

1. Pre-Viewing Sense Check

- Registration and mileage match the advert
 - Price aligns with similar vehicles on the market
 - MOT history reviewed for consistency
 - Seller communication is clear and transparent
 - VIN available and verifiable
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2. Documentation & History

- V5C present and registered to the seller
 - Service history provided and consistent
 - Evidence of major maintenance where applicable
 - MOT record checked for repeated advisories
 - Number of previous owners understood
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3. Exterior Assessment

- Panel gaps even and consistent
 - Paint finish - check for 'orange peel' or different colour panels
 - No corrosion/rust bubbling on sills, arches, door bottoms or panel edges
 - Tyres evenly worn and within legal limits
 - Wheels free from cracks or structural damage
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4. Interior Condition

- Wear level appropriate for mileage
 - Seats, mirrors, and steering adjustments working
 - Warning lights illuminate then extinguish on start-up
 - Infotainment, heating, and air conditioning functional
 - No signs of damp, mould, or strong odours. Check the boot well for water.
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5. Engine Bay Checks

- Oil and coolant at correct levels
 - No visible leaks or residue
 - Belts and hoses appear intact
 - Engine starts cleanly from cold
 - No warning lights remain on
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6. Test Drive Observations

- Smooth cold start
 - Clutch engages cleanly
 - Gear changes smooth under load
 - No knocking, rattling, or vibration
 - Brakes operate quietly and evenly.
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7. Final Due Diligence

- All keys present
 - Outstanding finance check completed
 - Warranty terms understood (if applicable)
 - Payment method agreed securely
 - Comfortable walking away if concerns remain
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Key Red Flags. Walk Away If:

- ▲ Seller applies pressure or rushes decisions
 - ▲ Documentation does not align
 - ▲ Warning lights reappear
 - ▲ Significant leaks, overheating, or smoke
 - ▲ "Today only" pricing tactics are used
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This checklist is designed to reduce risk and improve decision-making. It does not replace an independent inspection or professional report. For additional checks, view our used car check & report service at www.thecarkonsultant.co.uk