Classic Car Inspection Checklist

Bring this with you to every car you look at. Check each box as you go.

Car (year / make / model): _____ **Date:** _____

Seller / location: _____ **Asking price: $** _____ **Miles:** _____

BODY AND RUST

- ☐ Rust on floors, trunk, rocker panels
- ☐ Rust around wheel wells and fenders
- ☐ Even gaps between doors and panels
- ☐ Paint matches on every panel
- ☐ Overspray or filler (try a small magnet)
- ☐ Frame and underside look straight
- ☐ Glass and door seals in good shape

ENGINE AND DRIVETRAIN

- ☐ Starts easily when cold
- ☐ No leaks under the car
- ☐ No heavy smoke from the exhaust
- ☐ No knocking, ticking, or whining
- ☐ Transmission shifts smoothly
- ☐ Clutch grabs evenly (if manual)

BRAKES, STEERING, SUSPENSION

- ☐ Brake pedal feels firm
- ☐ Car stops straight, no pulling
- ☐ Steering is not loose or sloppy
- ☐ No clunks over bumps
- ☐ Tires are even and not too old

INTERIOR AND ELECTRICAL

- ☐ Seats, carpet, and headliner OK
- ☐ No musty or moldy smell
- ☐ Gauges all work
- ☐ Headlights, brake lights, signals
- ☐ Wipers, horn, heater, radio
- ☐ Windows and door locks work

PAPERWORK

- ☐ Clear title in the seller's name
- ☐ VIN matches the title and the car
- ☐ Service records or receipts
- ☐ Photos of any restoration work
- ☐ Numbers match (if seller claims so)

OVERALL RATING

Condition (circle one):

#1 Show **#2 Great** **#3 Good** **#4 Fair**

Would I buy it? ☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ No

TEST DRIVE NOTES

Smart buyer tips

Bring a flashlight, a friend who knows cars, and take photos. Look at the car in daylight. Never rush.
For a pricey car, consider paying a classic car specialist for a pre-purchase inspection.

Classic Car Budget Worksheet

Cheap cars can turn into expensive projects. Add up the real cost before you buy.

WHAT WILL THIS CAR REALLY COST?

ITEM	ESTIMATE	ACTUAL
Purchase price	$	$
Sales tax, title, and registration	$	$
Insurance (first year)	$	$
Shipping or trailer rental	$	$
Immediate repairs (brakes, tires, fluids)	$	$
Parts you already know you need	$	$
Tools and supplies	$	$
Storage or garage costs	$	$
Surprise fund (a cushion for repairs you didn't see coming)	$	$
TOTAL	**$**	**$**

Can you afford the total comfortably, not just the purchase price? If not, keep shopping.

COMPARE YOUR TOP 3 CARS

	Car #1	Car #2	Car #3
Year / make / model			
Asking price			
Hagerty value (condition #3)			
Condition rating (#1 to #4)			
Parts availability (easy / okay / hard)			
Four-door, wagon, or retired brand?			
Gut feeling (1 to 5)			

Check the price before you buy

Use Hagerty's free online Valuation Tool to compare a car's value at each condition level and see recent sales. Search for the year, make, and model at hagerty.com/valuation-tools. Prices change often, so check again before you buy.

Looking for your next classic?

Browse the Classifieds page at classiccarsonline.us and sign up for the newsletter to see new listings first.