



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- flashlight
- clean rags
- jack
- magnet
- jack stands

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Make :

Model :

Year :

VIN :

Mileage :

Start with the Basics

- ☐ Any gaps in service history that raise suspicion?
- ☐ Any reason to suspect the mileage isn't legitimate?
- ☐ Does the title include the word "salvage"?

Exterior

- ☐ Are the wheels damaged?
- ☐ Are the windshield wipers damaged or missing?
- ☐ Do turn signals, headlamps, and brake lights work?
- ☐ Any lug nuts damaged or missing?
- ☐ Any faded paint or cracks?
- ☐ Is the trim free of damage?
- ☐ Any panels a different color?
- ☐ Any differences in gaps between body panels?

Exterior (Continued)

- ☐ Any cracks or chips in the windshield?
- ☐ Any evidence of damage from a previous collision?
- ☐ Any small dark spots or oily spots on the bumper near the exhaust pipe?
- ☐ Are all the tires the same size, brand, and condition?
- ☐ Any signs of rust?

Interior (Continued)

- ☐ Any seats that are cracked, stained, or ripped?
- ☐ Is the trim intact and free of cracks?
- ☐ Any windows go up or down slower than the others, or make a noise?
- ☐ Does the sunroof operate slowly, make sounds, or struggle to move?
- ☐ Do all accessories (windshield wipers, stereo, etc) work properly?
- ☐ Any squeaking or rattling sounds from the climate control fan?

Interior (Continued)

- ☐ Does the climate control fan work on all speed settings?
- ☐ Any suspicious smells that could be attributed to mold or mildew?
- ☐ Air conditioning and heat in working condition?
- ☐ Any evidence of water damage under the seats, carpet, or glove box?
- ☐ Check the spare tire. Any water damage or rust in the spare tire well?
- ☐ Are the pedals, seats, or steering wheel more worn than the odometer suggest?

Under the Hood

- ☐ Any cracks or worn places in the belts?
- ☐ Any exposed wires?
- ☐ Any cracked hoses or signs of leaks?
- ☐ Any corrosion on the battery or battery clamps?
- ☐ Is the battery more than 4 years old?

Under the Hood (Continued)

- ☐ Any signs of fluid leaks? Are the fluid levels where they should be?
- ☐ Any oil change sticker? Is it overdue for an oil change according to the mileage?
- ☐ Is the air filter dirty?
- ☐ Any seepage or sludge at the bottom of the brake and coolant reservoirs?
- ☐ If the engine has a timing belt, is it older than 4 years?
- ☐ Is there excessive smoke coming from the exhaust?
- ☐ Does oil from the dipstick look black, smell burnt, or look gooey?
- ☐ Are there any metallic particles in the oil?
- ☐ Does the oil have a milky consistency at all?
- ☐ Does the oil smell like gasoline?
- ☐ Any signs of oil sludge or caking?
- ☐ For automatic transmission vehicles, does the fluid dipstick smell burnt?
- ☐ Are there lots of black particles in the transmission fluid? Is the fluid dark?

Chassis and Underbody

- ☐ Any of the inner fender shields broken or missing?
- ☐ Does the vehicle move up & down excessively when you place your knee on the bumper and give it a bounce?
- ☐ Are the tires unevenly worn?
- ☐ Any signs of oil leaking from struts or shock absorbers?
- ☐ Any lateral play on the wheels while the vehicle is lifted off the ground?
- ☐ Peek through the wheels. Any sign of worn brake pads or brake rotors?
- ☐ Does the underbody have any rust?
- ☐ Any bent or dented metal in the underbody?
- ☐ Any knocking noises coming from the engine that get faster or louder as you increase in speed?

Test Drive

- ☐ Are there any strange noises or smells?
- ☐ Is the airbag light on? Is it blinking?

Test Drive (Continued)

- ☐ Does the transmission jerk or hesitate at shift points?
- ☐ After driving the vehicle, can you spot any fresh leaks?
- ☐ Anything rub or clunk when the vehicle is driven in a tight circle?
- ☐ Does the brake pedal feel consistent and smooth when pressed/depressed?
- ☐ Does the car pull to one side? What about when braking?
- ☐ Feel any abnormal vibrations at highway speeds?
- ☐ Hear any excessive wind noise?
- ☐ Do the warning lights come on while the key is turned to the "on" position?
- ☐ Do the warning lights remain on after starting the vehicle?
- ☐ Does the engine fail to idle smoothly after startup?
- ☐ For standard transmission vehicles, does the clutch feel stiff, stuck, or jerky?
- ☐ For automatic transmissions, does the car move through the gears smoothly when accelerating?

ADDING IT ALL UP

<5	Little to no maintenance required	<5	Don't stress, it's a used car after all	<5	May need some significant repairs, get a pro's opinion
5-10	May need a few simple repairs	5-10	You may need some significant repairs	5-10	Be wary, this is a very risky buy
>10	Nothing serious, but potentially time-consuming to repair	>10	Risky, weigh your options.	>10	Keep looking

Items marked in black = seek professional advice before purchase