Used Hyundai i20 inspection checklist

What to check on a used i20, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.

COVERS **PB** 2010–2015

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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

- ☐ **Panel fit.** Walk around and sight down each panel gap, checking they're even with matching paint colour across adjoining panels. Overspray on rubber seals or trim points to earlier crash repair. Uneven gaps usually mean a panel has been refitted after an accident. $
- ☐ **Paint condition.** Look closely at the roof and bonnet in sunlight for flaking, cracking or dulled clear coat. Patchy, cloudy paint on these flat panels suggests the clear coat is failing. Clear coat failing on flat panels can mean a costly respray. $
- ☐ **Rust.** Check the sills, wheel arches, door bottoms and tailgate for bubbling paint or rust. Rust starting at the bottom of doors often means it is eating through from the inside out. A small hatchback like this often sits outdoors for years, so check carefully. $
- ☐ **Lights.** Test every light including headlights, indicators, brake lights and reverse lights, checking each works and is bright and clear. Hazy or yellowed headlight lenses cut night-time visibility. Cloudy lenses can usually be polished back to clear for a modest cost. $

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil.** Pull the dipstick and check the oil sits between the marks and looks brown, not black or gritty. Black, gritty oil suggests servicing has been skipped. Oil well above the top mark can point to a leak elsewhere affecting levels. $
- ☐ **Coolant.** Check the coolant reservoir is filled to its mark and the coolant is brightly coloured, not rusty or oily. Ask if it needs frequent topping up. Oily coolant can mean a blown head gasket, a costly repair. $
- ☐ **Drive belt.** With the engine off, look at the drive belt for cracks, fraying or glazing on its surface. A cracked or frayed belt can fail without warning. A worn belt is a cheap thing for a seller to have missed before sale. $
- ☐ **Battery.** Look for clean terminals and a date sticker on the battery, and check there's no white powdery corrosion. A battery older than about four years may need replacing soon. Corroded terminals can cause intermittent electrical faults. $

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Tyre tread.** Check tread depth on all four tyres is above the wear bars and wear is even side to side. Wear on one edge only suggests the wheels are out of alignment. Uneven wear can also point to worn suspension parts. $
- ☐ **Tyre valves.** Check each tyre valve for a slow hiss or bubbling when you wet it with a damp finger, and check tyre pressures are even across all four. A leaking valve is a cheap fix but worth knowing about before you buy. Soft tyres on one side only can also point to a slow valve leak. $
- ☐ **Underbody rust.** Look underneath at the floor and around the suspension mounts for rust, bent metal or fresh welds. Patchy new coating in one spot can be hiding crash repair work. Fresh undercoating applied only in one area is a common way to mask hidden damage. !
- ☐ **Brakes.** Look through the wheel spokes at the brake discs for deep grooves or a raised lip on the edge. A visible ridge on the disc means it's due for replacement soon. Light scoring is normal; a deep groove or lip is not. $

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Turn the key to "on" without starting, and check every dash light comes on then goes out once the engine is running. An airbag, brake or engine light that stays lit needs an explanation. A light taped over or a bulb removed is a red flag. !
- ☐ **Seatbelts.** Pull each seatbelt out fully and let it retract, then click it into the buckle. It should move smoothly with no fraying or stiffness. A belt that doesn't retract properly may not hold you firmly in a crash. !
- ☐ **Air con.** Run the air con on its coldest setting for a few minutes and check it blows cold air steadily without a musty smell. Check the footwells for damp patches afterwards. Weak cooling or a wet carpet can mean a leaking or underperforming air con system. $
- ☐ **Electrics.** Test the stereo, power windows, mirrors and central locking, and count the keys handed over. Missing keys or dead switches are cheap for a seller to hide but costly to fix. A single remote key left can mean a surprise cost to get a spare cut. $

! **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

- [ ] **Manual clutch.** Manual: pull away from a stop on level ground and feel for shaking or vibration through the pedal and floor as the clutch engages. It should take up drive smoothly with no judder. Judder on takeoff usually means the clutch or its mounts need attention soon. $
- [ ] **Automatic gearbox.** Automatic: drive through all gears and feel for slipping, delay or a thump when shifting into Drive or Reverse. Shifts should feel smooth and quick. A jerky or shuddering shift between gears points to a transmission problem. $
- [ ] **Brakes.** Brake firmly from speed on an empty road and check the car stops straight with no pulling, pulsing or grinding. A grinding noise means the pads have worn down to metal. Pulsing through the pedal means the discs are warped. !
- [ ] **Steering.** Check the car tracks straight with no wandering, and the steering feels consistent at all speeds. A whine or the assistance cutting in and out points to a power steering fault. Heavy steering at parking speed that lightens suddenly is a common warning sign. $
- [ ] **Suspension noise.** Drive slowly over a speed bump and listen for knocks or clunks from the front or rear. Any clunk over bumps usually means a worn suspension bush or link. A single sharp clunk on one side often points to a specific worn part rather than general wear. $

6 Documentation

- [ ] **Seller's ID.** Check the seller's ID matches the name on the rego papers, and that the VIN matches across the papers and the VIN plate on the car. Any mismatch needs an explanation before you pay anything.
- [ ] **Service history.** Look through the logbook for stamps on time with matching receipts, and check the odometer readings climb steadily with no gaps. Missing stamps or a jump in kilometres can mean skipped services or tampering. $
- [ ] **Roadworthy certificate.** Check the registration status online and confirm a current roadworthy certificate is supplied if your state requires one for a private sale. An unregistered car or missing certificate can mean extra cost and delay before you can drive it home. $

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5
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