

CHECKLIST FOR BUYING A USED CAR

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To help you answer the questions to ask when buying a used car we have put together a used car buying checklist of things to look for when buying a used car.

Exterior

Windshield free of cracks

Body panel colors match

Magnet adheres to all steel body panels

Fresh paint job (if yes then it could be to conceal rust)

Seams where the trunk and hood close are properly aligned

Seams where doors and fenders meet are properly aligned

Free of body scratches

Free of body dents

Windshields wipers and blades fully functional

Headlights and directional lights intact and fully functional

Tires

Tires are a reputable brand name (Michelin, Bridgestone, and Goodyear)

Tires are all of the same make

Tires are free of any cuts, bubbles or cracks

Tread worn evenly (uneven wear indicates alignment and suspension problems)

Spare tire, jack and lug wrench on car and fully functional

Spare tire inflated

Engine



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Free of fluid or oil leaks

Oil filler neck not coated with thick, black deposits

Battery terminals free of corrosion

Oil dip stick free of dark, black oil

Free of odors while engine is running

Exhaust pipe emissions are neither blue (indicates engine burns oil) or black (indicate excessive oil consumption)

Suspension

Vehicle rests levelly

When bouncing the vehicle's corners, no creaking noises are made

All corners respond the same when bouncing

Interior

Seats unworn and free of cracks

All doors open and close freely

Trunk opens and closes freely

All gauges work

No dashboard warning lights remain illuminated

Stereo works

Heater works

Air conditioner works

Windshield wipers work

Windshield wiper fluid dispenses properly

All seats equipped with functional seat belts



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All seats adjust properly

Power windows operate properly

Sunroof opens and closes properly (if applicable)

Car alarm works (if applicable)

Trunk and driver-side door lock and unlock with key

Hazard lights function properly

Headlights, including Hi-Beams, work properly

Frame

Chassis is neither bent nor cracked

No signs of crumpling or straightening inside the trunk

Frame holes just inside outer edge clean and free of scratches

Automatic Transmission

Transmission fluid looks clean, not dirty or gritty (no indicates possible internal transmission problem)

Transmission neither slips nor delays when driving

Manual or Standard Transmission

Each gear shifts smoothly

No grinding noises when in reverse

Brakes

Vehicle steers straight and does not pull to one side when applying brakes

Parking brake engages and disengages freely

No grinding noises when applying

Wheels do not lock when applying antilock brakes (if applicable)

Steering

Vehicle does not drift to one side without prodding

Vehicle is stable; no shaking or vibrating



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No resistance in the steering wheel when turning

No clicking or clunking when turning

Miscellaneous

Car manual located in the glove compartment

Instructions included for any accessories

Service and repair records available

Owner has title

Other Insights

Walk away if the seller objects to your inspection

Don't feel rushed while inspecting

Try to get a mechanic to assess checklist results

Use any flaws against the asking price

Please print this and have it with you when checking the vehicle out and have a pen handy to checkmark everything and at the end ask questions about the ones that you have not check marked and or are questionable to you.

