

Selling on Etsy — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a real, open Etsy shop with ranked, profitable listings. Each section maps to a course module: first you validate a niche against actual demand and competition, then you build a pricing model that survives Etsy's full fee stack, then you write listings engineered to rank in search, and finally you set up, launch, and market the shop toward its first 100 sales. Use your own real product, real costs, and real keyword data rather than the examples, and let the included spreadsheets handle the math so you can focus on the decisions. The fee figures reflect Etsy's US 2025 structure; always confirm current rates in your Etsy account, since fees and policies change.

Validate a Niche Before You Stock a Thing

Confirm real demand and beatable competition for a product idea before spending a dollar, then commit to one direction.

Worksheet: Mine Etsy's Free Demand Signals

Open Etsy and type your product idea into the search bar. Record the autocomplete suggestions (these are real popular queries), then run the top search and read the results page. Repeat for two or three product ideas. This is free research before you pay for any tool.

Product idea I am testing

Top 5 Etsy autocomplete suggestions for it (exact wording buyers use)

Approximate number of results shown for my main keyword

Are the top listings dominated by huge, review-heavy shops, or is there a mix with thin newcomers?

Which autocomplete phrase looks most specific and winnable for a new shop?

Worksheet: Keyword Demand and Competition Audit

Use eRank (free tier), Marmalead, Alura, or Sale Samurai to look up each candidate keyword. Record search volume and competition so hunches become numbers. Prioritize long-tail phrases with real volume and beatable competition over broad, crowded terms.

Keyword phrase

Estimated monthly searches (from tool)

Number of competing listings (competition)

Strength of the top 20 listings (sales, reviews, photo quality: weak / mixed / fortress)

Verdict: winnable opening, possible, or too crowded

Exercise: Score and Choose One Niche

Run three to six product ideas through the five criteria below and pick the single best opening. Write your final decision as one sentence backed by your numbers.

- Which idea has the best combination of real demand and beatable competition?
 - What is my clear differentiation angle (personalization, a tighter niche, better material, a bundle)?
 - Can I make or source this reliably at the quality the page-one photos demand?
 - My committed direction in one sentence: I will sell ___ targeting keyword ___, which shows ___ searches against ___ listings, standing out by ___.
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Checklist: Niche Validation Gate (pass before stocking inventory)

- Confirmed real search demand for my keyword using a tool and Etsy autocomplete, not just my own enthusiasm
- Checked the first page of results and found listings I can plausibly out-photograph or out-relevance
- Defined a specific differentiation angle a big-box retailer cannot easily copy
- Verified the typical selling price looks high enough to cover fees, materials, and labor (confirm in Section 2)
- Committed to one product line to launch, not five unrelated ones at once

Price for Real Profit After Etsy's Fees

Build a fee-accurate pricing model so every sale clears your true costs, your labor, and Etsy's full fee stack with profit left.

Worksheet: Calculate My Complete Cost of Goods

For one product, add up the full per-item cost most beginners undercount. Use the Pricing Calculator template to do the arithmetic. Include everything that gets consumed or risked per order, not just the obvious materials.

Product name

Materials cost per item

Packaging and shipping supplies per item

Share of consumables (glue, ink, etc.) per item

Waste and refund allowance per item

Total complete COGS per item (sum of the above)

Worksheet: Price My Labor and Set the Final Price

Add your paid time, then apply a markup and a fee allowance using the formula from the course. Cross-check the result against page-one prices for your keyword.

Minutes to make and pack one item

My target hourly wage (e.g., 20 to 25 USD)

Labor cost per item (minutes / 60 x hourly wage)

Base cost (complete COGS + labor)

Markup applied (e.g., 2.0x to 2.5x base cost)

Final price after adding a 15 to 20 percent fee/ads allowance

Page-one competitor price range for sanity check

Exercise: Stress-Test the Price Against Etsy's Fees

Use the Fee Breakdown sheet to subtract Etsy's actual fees from your price and confirm real profit survives, including an ad-driven scenario.

- On my chosen price plus shipping, what is the order total, and what do standard Etsy fees come to (0.20 listing + 6.5 percent transaction + 3 percent plus 0.25 processing)?
 - What is my profit per sale after standard fees, COGS, and labor?
 - What happens to that profit if the sale is attributed to an Offsite Ad (15 percent under 10k/year, 12 percent above)?
 - Is the price still profitable in the ad-driven case, and if not, how will I raise price or cut cost?
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Checklist: Pricing Sanity Check

- Counted complete COGS including packaging, consumables, and a waste/refund allowance, not just core materials
- Included my own labor at a real target hourly wage
- Confirmed profit survives standard Etsy fees of roughly 11 percent of the order total
- Confirmed profit still exists (or is acceptable) on an Offsite-Ad sale carrying an extra 12 to 15 percent
- Decided whether free shipping is built into the price (item raised to cover postage) rather than absorbed from margin
- For any digital product, priced on value and uniqueness since marginal cost is near zero

Get Found: Etsy SEO and Listings That Rank

Engineer titles, all 13 tags, descriptions, and photos around Etsy's ranking factors so listings surface in search and win the click.

