

Buying a Secondhand Tablet

This will tutorial will tell you what to watch out for when purchasing a secondhand tablet.



1. If you cannot check it out for yourself in person, I would generally recommend you not buy it. There are too many things that can go wrong. It might have issues the seller does not even realise. If you cannot see it, ask them questions based on this document.
2. Compare the asking price with other sources such as TradeMe or ask an expert. Is it a realistic and fair price?
3. Is the screen broken? If so I would be very reluctant to purchase the tablet, particularly if the touch is glitchy or non-functional as the impact might have caused other problems that might not be immediately obvious. You could ask the seller if they are willing to let a technician examine it first.
4. Examine the outside carefully. Superficial scratches are not an issue. However, if you see clear separation of the housing, I would recommend you not buy it. This can signify a swollen battery or impact damage. It would have also made the tablet more susceptible to water damage if the tablet was moved around a lot.
5. Look for dents or burrs in the housing around where screen meets the housing (Figure 1). If you see any, ask if you can get a technician to check it out before purchase because such things can potentially cause problems if you ever need to repair the tablet.
6. Thoroughly test the touch. Tap all points of the screen and make sure it is responsive. Move back and forth between home screens quickly, sweeping your finger back and forth along the full length of the screen.
7. Check and make sure all the buttons are functioning well.
8. Does the tablet appear to have been fully reset and deregistered from all accounts (Google for Android, iCloud for Apple)? If not, ask the seller to do this. If they cannot or will not, ask them to let you do it or take it to someone who can **before payment**. A tablet still registered to the original owner's ID will be a problem. They will see your photos and other content and vice versa, and they could also track and remotely reset the tablet. If you ever need to reset the tablet due to a software problem, you will be unable to get back in. Do not buy a tablet in this situation under ANY circumstances.
9. Check the Wifi is getting a good signal. Find a Wifi source, make sure it is strong, and then walk away from it. If the signal strength dips quickly, do not purchase the tablet unless they are willing to let you get a technician to check out the issue and drop the price accordingly.
10. If it supports it and you plan to use it, insert a SIM card and make sure it can bring up websites OK.
11. Ask them how long the battery typically lasts. You should be able to get a day out of it at least without needing a recharge.



Figure 1: Housing Damage

If the tablet passes all of these tests, there is a good chance it will be a safe purchase. If in doubt, ask if you can take the tablet to an expert for an assessment before purchase.