

Used Car Pre-Purchase Inspection Sheet

Carry out the same inspection on every car you view, so a decision made in somebody's driveway is based on what you saw rather than what you remember.

One sheet per car, filled in on the driveway while you are standing in front of it. Print one per viewing and lay them side by side afterwards, when nobody is watching you decide.

WHAT THIS SHEET IS, AND IS NOT

This is a buyer's own walk-round, not a professional inspection. It exists because people forget checks when a stranger is standing beside them — anything expensive is still worth paying an independent inspector to look at before money changes hands.

Make and model	Registration	Year	Date viewed
VIN / chassis number	Engine and gearbox	Colour	Advert reference

PRICE, MILEAGE AND HISTORY the numbers to settle before you look at the car

Asking price	Mileage on the clock	Mileage at the last stamp	Former keepers
Seller — name and town	Private or trade	Phone	Do the mileages agree?

DOCUMENTS SEEN tick only what you have actually held in your hand

☐ Registration document — seller's name and address	☐ Roadworthiness certificate, and when it expires
☐ Service book stamps, dates and mileages in order	☐ Both keys, locking nut key and handbook
☐ Invoices for the work the advert claims	☐ Finance, write-off and identity checks done

COLD START ask for the engine to be stone cold when you arrive

☐ Bonnet cold to the hand before the key is turned	
☐ Smoke on start-up — colour, and whether it clears	
☐ Noises from cold: rattle, tap, whine, chain	
☐ Idle steady, or hunting and dropping	
Warning lights with the ignition on, before starting	Still lit once it has started

PANELS, GAPS AND PAINT walk round in one direction and write what you see

☐ Bonnet — gaps and paint

☐ Wings and headlamps

☐ Doors, gaps and sills

☐ Roof, pillars and screen

☐ Rear quarters and arches

☐ Boot floor and bumpers

TYRES AND WHEELS front and rear, plus the spare — the date code is on the sidewall

Wheel	Make and model	Size	Tread depth	Date code	Condition and damage

Engine oil — colour and level

Coolant

Brake fluid

Gearbox and other

Test drive — clutch, gears, brakes, steering, temperature, noises

FAULTS FOUND, AND WHAT THEY COST TO PUT RIGHT

Fault	How bad	Who quoted	Cost to fix	Off the price?

Decision

Offer made

Outcome