey, Deloitte found that 51% of parents are planning to spend less than they did last year on back-to-school shopping.

That said, spending less doesn't have to mean settling for poor-quality supplies or even buying fewer things for your student. Reviewed is here to lighten your load with tips and products that will help you get the biggest bang for your buck this back-to-school season.

Make smart choices without hours of googling. *Subscribe to The Checklist newsletter for expert product advice and recommendations.*

Shop back-to-school deals

- **Back-to-school shopping on a budget?** Shop 10 best deals on calculators, laptops and pens
- **MacBook Air:** Stick to your back-to-school budget with \$250 off the 2020 Apple MacBook Air at Amazon
- **Laptop deals:** Log in to these back-to-school laptop deals on Apple, Lenovo and HP
- **Apple deals:** Shop the best back-to-school deals on Apple iPads, AirPods, MacBooks and more

- **Nordstrom Rack:** Shop Nordstrom Rack for back-to-school deals on Barefoot Dreams, Nike and Madewell
- **Top sales to shop:** Shop the 10 best back-to-school deals at Walmart, Amazon and Best Buy

Use a browser extension to track price changes

If you're on the lookout for deals while shopping Amazon, then a browser extension can make your life a lot easier.

CamelCamelCamel or the Camelizer is a helpful price tracker that helps you find deals. It's so good, in fact, that we make use of this tool ourselves to bring quality deals to you year-round. The Camelizer monitors millions of products across Amazon to determine when they're on sale. The site also tracks the price of a product across several months and years, allowing you to decide for yourself whether a particular price is a deal or not at a given time.

Get the Camelizer

Check money-saving websites and apps

Several other sites can help you save money on back-to-school shopping across most retailers.

- Thanks to PayPal Honey, trying out dozens of expired promo codes during online checkout is a thing of the past. This helpful extension tracks where you're shopping and applies any usable promo codes upon checkout.
- Rakuten is an extension that teams up with more than 3,500 participating retailers such as Target and Walmart to award you cash back on purchases. Each time you buy from one of the eligible stores with the extension installed, you'll be paid back part of Rakuten's commission. The percentage varies by site, and you can be paid using PayPal deposit or American Express Member Rewards points.
- Flipp is an app that conveniently lists deals for local grocery stores in one location to help you find the best deals.
- Slickdeals boasts a community of money-minded shoppers who share the best deals with one another. If that wasn't enough, Slickdeals also features a cash-back program.

If you're still daunted by the idea of searching for deals, then we've got you covered. We've rounded up the best back-to-school sales from stores like Walmart and Best Buy so you can

get straight to shopping.

Save money by shopping in-store

If you're shopping in person, there are a few options when looking for school supplies. If you're prepping for the entire school year or purchasing for multiple students, buying in bulk at a wholesale chain such as Costco or Sam's Club can save you money. If you don't need specialized items, then budget stores such as Dollar Tree will meet all your school supply needs without costing you a lot of money. Wherever you shop, make sure you talk to your student beforehand so you don't buy something they won't use.

Reuse items instead of buying new

One way to save money is by reducing the number of items you buy in the first place. If this isn't your child's first year at school or if they have older siblings, it's worth looking through your storage to see if anything can be reused.

Backpacks are the best candidate for reusability, but many supplies can be brought out of retirement for a new school year. If you look through every nook and cranny of your home (including your child's room) you may find more than enough writing utensils to start the new year. If they're in good condition, folders can be relabeled and repurposed for new classes and subjects. Reusing notebooks is tricky, but it may be worth attempting if a notebook has many blank pages. If you have several notebooks with blank pages, consider taking them out to use as loose-leaf pages or stapling them together as a DIY notebook.

Use products that can extend the life of your materials

When you *do* inevitably buy new school materials, you'll want to make sure they last, saving you time and money from having to stock up on supplies throughout the year. There are a few products that can help your new purchases last a bit longer.

Pencil sharpeners are an absolute must when it comes to school supplies. Mechanical, hand-crank pencil sharpeners aren't as fast or reliable as electric pencil sharpeners, so if you're looking to keep your pencils usable, paying a little more now will save you a lot in the long run. If you're using a mechanical pencil, don't neglect to buy more lead for when it runs out.

\$15 from Amazon

\$4 from Amazon

If your child prefers the feel of pens, it might seem like notebooks going to waste by being filled with corrective scribbles is inevitable. However, pens made with erasable ink combine the best traits of pens and pencil, guaranteeing your school supply dollar stretches that much further.

If you have a young child, their broken crayons can gain a creative and fun second wind using a crayon mold. With an oven-safe mold, you can take their broken crayons and melt them back into a usable shape. You can even melt different-colored crayons to create a mesmerizing, unique swirl.

\$5 at Amazon

\$14 at Amazon

*The product experts at **Reviewed** have all your shopping needs covered. Follow Reviewed on **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok** or **Flipboard** for the latest deals, product reviews and more.*

Prices were accurate at the time this article was published but may change over time.