

How to Inspect a Used Car Checklist

Initial Details required

Year of Manufacturing	
Name of Company/Model	
Price asked by seller	
Current market value	

The Body:

Scratches found of vehicle	
Dents found during check	
Windshield condition	
Headlights condition	
Brand sticker and tags	
Brake disc/drum (check for rust)	

The Wheels:

Tread condition	
Wheel observation if any	
Wheel damage?	

Internal condition:

Seat (tear, wear and tear)	
extra (sunroof, etc)	
Headliner (saggy?)	
Transmission –MT/AT	
Steering wheel (worn?)	

Under the chassis:

Leaks (Engine and Differential, Gear box)	
Rusting (exhaust, chassis, body, etc)	
Suspension (tie rods, ball joints, shocks, axle, etc)	
Chassis damage (from collision)	

The Test Drive

Questions to ask the owner (make sure story is realistic and answers questions consistently)

- 1.) How long have you owned the car?
- 2.) Why are you selling it?
- 3.) Does everything work/any problems?
- 4.) Any service records, what have you done since owning the car?
- 5.) What did you use the car for?
- 6.) How many miles did you put on it when you owned it?
- 7.) What car are you looking to get now? Why?

From your Research:

Value of the Car (trade in value):			

Engine

Before Starting the test drive: check-			
Does car Hood open easily?		Hood support/struts condition?	
Frame (straight, no kinks)		Engine bay is clean or not	
Inspect for leaks (oil, coolant, etc)		Any damage/new parts	
Oil level and oil (no metal, not frothy)		Oil Cap damage?	
Check Coolant level		Hoses, belts, battery terminal, cable, etc.	
Cold Startup			
Any strange noises/smoke? (knocking, grinding, etc)		Does it take too long to start?	
Does the motor move a lot (bad motor mounts)		Check under oil cap (strong pulses/smoke)	
Idle (does the idle drop and smooth out)		Check exhaust for smoke upon startup	
Warm Startup			
Any strange noises/smoke? (ticking, grinding, etc)		Does it take too long to start?	
Check under oil cap (strong pulses/smoke/froth)		Idle (does the idle drop and smooth out)	
Bubbling in radiator reservoir? (blown head gasket)		Check exhaust for smoke upon startup	

Interior

Seats: Front and rear			
Damage, rips, tares, stains, smell		Solid/no movement	
Adjust properly (forward, back, tilt)			
Carpet: Front, rear, and trunk			
Check Under Carpets (rust, water)		Floor mats?	
Stains, holes, cuts, smell, dampness			
Trunk:			
Spare (holds air, not rusty)		Jack with lug wrench	
Spare tire carrier round (no indents)		Lug nut key (locking lug-nuts)	
Water marks, damp carpet?			
Vehicle features			
Power Windows (move up/down, scratches)		Window (bubbles, legal)	
Mirrors adjustment		Power Locks (all doors lock/unlock)	
Music (speakers/display/knobs/volume)		AC/Heat (auto,/ all vents)	
Wipers and washer fluid work		Sunroof (opens/closes, no leaks)	
Rear View Mirror (auto-dim)		Parking Sensors (beep in reverse)	
Lights (glove box,dashboard, etc)		Emergency Brake	
Check for Owner's Manual			
Headliner:			
Sagging?		Water Damage, Burns, damage	
Wear and Tear:			
Gas/Brake Pedal		Steering Wheel and cover	
Shift Knob		Seats/Carpet	

Exterior

Lights			
High/Low Beams		Front Running Lights	
Front Fog Lights		Front Turn Signals	
Brake Running Lights		Pressed Brake Lights (3 rd brake light)	
Rear Turn Signals		Rear Fog Lights	

Bodywork			
Panel Gaps		Paint Seams on edge of panels	
Tires			
Turn lock to lock		Inspect tread-wear	
Inspect camber/toe angle			

Test Drive (go for a regular drive city and highway)

Acceleration Test: smooth, no knocks or hesitation,			
Regular Acceleration		Hard Acceleration	
Turning Test			
Stationary- turn lock to lock (noise/feel)		Moving- turn 360 (noise/feel both ways)	
Turn back and forth in motion to sway car (controlled, squeaks, knocks)		Hard turn while moving (controlled, squeaks, knocks)	
Brake Test -smooth, no pulls, no noises, no vibrations			
Regular Braking		Hard Braking (try to activate abs)	
ABS Light on dash?		Noise/pulling?	
Highway: stop and go, bumps, turns, slower			
RPM (top gear/overdrive)		Smooth/controlled/comfortable/solid	
Noises (thuds, squeaks, whines)		Downshift at cruising speed	
Cruise Control			
City: stop and go, bumps, turns, slower			
Noises (thuds, squeaks, whines)		Vibrations	
Does the car feel good to drive?		Shifting (smooth, crisp, no slipping)	
Scan Engine after Test Drive			