

# Tutor Lead Session – Using Freecycle

## Celebrating Recycle Week 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015

### What is Freecycle?

Rather than throwing away usable items, freecycling encourages you to give them to others who will use them. With over 8 million members and over 5,000 local groups around the world, 100 million tons can be kept out of landfills in a year. This is because of people just like you "gifting" their old toaster, ugly shoes or lamps they've been wanting to get rid of for years. Items are all free, legal and appropriate for all ages.

### Accessing FreeCycle

From your web browser go to [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)  
In the **find a group near you** type in your town and click **go**.



You can access any posts that people have added by clicking onto them but you are unable to reply or post anything yourself until you register with the site.

### Registering

Click **log in / sign up** on the navigation bar at the top of your screen.  
Then select the **signup form** hyperlink in the **I'm not a My Freecycle user** section.

You will need to create an account before you can use My Freecycle. You will need to pick a unique username and enter a valid email address that you read. If you are an existing Yahoo!Groups user, it is recommended that you either use your registered Yahoo! email address or add the new address to your Yahoo! profile.  
Jsernames must be between 4 and 32 characters in length, start with a letter or number, and may only contain alphanumeric characters (A-Z, 0-9), underscores ( \_ ) and plus (+) or minus (-) signs.

The image shows the "Sign up form" on the Freecycle.org website. The form has a green header with the text "Sign up form". It contains several input fields: "Username :", "Email address :", "Password :", and "Confirm password :". There is also a "Sign up using Facebook" button. Below the input fields is a CAPTCHA image showing the number "120" and a "Type the text" input field. There is also a "Privacy & Terms" link. At the bottom of the form is a checkbox labeled "I agree to The Freecycle Network Terms of Service." and a "Sign up" button.

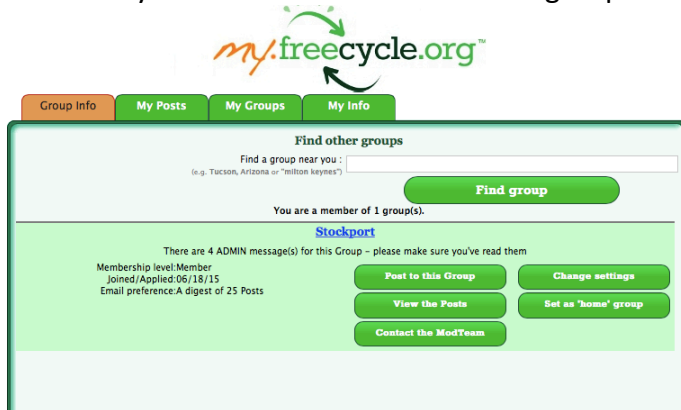
We recommend that you do not register using your Facebook account and create a separate Freecycle account. We recommend this on all sites and this tip is not specific to Freecycle.

Complete all fields and select that you agree to the **Terms of Service**

Click **Sign Up**.

You will receive an email to confirm your registration.

Go to the **My Groups** tab and add local groups by typing your town or city in the search facility. You can have more than one group.



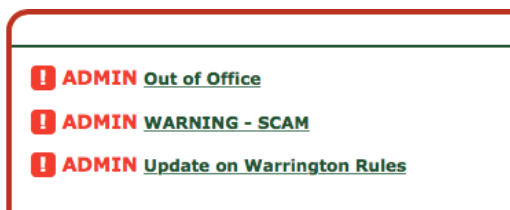
**NOTE:** the logo has changed to **MyFreeCycle** – this is because you are logged in!

## Read the group guidelines carefully

Every group must follow the "free, legal and appropriate for all ages" rules, but most have added other rules and some are more relaxed.

Rules often include "no strings attached". This includes not allowing "sob stories" as part of the reasons for looking for or getting rid of items because people must freely give away or seek things and not pressure others with emotional levers.

There may be rules about taking free items for resale. Some people resell the items they've been given for free and this upsets those giving them away freely if they aren't told up front. You may need to disclose this as your intention.



## Finding Free Stuff

**Choose how often you want the posts to arrive:**

All of the posts will come to you through an email group of one kind or other. You can have an email update as soon as an item is listed but this will probably overload your in-box, especially if your local Freecycle is very active. Or, you can ask for

regular digests that summarize the giveaways for the day. You always have the option of reading all posts directly on the web.

To change your settings go to **Group Info** and **Change Settings**, then select your **Email Preference** as below:



### Understand what each term means

In order to make the most of your experience, you'll need to know what the item offer means. In a nutshell:

**Offer** - this means someone is offering this item for free. If it sounds like something you're interested in, write the person back directly to their personal address, not to the group list. The one who makes the offer gets to choose who will be the recipient of the item.

