

*Keep this guide handy as you go through the inspection process.*

## **Buyer's Toolkit (USA/Canada Edition)**

### **Used Car Inspection Checklist**

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#### **Before Meeting the Seller:**

- ☐ Ask for VIN and run a vehicle history report (Carfax/AutoCheck)
- ☐ Ask for maintenance/service records
- ☐ Confirm mileage and ownership history
- ☐ Ask for reason for selling

#### **At the Vehicle Location:**

##### **Exterior**

- ☐ No mismatched paint or uneven panels
- ☐ Check for rust spots, especially on wheel wells & undercarriage
- ☐ Working headlights, brake lights, turn signals
- ☐ Windshield free of cracks
- ☐ Tires have even tread & no bulges

##### **Interior**

- ☐ All windows/locks function
- ☐ Dashboard warning lights (check engine, ABS, etc.)
- ☐ HVAC works (heat and A/C)
- ☐ Odor (no mold or smoke smell)
- ☐ Seats adjust properly

##### **Under the Hood**

- ☐ Oil level clean (not black or burnt)
- ☐ Coolant level and color (no rust or oil in it)
- ☐ Transmission fluid (if applicable)
- ☐ Belts and hoses not cracked or frayed
- ☐ Battery is under 4–5 years old

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### **Test Drive**

- ☐ Brakes firm, no squealing or vibration
- ☐ Steering is responsive, no pulling
- ☐ No unusual engine noises
- ☐ Transmission shifts smoothly (auto or manual)
- ☐ Acceleration and cruise at highway speed
- ☐ How the car drives straight (if it pulls to one side)

### **Paperwork to Ask For**

- ☐ Title (clean, in seller's name, no liens)
  - ☐ Service records (digital or physical)
  - ☐ Emissions certificate (if required)
  - ☐ Bill of sale (download or fill at sale time)
  - ☐ Registration status
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### **Red Flag Cheat Sheet: What to Avoid**

- Seller refuses VIN or service records
- Title not in seller's name or "lost title"
- Very low price with no clear reason
- "Cash only" with no paperwork
- Strong air freshener smell (may hide mold/smoke)
- Car not cold when you arrive (could be hiding cold start issues)
- Seller rushes you or avoids questions
- No test drive allowed
- Warning lights on dashboard
- If in doubt, consider getting a trusted mechanic to inspect the car before finalizing the deal.

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