

FREE BUYER'S GUIDE

2012 Hyundai i20

A simple guide for buyers with no car knowledge.

Your safety comes first

Please read these five rules before you look at any car.



1. Flat ground, handbrake on

Only look at the car on level ground.



2. Never open the radiator cap

Hot coolant can spray out and burn you.



3. Never go under the car

Look underneath from the side only.



4. Hands away from a running engine

The fan and belts can catch fingers and clothing.



5. Test drive only with permission

Bring your licence and drive gently. Ask the seller: "Does your insurance cover me to drive it?" If it doesn't, you could have to pay for any damage yourself.

How this guide works

Two stages. No rush.



Do most of the work **from home, on the phone**. Only go and see the car if you like what you hear.



Stage 1

At home and on the phone



Checkpoint

Is it worth a visit?



Stage 2

At the car

Scoring is easy

Tick **Yes** or **No**. Yes is always the good answer. At the end, just **count your No's**. A red  means a stop sign: a "No" there matters most.

STAGE 1**Before you visit**

At home and on the phone.

01**Which 2012 i20 is it?**

There are two different ones.



Some 2012 cars are listed as MY12.5 and some as MY13. Ask the seller which one this car is.

Ask the seller:

"Can I see the engine code in the logbook or on the compliance plate?"

1.4L petrol 1.4 PETROL

Engine code G4FA · 4-speed automatic, 5-speed manual or 6-speed manual

- 73.5 kW and 136 Nm
- Sold in the Active and Elite
- Timing chain, not a belt

1.6L petrol 1.6 PETROL

Engine code G4FC · 4-speed automatic or 5-speed manual

- 91 kW and 156 Nm
- Sold in the Premium
- Same engine family as the 1.4L, which has a timing chain

Good to know: safety rating**Which i20**

All i20 models built from 2011, when 6 airbags became standard. The 5-door was tested. The 3-door was not tested on its own.

ANCAP rating

5 stars (34.07 out of 37)

As published by ANCAP. Older ratings, tested to easier standards than today's.

02

The big-money items

The parts that cost the most to fix.



You can't see inside these parts, but you can ask about them.

\$ under \$500 · \$\$ \$500 to \$2,000 · \$\$\$ over \$2,000 (rough guide)



Timing chain and tensioner

1.4L G4FA ENGINE. THE 1.6L IS THE SAME ENGINE FAMILY.

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WHAT IT IS

A chain inside the engine keeps its moving parts in step. A tensioner keeps the chain tight.

ASK

"Has the engine been heard rattling on a cold start? Is there proof of regular oil changes?"



Clutch (manual cars only)

MANUAL GEARBOX CARS

\$\$

WHAT IT IS

The clutch joins the engine to the gearbox. Owners report it losing pressure in heavy traffic.

ASK

"Has the clutch or its fluid ever been fixed? How does it feel in slow traffic?"



Radiator leaks

2010 TO 2015 I20, ALL ENGINES

\$\$

WHAT IT IS

The radiator cools the engine. Leaks can come from the cooling system.

ASK

"Has the radiator or any coolant hose been replaced? Is the coolant level steady?"



Engine oil leaks and rough idle

2010 TO 2015 I20, ALL ENGINES

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WHAT IT IS

Oil can seep from engine seals. Rough idle means the engine shakes when stopped and running.

ASK

"Are there any oil leaks, and has the engine ever idled roughly?"

03

Regular maintenance

Cheap jobs that protect the expensive parts.



Look for these on the service invoices.



Engine oil

Keeps the engine moving parts clean and slippery.

As shown in the logbook



Spark plugs (petrol)

Make the spark that starts the fuel burning.

As shown in the logbook



Brake fluid

The liquid that carries your foot push to the brakes.

Every 2 years (our guide)



Coolant

Keeps the engine from getting too hot.

As shown in the logbook



Gearbox oil

Keeps the gears smooth. Automatic and manual gearboxes both use it.

As shown in the logbook



Air filter

Cleans the air before it goes into the engine.

As shown in the logbook



Tyres

The only part of the car that touches the road.

Replace at 6 years old, even with good tread (our guide). Alignment every 10,000 to 15,000 km (our guide)



Battery

Starts the engine and runs the electrics.

Most last about 3 to 5 years

04

Questions to ask on the phone



Tick Yes if you get the good answer.

Ask the seller	Good answer	Yes	No
"Is it registered in your name?" Why: Only the owner can legally sell it to you.	"Yes."		
"Why are you selling it?" Why: A clear reason helps you trust the rest of the story.	A clear reason.		
! "Can you send me the VIN?" Why ask? The VIN is the car's 17-character ID number, like a fingerprint. With it you can check online if there's money owing , if it was written off after a big accident, if it's been reported stolen , and if it has any recalls (Section 06). An honest seller will send it.	They send it.		
"Has it been in an accident?" Why: Repairs can hide damage. An invoice shows it was fixed properly.	"No", or they have the repair invoice.		
"Does it have service invoices?" Why: They show the car was looked after.	"Yes."		
Which engine does the car have? Can you read the engine code from the logbook? Why: The i20 came with two petrol engines, so the code tells you which one it is.	The seller reads out a code from the logbook or compliance plate.		
When was the engine oil last changed? Is there a receipt? Why: The timing chain relies on clean oil.	A date and kilometres in the logbook or on an invoice.		
Does the engine rattle when started cold? Why: A knock that fades once warm can be chain noise.	No rattle on a cold start.		
"Are any warning lights on?" Why: A light means the car has found a fault.	"No."		
"Can you leave it cold before I arrive?" Why: Some problems only show when the engine is cold.	"Sure."		

