

Used Car Inspection Checklist

Gebrauchtwagen-Checkliste | Bilingual DE/EN | Print & fill

How to use this checklist

Print this PDF and bring it to every test drive. Check each item systematically. Mark OK or Issue for each point. Use the Notes fields to record details. Cross-reference specifications with automobilisto.de/en/catalog before your visit. This checklist covers the same points a professional pre-purchase inspector would examine.

Vehicle Information | Fahrzeugdaten

Brand / Marke:	_____	Model / Modell:	_____
Year / Baujahr:	_____	Mileage / km-Stand:	_____
VIN / FIN:	_____		
Seller / Verkäufer:	_____	Date / Datum:	_____
Asking Price:	_____	Location:	_____

1. Documents & Papers | Dokumente & Unterlagen

☐ Zulassungsbescheinigung Teil I — Vehicle registration certificate (Fahrzeugschein)	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐ Zulassungsbescheinigung Teil II — Vehicle title (Fahrzeugbrief) — if missing, walk away	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐ TUV/HU report — Last inspection report — check expiry date on rear plate sticker	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐ Service book / Scheckheft — Stamped by authorized workshops? Consistent mileage entries?	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐ Spare keys — How many keys? Missing key = possible theft risk	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐ Owner's manual — Original Bedienungsanleitung present?	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐ Warranty documents — Any remaining manufacturer or dealer Garantie?	☐ OK ☐ Issue

PRO TIP: Always verify the VIN (FIN) on the documents matches the one stamped on the car body (door frame, windshield, engine bay). Mismatches = fraud risk.

2. Exterior | Aussenansicht

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| ☐ Paint condition — Even color across all panels? Use paint thickness gauge if possible | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ Panel gaps — Symmetrical gaps between doors, bonnet, boot? Uneven = accident repair | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ Rust / corrosion — Check wheel arches, sills, door edges, boot floor, underbody | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ Glass / windshield — Chips, cracks, delamination? Check all windows + mirrors | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ Lights & lenses — All headlights, taillights, indicators, fog lights functional? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ Tires & wheels — Tread depth min. 3mm recommended. Even wear? Matching brand/size? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ Underbody — Oil leaks, rust, welding marks, structural damage? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ Exhaust system — Corrosion? Unusual sounds? Smoke color at idle? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |

PRO TIP: Photograph the car from all four corners + close-ups of any damage. Compare with catalog photos at automobilisto.de to spot non-original parts.

3. Interior | Innenraum

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| ☐ | Seats & upholstery — Tears, stains, excessive wear? Driver seat wear = real mileage indicator | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Dashboard & controls — All warning lights off after engine start? Check every button/switch | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Infotainment / Navigation — System responsive? Bluetooth pairing? Software version? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Air conditioning — Cold air from AC? Warm air from heater? All zones working? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Windows & sunroof — All electric windows functional? Sunroof opens/closes smoothly? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Odometer check — Digital or analog? Cross-reference with service book entries | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Pedal & steering wheel wear — Heavy wear with low mileage = potential odometer fraud | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Trunk & spare tire — Spare wheel present? Jack and tools? Boot floor dry (no water ingress)? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |

PRO TIP: Smell test: musty = water damage. Sweet chemical = coolant leak. Burning = electrical issue. Fresh air freshener = something being masked.

4. Engine & Mechanics | Motor & Technik

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|--------------------------|---|--|
| ☐ | Cold start — Start engine cold — should fire immediately, no unusual noises | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Oil condition — Check dipstick: golden-brown = good. Black/gritty = overdue. Milky = head gasket | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Coolant level & color — Should be green/pink, not brown or oily | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Belts & hoses — Cracks, wear, leaks around connections? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Transmission — Smooth shifts? No grinding? Check manual clutch bite point | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Brakes — Disc thickness, pad wear, no vibration when braking | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Suspension — Bounce test: press each corner, should return once. No clunks over bumps | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Steering — No play in straight-ahead position. Power steering whine? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Battery — Age? Voltage test? Corrosion on terminals? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Exhaust emissions — White smoke = coolant. Blue = oil burn. Black = fuel. Clear = good | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |

PRO TIP: If possible, have the engine scanned with an OBD-II reader before purchase. Stored fault codes reveal hidden problems the seller may have cleared.

5. Test Drive | Probefahrt

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|--------------------------|---|--|
| ☐ | Engine performance — Expected power delivery? Compare specs at automobilisto.de/en/catalog | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Transmission shifts — Smooth? No hesitation? Auto: no jerking between gears | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Straight-line tracking — Car pulls left/right? = alignment issue or uneven tire wear | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Braking — Firm pedal? No pulling to one side? No ABS activation on dry road? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Noise check — Window down at 50 km/h: wind noise, bearing hum, suspension clunks? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Highway test — Vibrations above 100 km/h? Steering stable? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | Parking maneuver — Full lock both directions — no power steering whine or clunks? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |
| ☐ | All electronics — Cruise control, parking sensors, lane assist, heated seats? | ☐ OK ☐ Issue |

PRO TIP: Drive at least 15-20 minutes on mixed roads (city + highway). Many issues only appear when the engine and transmission are fully warmed up.

6. Price Evaluation | Preisbewertung

Check	Source	Value
☐	Asking price (Verkaufspreis)	EUR _____
☐	DAT/Schwacke valuation	EUR _____
☐	mobile.de comparable listings (same model/year/km)	EUR _____
☐	AutoScout24 comparable listings	EUR _____
☐	Estimated repair costs for found issues	EUR _____
☐	Remaining TUV months (value if fresh TUV)	_____ months
Your target negotiation price		EUR _____

7. Red Flags — Walk Away If: | Sofort gehen wenn:

☐	No Teil II (Fahrzeugbrief) — Outstanding financing or stolen vehicle	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐	VIN mismatch — Documents don't match car body stamp	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐	Seller refuses test drive — or demands cash deposit before viewing	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐	Odometer inconsistencies — Service book km don't match displayed km	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐	Fresh undercoating — May hide structural rust or accident damage	☐ OK ☐ Issue
☐	Multiple recent owners — Frequent changes = known problems being passed along	☐ OK ☐ Issue

8. Your Decision | Ihre Entscheidung

☐ BUY — No significant issues found	☐ NEGOTIATE — Issues found, reduce price by EUR _____
☐ WALK AWAY — Critical issues or red flags	☐ GET INSPECTION — Professional ADAC/DEKRA check first

Additional notes / Zusätzliche Anmerkungen:

Automobilisto Resources — Bookmark These
Vehicle Catalog: automobilisto.de/en/catalog — Verify specs for 5,000+ models, dual-source verified
Brochure Archive: automobilisto.de/en/archive — Original manufacturer brochures 1960-2025
Model Comparison: automobilisto.de/en/comparison — Side-by-side spec comparison tool
Editorial Methodology: automobilisto.de/en/methodology — How we verify every data point
B2B API: automobilisto.de/en/b2b/api — Vehicle data API for professionals

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