Worksheet: Build One Fully Optimized Listing

Using the Listing & SEO Planner template, draft the searchable fields for one product. Pull phrases from your Section 1 keyword audit and front-load the strongest one.

Primary keyword phrase (goes first in the title)

Full title (stack a few real phrases, readable, top keyword first)

All 13 tags (multi-word phrases, up to 20 characters each, no blanks)

First sentence of the description (keyword-rich opening)

Attributes filled (color, size, occasion, material, etc.)

Category chosen (specific, matches buyer filters)

Exercise: Optimize for the Two-Stage Algorithm

Confirm your listing is eligible for the query (stage one) and built to rank within it (stage two). Answer each in writing.

- Are my exact buyer keywords present in the title, all 13 tags, and the opening of the description?
 - What in this listing earns the click and the sale (thumbnail, price, free shipping, clear title) to feed my quality score?
 - Did I fill every attribute and category so I also match filtered searches?
 - Which long-tail phrases give a new shop a realistic shot at page one versus the broad, crowded terms?
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Checklist: Product Photo Set Checklist

- Photo 1 thumbnail: product fills the frame, bright and sharp, reads clearly at stamp size on mobile
- Lifestyle shot showing the product in use or in a real setting
- Scale shot (next to a common object or in a hand) so size is unmistakable
- Detail close-ups of texture, stitching, engraving, or material quality
- Personalization or color/variation examples shown
- An infographic image with key specs or personalization steps for skimmers
- A short video added (Etsy allows one; it lifts conversion)
- Shot near a window with side light and a white reflector; edited for brightness and straightness in Canva or Snapseed

Launch, Sell, and Grow to 100 Sales

Finish the shop for trust, drive early traffic to beat the cold start, earn honest reviews, and let Stats guide what you build next.

Checklist: Shop Completeness and Star Seller Setup

- About section written with story and behind-the-scenes photos
- Shop policies set: processing time, shipping, returns/exchanges, and personalization rules
- Logo and banner added so the shop looks established
- Honest processing time set (e.g., 3 to 5 business days) that I can reliably beat
- Plan to reply to first buyer messages within 24 hours
- Plan to ship on time with tracking on every order
- Targeting an average rating at or near 4.8 stars to qualify for and keep Star Seller

Worksheet: First-Traffic Marketing Plan

Plan how you will drive the outside traffic and early sales that the algorithm needs before it ranks you. Use the Marketing & Stats Tracker template to log results weekly.

Primary free channel I will use (Pinterest is especially strong for Etsy)

Communities or networks where I can share the shop (where self-promo is allowed)

Weekly outreach/posting target for the first month

Etsy Ads test budget if any (e.g., 1 to 3 USD/day) and which listings I will test

My rule for pausing an ad (cost per sale exceeds profit per sale)

Exercise: Earn the First Reviews Honestly

Design a post-purchase experience that produces genuine 5-star reviews without violating Etsy policy. Never buy or incentivize fake reviews.

- How will I delight buyers (ship early, careful packaging, thank-you note) so reviews come naturally?

- What will my polite printed insert inviting honest feedback say?

- How will I resolve a problem quickly and generously before it becomes a bad review?

- What is my target number of reviews before I expect organic search rank to lift?

Worksheet: Weekly Stats Review and Scale Plan

Read Etsy Stats every week and turn it into action using the Marketing & Stats Tracker. Double down on winners, fix the leakers, and expand where demand already exists.

Top search terms that found my shop this week (keywords to lean into)

Best-converting listing (template to clone with variations)

Listing with high views but low conversion (needs new photo/title/price)

Specific change I will test this week and the metric I will watch

Next product or variation I will add around a proven winner

Your Action Plan

1. Validate one niche: confirm real demand with eRank/Etsy autocomplete and check that page-one competition is beatable, then commit to a single product line.
2. Calculate complete COGS for your chosen product, including packaging, consumables, and a waste/refund allowance.
3. Add your labor at a real hourly wage, apply a 2.0x to 2.5x markup, add a 15 to 20 percent fee/ads allowance, and set a final price.
4. Stress-test the price against Etsy's actual fees, including an Offsite-Ad scenario, and confirm real profit survives.
5. Decide your shipping approach: build postage into the price and offer free shipping over 35 USD where it makes sense.
6. Write one fully optimized listing: keyword-front-loaded title, all 13 multi-word tags, keyword-rich description opening, and every attribute filled.
7. Shoot a full photo set led by a thumbnail that reads at stamp size, plus lifestyle, scale, detail, and an infographic image, and add a short video.
8. Finish the shop for trust: About section, complete policies, logo and banner, and an honest processing time you can beat.
9. Open the shop, then drive outside traffic (Pinterest, communities, your network) to beat the cold start and earn the first sales.
10. Earn honest reviews by delighting buyers, and use Etsy Ads only with a tiny disciplined test budget judged on return, not clicks.
11. Qualify for and protect Star Seller by replying within 24 hours, shipping on time with tracking, and holding ratings near 4.8.
12. Review Etsy Stats weekly: lean into the keywords that work, fix high-traffic low-conversion listings, and clone winners toward your first 100 sales.

