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Used car inspection checklist
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1. Preliminaries

- ❑ Vehicle details and identity
- ❑ Build, compliance plates
- ❑ VIN
- ❑ Registration (license plate)
- ❑ Vehicle history
- ❑ Service history
- ❑ Repair receipts
- ❑ Odometer reading

2. Visual inspection

Engine bay
- ❑ Check oil level & quality
- ❑ Check coolant level & colour
- ❑ Check fluids: power steering, brake, transmission & battery
- ❑ Radiator free from corrosion
- ❑ Hoses free from cracks, splits

Under the car
- ❑ Check for oil leaks: engine, transmission, differential, axles, power steering
- ❑ Check for damage, dents, welds
- ❑ No rust
- ❑ Check fuel tank & filler pipe for leaks

Tyres
- ❑ Correct specification
- ❑ Consistent, regular wear patterns
- ❑ Check vehicle jack

Exterior
- ❑ Look for dents, creases
- ❑ Check panel gaps
- ❑ Any door sag
- ❑ Windscreen free from chips, cracks
- ❑ Check headlights, tail-lights
- ❑ No rust
- ❑ Shock absorber test

Interior
- ❑ No corrosion (under carpets)
- ❑ Free from odours
- ❑ Seats are secure
- ❑ Seatbelts in good condition
- ❑ Interior consistent with age, use
- ❑ Powered items work

3. Start-up

Engine and exhaust
- ❑ Easy to start
- ❑ No shaking, excessive vibration
- ❑ No knocking, rattling or whistling noises
- ❑ No exhaust smoke

Interior
- ❑ No warning lights after start-up
- ❑ Check air conditioning
- ❑ Test lights, indicators, horn and windscreen wiper

4. Driving

Automatic transmission
- ❑ Gears engage easily & without delay
- ❑ Gearshifts free from jerks, jolts
- ❑ No rumbling, whining noises

Manual transmission
- ❑ Clutch depresses fully without noises
- ❑ Clutch does not slip under acceleration
- ❑ No shuddering from hill-top start

Engine
- ❑ Runs smoothly
- ❑ No signs of smoke
- ❑ No irregular noises

Interior
- ❑ Instruments, odometer work
- ❑ Gauges remain in proper operating range

Brakes
- ❑ No pulsing through the pedal (ABS excepted)
- ❑ No squeaking, groaning noises
- ❑ Emergency stop test

Steering and suspension
- ❑ No steering wheel vibrations, shudders
- ❑ Steering wheel does not pull left/right
- ❑ For FWD, no clicking noises on full lock
- ❑ No knocking, thumping noises over bumps

5. Final check

- ❑ After driving, check for any oil or water leaks from under the vehicle and in the engine bay.