Used Hyundai Accent inspection checklist

What to check on a used Accent, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.

COVERS **MC** 2006–2011 **RB** 2011–2019

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☐ **Tick it** if it's fine. **Cross it** if it isn't, and note what you found so you can price it into your offer.

! **Safety critical:** affects how safely it drives or protects you in a crash. Best to have a mechanic check it before you buy.

$ **Negotiate:** costs money to fix, from wear to major repairs. Get a quote and take it off the price.

1 Exterior

- ☐ **Panels.** Walk around the body in good light and check that the gaps between panels are even and the paint colour matches all over. Overspray on rubber seals or trim means a panel has been repainted. Mismatched colour between panels usually means a repair after a crash. $
- ☐ **Wheels.** Check each wheel rim for kerb marks, cracks or dents. Rims should be free of damage and look the same style on all four corners. A badly kerbed wheel can be bent, causing a vibration at speed. $
- ☐ **Rust.** Look closely at the wheel arches, sills, door bottoms and the bottom edge of the boot lid for bubbling paint or flaking metal. Rust here spreads from underneath and is expensive to fix properly. $
- ☐ **Lights.** Test every exterior light with someone outside the car, including indicators, brake lights and reversing light. All should work clearly. A dim or flickering light can mean a failing connector, not just a bulb. $

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil.** Pull the dipstick with the engine cold and check the level sits between the marks. Oil should look brown, not black and gritty. Ask how often it needs topping up between services. $
- ☐ **Coolant.** Check the coolant reservoir sits at the marked level and the fluid is a bright colour, not rusty or oily. Oily coolant can mean a head gasket problem. $
- ☐ **Drivebelt.** Look at the drivebelt across the front of the engine for cracking, fraying or a glazed, shiny surface. A belt that squeals on startup is already showing wear. $

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Tyre tread.** Check tread depth across all four tyres; it should sit well above the wear bars and be even side to side. Wear on one edge only points to wheels out of alignment, often from hitting kerbs. $
- ☐ **Underbody rust.** Look under the car at the floor and around the suspension mounts for rust, bent metal or fresh welds. New black coating in just one spot can be hiding a crash repair. !
- ☐ **Suspension.** Push down hard on each corner of the car and let go; it should bounce back once and settle, not keep bouncing. Oily residue on the shock absorbers means they are leaking. $
- ☐ **Brakes.** Look through the wheel spokes at the brake discs for deep grooves or a raised lip around the edge. A raised edge means the discs are thinning and due for replacement. $

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Turn the key to "on" without starting the engine; every dash light should light up, then go out once the engine is running. A brake, airbag or engine light that stays on needs an explanation before you buy. !
- ☐ **Seatbelts.** Pull each seatbelt out fully and let it retract, then click it into the buckle to check it latches firmly. Fraying or a belt that doesn't retract smoothly means it needs replacing. !
- ☐ **Electrics.** Work through the screen, Bluetooth, reversing camera if fitted, power windows and mirrors to confirm each one works. A camera that's hazy or doesn't come on may have a wiring fault. $
- ☐ **Interior rattles.** Drive over a rough patch of road with the radio off and listen closely for creaks or rattles from the dash, doors and seats. A loose trim clip is usually cheap to fix but worth factoring into your offer. $

5 Test drive

- ☐ **Cold start.** Start the engine from cold if possible and listen as it settles to idle; it should start easily without hesitation. Knocking that speeds up with revs needs a mechanic's opinion before you buy. $
- ☐ **Manual clutch.** Manual: pull away from a stop and accelerate hard in a high gear; the clutch should bite smoothly partway up the pedal with no slipping. A rising pedal bite point or a burning smell means the clutch is near the end of its life. $
- ☐ **Automatic gearbox.** Automatic: drive at varying speeds and feel each gear change; it should shift smoothly with no hard thump, flare or hesitation into Drive or Reverse. A delayed or jerky shift into gear often means the transmission needs attention. $

! **Stay safe.** Never go under a car held up only by a jack, and never open the radiator or coolant cap on a hot engine. Keep hands, hair and loose clothing clear of fans and belts when the engine is running, and do checks under the bonnet with it switched off where you can. On the test drive, hold a current licence, confirm the car is registered and insured, obey road rules, and only brake hard when the road behind is clear. Meet in a safe, public-facing place, take someone with you, and don't carry large amounts of cash to a viewing.

5 Test drive continued

- [ ] **Engine power.** Accelerate firmly from low speed and check the car pulls cleanly without stuttering, hesitating or smoking. Smoke from the exhaust under load points to an engine problem. $
- [ ] **Brakes.** Brake firmly from speed on a quiet road; the car should stop straight with a firm pedal and no pulling, pulsing or grinding. Pulling to one side can mean a sticking caliper. !
- [ ] **Steering.** Drive over bumps and around a corner at low speed; the car should track straight with no clunks from the front end. A hum that grows louder with speed is often a worn wheel bearing. $

6 Documentation

- [ ] **Service history.** Ask for the logbook and receipts, and check services were done on time and at the right intervals. Cheap cars often miss services; ask for receipts, not just a stamped book.
- [ ] **Registration.** Check the car's registration status online using the plate number to confirm it is current and matches the seller's details. An expired or soon-to-expire rego is a cost you'll wear straight after buying.
- [ ] **Roadworthy certificate.** Ask the seller for a current roadworthy certificate if your state requires one before a car can be sold or transferred. Without one you may need to arrange and pay for an inspection yourself before registering the car.

What this guide can't tell you about the Accent you're looking at

1+
recalls on Accents built since 2000*

22
common faults reported on Accents built since 2000*

881
owner complaints on Accents built 2012–2017*

Money owing, stolen or a write-off?
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* Shufti analysis, October 2026, of official recall notices, complaints lodged by vehicle owners with vehicle safety regulators, and independent reviews and owner forums. Faults are counted when two or more independent sources report them.

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