



We've put together this special form summarising all the key tips and advice in our *KwikGuide to Buying a Used Car* for you to print out and take with you when viewing cars.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN PHONING	CHECKING THE OILY BITS
How long have you owned the car? Why selling?	Engine bay - very oily or suspiciously extra clean? Wires or hoses hanging loose?
What's its general condition - had any problems with the car?	Oil - light brown good, pitch black typical. Bad news white gunge under oil filler cap?
How much MOT & tax is left on it?	Engine warm - bad starter prepared for you?
What's the mileage - know if it's genuine?	Hoses - hard, cracked or split?
Any service records - any work done recently?	Rust - any around the front suspension mountings & how bad on the exhaust?
Has it transported pets or been used by smokers?	Any wires with cracked or burned outer coatings, or engine belts loose or frayed?
CHECKING THE OUTSIDE	Other fluids: brake, power steering, gearbox oil all full to the proper levels?
Overview: is it standing straight & level?	Water - CARE! Don't open filler cap if engine is hot. Full to the proper level & not dirty brown colour? Blue / green / orange with antifreeze?
Body: dents, scratches, varied panel gaps?	
Shock absorbers: leaking, too bouncy?	CV joints: split rubber bellows where the suspension arms meet the engine? Expensive MOT failure point.
Paint: ripples, overspray, mismatched colour on different panels?	
Rust: door bottoms & sills, wheel arches, boot lid?	Any oil on engine underside or oily marks on the ground where the car is usually parked?
Doors: creaking or ill-fitting?	
Wheels: cracked or scuffed trims? Dents in metal rims bad news for suspension.	CHECKING THE PAPERWORK
Glass: cracked or chipped, especially the windscreen, where a chip can be an MOT fail?	V5 registration document: check the watermark to ensure it's genuine. Don't buy without one!
Lights: lens cracks or moisture? All working?	check the number plate and chassis number on the V5 match those on the car. Any signs of tampering with numbers on the car?
Tyres: condition & wear pattern, different make at each corner?	tax disc: genuine? for the right car?
Underside: evidence of welding or repairs?	MOT certificate: check expiry date is as claimed. check genuine at www.motinfo.gov.uk
CHECKING THE INSIDE	seller's ID: ask for ID & check their address matches the one on the V5 registration doc.
Smell of smoking or pets? Feel the carpets thoroughly for dampness.	check the last change of ownership date. Is number of previous keepers as claimed?
Seats: high wear = high miles	
Shiny steering wheel or gearstick = high miles	service history: ideally a stamped dealer service book, or a big file of receipts?
Milometer: numbers mis-aligned, scratched or painted over?	
Instrument panel screws scratched or rounded?	what's been repaired? if a major service item, verify it with the garage. next service due?
Pedal rubbers: worn, missing or very new?	
Doors: all handles & locks working? Ask for a demo of the alarm, if fitted.	check dates and mileages on service receipts make sense & match car's current mileage
Sunroof: winds back /tilts fully, no sign of leaks or rust around opening?	warranty - what's covered: parts, labour? any excesses, limitations? what invalidates?
Spare wheel: inflated, with all the tools?	previous owner - get name/address from V5 and call them to check mileage & if problems
Boot: check for rust under carpet & around joins, and for paint overspray	buy a history check - don't get stuck with a write-off, stolen car or one with finance owing