**Wanted** - this means someone is searching for a particular item. Maybe you've got this stored in the attic, basement, or back of the closet. Want to get rid of it? Now is your chance. When you have an item you're looking for, you can post a Wanted requesting that item.

**Taken** - this means the item that was offered has been taken. It is posted by the person who offered the item.

**Admin** - occasionally you'll see the heading ADMIN. This is a message from the moderator that you need to be sure to read. It will often update you on small changes or it may draw attention to behaviors that have occurred that need to be changed/stopped or minimized (such as making demands on people like asking them to deliver a free item, etc.).

	<b>OFFER</b> <b>Cut offs of Wallpaper</b> (Davenport ) by Lilyrose-14 1 Roll of black patterned wallpaper 3 Roll offcuts of purple flower patterned wallpaper Thu Jun 4 12:57:18 2015 (#47879640)	<a href="#">See details</a>
	<b>WANTED</b> <b>IKEA highchair sk2</b> (Stockport ) by Mazfree168 Hi. Looking for 2 IKEA highchairs for my twins please. Can pick up when convenient. Thank you, Thu Jun 4 09:34:37 2015 (#47876924)	<a href="#">See details</a>
	<b>OFFER</b> <b>Single bed</b> (Cheadle) by granny_1 Single bed with box base and mattress, no drawers. Wed Jun 3 22:19:41 2015 (#47871646)	<a href="#">See details</a>
	<b>WANTED</b> <b>sit in baby walker</b> (conwy) by seiriol Sit in baby walker. One without toys on shelf. Thank you Wed Jun 3 19:10:30 2015 (#47867976)	<a href="#">See details</a>

## Getting Picked For An Offer

### **Be polite and quick.**

When you see an Offer that interests you, get in quickly. While there is no rule that the first past the post wins the item, those giving away often want the item removed quickly, so being fast to claim makes good sense. When emailing for the Offer, consider the following:

Be polite. If you use ALL CAPS, make derogatory remarks about the item, fail to connect with the person as a fellow human being, you're a lot less likely to win the freebie than someone who is polite. Address the person politely, be nice about the freebie and remember that this person is being generous.

Explain your reason for wanting the item. An email that says something like "Yeah, I'll take it thanks" doesn't tell the person giving away very much and if you're competing with others, such a message may well lose you the chance. Give a *brief* explanation of why you'd like the item. For example, "I'd love those lamps because I have a problem reading at night with just an overhead light and I'd really like to curl up on the couch under a cozy lamp to read."

### **Follow the instructions for collection.**

The one who posts the Offer usually decides the method for picking up the item (usually it's pick-up but sometimes you can get the item delivered, depending on the simplicity of doing this).

Keep your personal safety in mind throughout every "transaction." It is often a good idea to take someone else with you, especially if you don't know the area or you've not connected with the donor before.

### **Give as well as taking**

The idea of Freecycle is to share things around. It is not at all uncommon for you to be a donor and a collector all in the same day; be sure you keep the virtuous cycle of reusing goods turning by offering the things you no longer need too.

## Offering Items

### **Write a short and clear description of the item**

If the site allows images, consider uploading one but this is optional. If the item has anything you think people should be aware of, include this. For example, you might want to point out if the item needs a good dust, clean or needs repair, etc.



Note that the following things are often not permitted as part of an Offer post: Phone numbers, requests for borrowing/lending, web links, public notices, urgent/desperate calls for help, fundraising events, general questions, etc. This will vary depending on your location.

Freecycle is not a place for bartering, exchanging, making deals or borrowing. Freebies must come with no strings attached.

### **Upload the description**

Then wait for requests. These are likely to begin quickly, as some people watch the new items being listed all the time. Some things to bear in mind:

It's a good idea to wait for a few emails to arrive. That way, you can make a choice as to who will gain the freebie from the way they've asked for it. There is no rule that says you have to accept the first person's request. Go with the reply you feel is right.

### **Reply to the person you'd like to collect the item**

Provide your address and any quirks about getting to your place. Offer a phone number in case they get lost. And ask them to let you know when they can make it. If you're in a hurry to offload the item, stress this.

### **State that the item has been Taken when it has been picked up**

This alerts others on the list that they won't be able to ask for it any longer.

## **Freecycle Tips From Money Saving Expert Website**

I have started this thread as some of us who have been using Freecycle for a while, possibly have several pieces of advice and tips that can be passed on to newbies.

### **When offering**

- 1 Don't agree to giving the item to the first person who replies - some people see to spend all day on line ready to respond. If you wait a while you can then decide who you wish to give the item to
- 2 Give a good description of the item with perhaps a link to a web site that has a pic

of the item

**When responding to offers**

- 1 Be polite
  - 2 try to pick up the item as soon as possible
  - 3 explain why you would like the item
- don't be greedy