

Buying a car checklist	Is it covered?
<u>Pre-Inspection Essentials</u>	
Get the description in writing - the seller MUST present an accurate description of the vehicle. Take screenshots of the advert, and if you get more details over the phone, ask them to confirm those on an email. It's all about making sure there is no 'bait and switch' going on.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Research the seller – if the car is on an online auction and classifieds website look who the seller actually is – how many negative reviews do they have, and how have they responded? Are they a new seller? That could be a red flag. Verified sellers are preferred, as are ones with a positive Trade Me seller history.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check how long the seller has had the car. If it's less than three months, the chances are that the seller is an illegal dealer	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Don't meet up at a neutral location – make sure you go to the seller's home to view the car. Meeting at a carpark etc. screams dodgy and suggests they don't want buyers to know where they live in case something goes wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Call in a friend – having a second opinion is essential. Bring a family member, friend or workmate who knows something about cars – they don't need to be an expert, just someone with some common sense.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<u>Viewing the car</u>	
Ask to see the registration documents. You need to make sure that the person selling it is the real owner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check the car's mileage – allow for 10,000km per year, so if a 12-year-old car has only done 70,000km, check the car's history to ensure the mileage is correct.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Ask if the car has been involved in any previous accidents	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Make sure that the car has a current registration and safety certificate. If due in less than six months get a new safety certificate before purchase as this is another mechanical inspection.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check that the windscreen is free from stone chips and cracks.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Look down the sides and roof of the car for obvious faults in the panel work. Look from different angles and move the car so that you have seen all the car in direct sun light. Use a fridge magnet on all panels. Anywhere it does not stick could indicate a crash repair.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Open the doors and lie on the ground so you can see if there is look underneath for rust damage. Use a fridge magnet on all panels. Anywhere it does not stick could indicate a rust repair.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Remove spare tyre and look at tyre well for rust.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Remove car mats and look for and smell for any dampness that may indicate a leaking window seal.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Open every door from the outside. Grasp the sides of the door like a handle and try to jiggle it up and down. Obviously, the door is allowed to swing open and shut, but it should have NO UPWARDS OR DOWNWARDS MOVEMENT.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Run the car for five minutes and check:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For any hisses from exhaust system underneath the vehicle. Get an old rag and block the end of the exhaust pipe completely, any holes in the exhaust will become obvious. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for any drops of water or oil on the ground. If there is red oil underneath, then there's probably a problem with the automatic transmission or steering. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for smoke coming from the exhaust as this is a sign of a possible worn piston rings 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any unusual noises coming from the engine bay. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Wipe off the dipstick with a rag and re-insert it into the engine. The oil should be between the two markings on the dipstick. Very dark oil tells you that the owner hasn't maintained the vehicle properly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Take off oil filler cap and water cap on radiator. If there is any white goo in the middle of these caps you have a blown head gasket.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sit in the driver's seat and:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn the air conditioning onto 'cold' and set the fan on full. It should be able to turn the inside of the vehicle into a fridge within a couple of minutes 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that the car is in park mode, then turn on the ignition key one stop so the coloured lights on the dashboard come on. Turn another stop so the engine starts and note that they all go off. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play Spotify and or a CD to listen to radio sound. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open and shut all windows 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn on and off all remaining switches and detect that they are working. This may require a road test. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Ask to see the car's maintenance history from the old service invoices and review the car's manual. Local cars will often have their service history documented in a booklet in the manual.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Pour a little bit of water over the windshield. Make sure no water enters inside the car through a poor seal.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check the oil level. Lift out the oil stick to confirm it's at the right level and the oil is not black.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Look at the engine, while it is running, and watch out for water and oil leaks - be sure to check for leaks by looking under the car as well.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are the doors, boot, and bonnet easy to open?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check all passenger doors to make sure you can open them from inside and outside.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Ask the seller to sit in the driver's seat and:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn on the side, full lights and high beam. check all of the lights are working. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn on the left and then right indicators. Check all are working. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check the lips of the disc brake rotors for wear. Anything over 2 mm will mean disc brake replacement. You will often note that the front brakes are more worn as they are designed to do more work than the rear discs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check tire tread. A new tyre has 8mm. to be safe and legal you will need tread of around 2 mm, across 75% of the tyre's width.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Testing how it drives	
Organise for at least a 20 km test drive covering motorway and Hills. Many problems will not surface on a suburban road test.	
Are you comfortable? Can you adjust the seat to rise, slide backwards, forwards and recline easily?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you adjust the position of the steering wheel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check the passenger seats. Make sure the front seat can adjust like the driver's seat.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check that all the seatbelts fit properly by belting yourself into each seat.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the passenger area comfortable for long distances?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there space for big items you may need - golf clubs, sports equipment etc.? Is it easy to fit them in and get them out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you fit in child's car seat in the car?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Perform an emergency stop on an empty road to check the strength of the brakes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Listen for any unusual sound. Does it go away if you are cruising in neutral? Does it increase with the engine revs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Take your hands off the wheel (keep them close) and see whether the vehicle pulls markedly to the left or right	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Find a hill or road with a gradient and perform a hill start to check that the handbrake releases and the clutch works properly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Perform a parallel park to see how easy it is to park – this is a major factor of hassle later on if you struggle to get control of parking it.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the car balanced? Drive straight and take your hands off the wheel – does it veer to the left or right, or does it feel balanced?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does it accelerate smoothly without judders or rattling?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How powerful is the engine? Can you get to a comfortable speed in a time that feels safe? Do you need to change gears more than usual?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Check the shock absorbers/suspension. How well does it absorb bumps, potholes, and handle corners?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<u>Get the car's complete history for a small fee</u>	
A car history check will tell you if the vehicle has money owing, an inconsistent odometer, has been reported stolen and offers a number of other useful information points. It will also tell you the current legal owner so you can be certain you are dealing with the correct person. Car history checks can be bought instantly online.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Stolen car? If you only want to know if it's stolen, enter the registration on the local police website to check its status.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Money owing? There are government services that check if there is money owing on the car. It is a small cost.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<u>Always get a pre-purchase inspection if interested</u>	
The AA (or similar providers) offer pre-purchase comprehensive inspections undertaken by an experienced mechanic. They will cover an overview of any recommended repairs, an indication of any potential warrant of fitness issues and a professional opinion on the car's condition. The cost is often more than covered by the negotiated price reduction you achieve with this information.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Alternatively, you can also contact a local mechanic who can do an inspection. If it is a specialist car use a mechanic who regularly services that model.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Questions to ask	
Can I see the last warrant of fitness report?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Who was the previous owner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What is the service history?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there any faults with the car, i.e. features or parts not working (radio, aircon etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has it been involved in any crashes or accidents?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If buying from a dealer. What warranty is included, and what does it cover?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Make sure you bargain	
Look on on-line sellers and get a good idea of the selling price range.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Remember genuine low mileage is better	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
"Would you be insulted if I offered a lower price." You now have their permission to give a much lower offer.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Offer a price that is at the low end of comparable models.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Talk less, not more – don't panic and talk too much in the negotiating stage to avoid awkward silences. When you make an offer, wait for them to make a counteroffer.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
When negotiating be friendly – don't be rude. You are more likely to get a discount if they like you.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Before you drive off with your new car	
Is the spare tire in place along with a tire jack and tire iron	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Is the car manual in the glove compartment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there a spare key?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No