Used Jeep Grand Cherokee inspection checklist

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

COVERS **WK** 2005–2010 | **WK2** 2011–2021 | **WL** 2022 on

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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

- ☐ **Bullbar mounting.** If a bullbar is fitted, check it's bolted solidly to the chassis with no rust or cracking at the mounts and that it doesn't cover the crash sensors. A poorly mounted bullbar can stop airbags working properly in a crash. !
- ☐ **Panel gaps.** Walk around the body checking panel gaps are even and paint colour matches across every panel and door jamb. Mismatched colour or uneven gaps usually mean a crash repair. $
- ☐ **Roof racks.** If roof rails or racks are fitted, check the mounting points for cracks in the paint or rust streaks below them. Cracked paint around mounts can mean stress from a roof-top load or box. $
- ☐ **Tow ball wear.** If a towbar is fitted, check the tow ball for scoring or an oval shape rather than a clean round surface. A worn tow ball points to a lot of heavy towing over the car's life. $

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil.** Pull the dipstick and check the oil sits between the marks and looks brown and clean, not black, gritty or milky. Milky oil suggests coolant is mixing with the oil somewhere in the engine. $
- ☐ **Oil cooler mixing.** Check the coolant and oil for any sign of cross-contamination: a milky coolant cap or oil with a creamy tinge on the dipstick. A failed internal oil cooler lets coolant and oil mix, ruining both fluids. $
- ☐ **Coolant condition.** Check the coolant in the overflow bottle sits at the mark and looks a clean colour, not rusty, oily or milky. Discoloured coolant points to a cooling system or oil cooler problem. $
- ☐ **Diesel turbo pipes.** Diesel: look inside the large rubber intake pipes for oily residue and check for blue smoke on startup. Oil in the pipes or heavy smoke points to a tired turbo. $
- ☐ **Battery condition.** Check the battery terminals for corrosion and ask when the battery was last replaced, as these cars are hard on batteries with their electronics. A weak battery can cause odd electrical faults that look like bigger problems. $

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Underbody rust.** Look underneath at the floor pans and suspension mounts for rust; light surface rust is normal but flaking metal or holes are not. Heavy rust here can mean the car has spent time near the coast or on salted roads. !
- ☐ **Air suspension.** If fitted with air suspension, check the car sits level on flat ground and doesn't sag noticeably overnight. A corner sitting low points to a leaking air spring or compressor fault. $
- ☐ **Tyre wear.** Check all four tyres for even wear and matching size, as uneven wear can point to alignment or 4WD system issues. Feathered or one-sided wear suggests the alignment or suspension needs attention. $
- ☐ **Suspension bounce.** Push down hard on each corner of the car and let go; it should rise once and settle, not keep bouncing. A corner that keeps bouncing means a worn shock absorber. $

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Turn the key or press start without the engine running and check the engine, ABS, airbag and 4WD lights all come on, then go out once running. A light that stays on, especially 4WD or airbag, needs an explanation before you buy. !
- ☐ **Infotainment screen.** Turn on the touchscreen and work through the menus, checking it doesn't freeze, go blank or reboot on its own. A screen that freezes or restarts points to a software or hardware fault. $
- ☐ **Seatbelts.** Pull each seatbelt out fully and let it retract, checking it latches firmly with no fraying or cuts in the webbing. A belt that doesn't lock up sharply when yanked may not hold you in a crash. !
- ☐ **Third-row or cargo trim.** Check the cargo area and any folding seats for worn trim, cracked plastic or a hatch release that doesn't work smoothly. Heavily worn cargo trim suggests the car has carried loads or towed often. $

5 Test drive

- ☐ **Automatic gearbox.** Drive off from a stop and through several gear changes, feeling for a harsh thump, hesitation or flare between gears. Judder or a harsh shift at low speed is a warning sign of a transmission problem. $

! **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

- [ ] **4WD engagement.** On gravel or grass, try any selectable 4WD or low-range setting, checking for clunks and that the dash indicator confirms engagement. A light that keeps flashing means the system hasn't properly engaged. $
- [ ] **Steering stability.** At highway speed, check the car tracks straight without wandering or needing constant correction. Wandering at speed can mean worn steering or suspension parts. !
- [ ] **Braking.** Brake firmly from speed on a quiet road and feel for shaking through the pedal or the car pulling to one side. Shaking under braking usually means warped brake discs. !
- [ ] **Diesel cold start.** Diesel: start the engine from cold and check it fires within a couple of seconds and settles into a smooth idle without heavy smoke. Rough running or lingering smoke on cold start needs a diesel mechanic's opinion. $

6 Documentation

- [ ] **Service history.** Check the logbook or invoices show regular oil and transmission fluid changes, with extra attention if the car has towed heavily.
- [ ] **Modification paperwork.** Ask for certificates for any suspension lift, GVM upgrade or towbar fitment and check your state and insurer were told.

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