Tip

Write down what they say. See if the answers stay the same when you visit.

05

Check the invoices

Ask the seller to send you photos.



Ask the seller:

"Could you send me photos of the service book and invoices?"

Looking at the invoices	Yes	No
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Did they send them?

Does each one show the workshop name, date and kilometres?

Do the kilometres go up each time?

Do the services follow the logbook, with no gaps of more than a year?

Words you might see on an invoice

Invoice says	It means
Timing chain kit	The chain, guides and tensioner that keep the engine's moving parts in step.
Tensioner	The part that keeps the chain tight.
Rocker cover gasket	The seal on top of the engine. It is a common spot for oil seeps.
CVVT or VVT solenoid	A small valve that adjusts when the engine's valves open. A fault can cause rough running.
Coil pack	The part that makes the spark. A fault can cause the engine to misfire.
Brake rotors	The discs that the brake pads grip to slow the car.

06

Quick checks at home

All you need is the VIN. Five minutes.



1. Recalls

Type the VIN into either site:

— hyundai.com/au/en/owning/safety-recalls

— vehiclerecalls.gov.au

Safety recalls are fixed for free by the maker.

2. Money owing

Search the VIN at:

— ppsr.gov.au

It shows money owing, write-offs and theft. Small fee. Check again on the day you pay.

Your result

Yes

No

 **PPSR is clear**

No open recalls, or proof they were fixed

Good to know

A class action about some Hyundai and Kia engines is listed on its own website. The i20 was not in the model lists we found. Ask the seller: "Has the engine had any maker repair or program work? Do you have the papers?"

Checkpoint: is it worth a visit?

Count your No's from Sections 04, 05 and 06.



My No's

Stop signs with No



Any stop sign with a No?

Don't go yet. Sort it out with the seller first.

0 to 2

Go and look

Take Stage 2 with you.

3 to 5

Ask more first

Ask the seller about each No. Go if you're happy.

6 or more

Is it worth the trip?

A lot couldn't be confirmed.

The decision is always yours.

Want to check it like a mechanic?

The 2012 Hyundai i20 Buyer's Inspection Guide shows you every check, step by step, with drawings of where to look.

Get the full guide · \$29

General information only, not an inspection of any vehicle. "Our guide" means our recommendation, not a legal rule. Costs are a rough guide. Information current at October 2026: always check the VIN yourself. Perth Cars Pre-Purchase Inspection Service · ACN 612 731 996 · Licence Nos. LVS/WSS MR20570 · MS30917 · 0451 237 048 · info@autolab360.com · perthprepurchaseinspection.com

STAGE 2**At the car**

Take this guide with you.

07**Dashboard warning lights**

The colour tells you how serious it is.

**Red = Stop**

Serious

**Yellow = Check**

Needs a look

**Green = OK**

Just information

The one-minute light test**1****Key on**

Lights come on. Good!

2**Start the engine**

Lights go out.

3**Watch**

Any light left on? Ask about it.

**Check engine**

Engine fault found.

**Battery**

Not charging.

**Oil pressure**

Low oil. Stop the engine.

**Engine too hot**

Overheating. Stop.

**Brake**

Handbrake on, or a brake fault.

**ABS**

Anti-skid brake fault.

**Airbag**

Airbags may not work.

**Power steering**

Steering may feel heavy.

**1. Paint and panels****GOOD**

Same colour everywhere, even gaps.

ASK ABOUT IT

One panel a different colour.

**2. Automatic gearbox feel****GOOD**

The gears change smoothly, with no hesitation or harsh jolts.

ASK ABOUT IT

"Has the automatic gearbox ever been serviced or repaired?"

**3. Jack warning sticker****GOOD**

A correct warning sticker on the jack, or a dealer record that it was fitted.

ASK ABOUT IT

"Was the jack sticker recall done at a Hyundai dealer?"

**4. Tyres****GOOD**

Even wear. The 4 numbers on the side (like **2319** = 2019) show under 6 years old.

ASK ABOUT IT

Worn on one edge, cracked, or 6+ years old.

**5. Cold start****GOOD**

Starts quickly. Any smoke clears in a minute.

ASK ABOUT IT

Hard to start, rattles, or keeps smoking.

**6. Test drive****BEFORE YOU DRIVE**

Seller says yes, their insurance covers you.

GOOD

Goes straight. Smooth gears. Firm brakes.

ASK ABOUT IT

Pulls to one side, clunks, or a warning light.

09

Your scorecard

Tick Yes or No, then count your No's.



At the car	Yes	No
Engine was cold when I arrived		
! VIN on the car matches the rego papers		
Seller's answers were the same as on the phone		
Paint even, no bubbly rust		
Sits level		
Tyres look good and are under 6 years old		
! Light test passed		
! Started easily, smoke cleared		
Windows, locks and air-con work, two keys		
Drives straight, smooth gears, firm brakes		
! No warning light on the drive		
Does the engine start quietly when cold, with no rattle?		
Does the logbook show regular oil changes?		

My No's

 / 13

Stop signs with No

What your count means



Any stop sign with a No?

Stop. Don't pay a deposit until it's sorted.

0 to 1

Looks well cared for

Many buyers still get a mechanic to check inside the engine.

2 to 3

A few questions

Ask the seller, and ask a mechanic what each No might cost.

4 to 6

Lots of unknowns

Get a mechanic to look before you pay anything.

7 or more

Many warning signs

Take your time and get advice first.

The decision is always yours.