

The Ultimate Used Laptop Buyer's Checklist

Print this out or keep it on your phone for your next Facebook Marketplace or Gumtree meetup!

Section 1: The Deal Breakers (Check FIRST)

- [] **Account Locks:** Ensure the seller has signed out of **iCloud** (Mac) or **Microsoft Account** (Windows). If "Find My" is on, **DO NOT BUY**.
- [] **BIOS Password:** Turn the laptop on. If it asks for a password before Windows/macOS starts, it may be a stolen corporate device.
- [] **Liquid Damage:** Open the bottom (if possible) or look into the USB ports with a torch. Any green/white crusty residue = Walk away.

Section 2: Physical Inspection

- [] **The Hinge Test:** Open and close the lid 5 times. It should be smooth with no "clicking" or loose wobbling.
- [] **Chassis Check:** Look at the corners. Deep dents suggest a hard drop that could have damaged internal motherboards.
- [] **Screen Check:** Open a blank white browser page. Look for tiny black dots (dead pixels) or bright white spots (pressure damage).

Section 3: Hardware & Performance

- [] **Battery Health:** - *Mac:* Option + Click Battery Icon. Does it say "Normal"?
 - *Windows:* Type `powercfg /batteryreport` in Command Prompt.
- [] **The "Hot" Test:** Play a 4K YouTube video for 5 minutes. If it shuts down or feels painfully hot, the cooling system is failing.
- [] **Keyboard & Trackpad:** Open a Notepad and hit **every single key**. Ensure the trackpad clicks at the bottom and taps at the top.
- [] **Port Check:** Plug a USB drive or your phone charger into **every** port to ensure they actually work.

Section 4: Connectivity

- [] **WiFi:** Connect to your phone's hotspot. Walk 5 meters away to see if the signal drops (checking the internal antenna).
- [] **Webcam/Mic:** Open the "Camera" app. Check that you can see yourself and that the audio bars move when you speak.