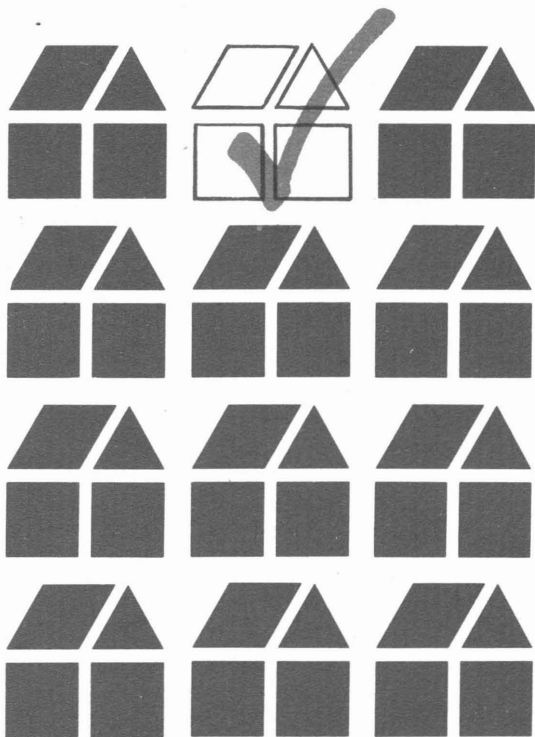


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# Home Buyer's Checklist

The Texas A&M  
University System



**Texas  
Agricultural  
Extension  
Service**

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# HOME BUYER'S CHECKLIST

Sue Young\*

Once you've decided to buy a house, the next step is to evaluate several houses available in your price range and in the area where you want to live.

This checklist will help you systematically evaluate potential houses and assess their relative merits. The list points out some important factors to consider before buying. While it is doubtful that any house will have every feature you want, you will be more pleased if you select a house which has the features you consider most important.

## The Neighborhood

Yes

No

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the neighborhood attractive and well maintained?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do the homes complement one another in design and color?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are most homes in the same general price range?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the character and quality of the neighborhood likely to remain unchanged? (This may be difficult to evaluate; indicators are converted buildings to rentals and business operations, and the proximity to commercial and urban renewal areas.) |

\*Extension real estate specialist, The Texas A&M University System.

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is the neighborhood zoned residential?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is the neighborhood free from danger of flooding? (Check city flood-plane maps.)

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are there other people in your age and interest group?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are there sidewalks, curbs and gutters?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are the streets well lighted?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are police and fire protection adequate?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is the tax level of the community consistent with the services provided and consistent with what you can afford to pay?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is it unlikely that special assessments for sidewalk construction, sewer extension, etc. will be levied in the near future?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is the neighborhood in a growing area which will probably increase in value? Is it in the direct path of the city's most desirable residential planning?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are there airports or other sources of noise or pollution nearby?

Is the neighborhood conveniently located with respect to:

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Shopping facilities?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Public transportation?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Schools?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Parks?

- Are streets paved and well maintained?
- Are there plans for major highways to run through the neighborhood?

Are utilities installed or available, such as:

- Cable television?
- Water?
- Electricity?
- Gas?
- Sewerage? If the house is not connected to a city sewer line, is the sewage disposal system adequate?
- Telephone?
- Storm sewers?
- Garbage pick up?

### **The Lot**

**Yes    No**

- Is the lot graded so rainwater will drain away from the house and lot in every direction?
- Is the lot large enough for adequate privacy and activities you enjoy?
- Is the view pleasant and likely to remain so?
- Are there trees and adequate landscaping?
- Is automobile access to the lot simple, easy and safe?

- Does the driveway permit easy, direct entry to the garage without steep inclines but with good drainage away from the garage?
- Are the walks logically located, placed only where needed and adequate in width (not less than 3 feet wide)?
- Is there a logical relationship between the house plan and outdoor areas?
- If fences are attached to the house, are they the same or similar to the house in material, color and construction?
- Is the boundary between lots adequate so that the house does not have a crowded feeling?

### **The House**

**Yes    No**

- Is the house one that would meet the needs of the majority of buyers (not of unusual size or design), thus having good resale value?
- Does the house have a simple, straightforward exterior?
- Is the house suitable for the type of living and entertaining you enjoy?
- Will the space within this plan be adaptable to your changing needs through the years you probably will live there?
- Are there no more than two types of siding materials used on the house exterior?

- Is there a porch roof or overhang at the entrances for weather protection?
- Is there an entry or foyer space at the front door with a guest closet?
- Are the rooms of the house organized or grouped into logical activity areas or zones? (Sleeping, living and work areas should be properly related and connected by easy and compact circulation.)
- Can the rooms be used for dual purposes?
- Can you get from the house to the garage or carport under shelter?
- If the garage is attached to the house, can you go directly from it into a service area in the house?

### **Energy Saving Features**

- | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the house adequately insulated? (At least 3 inches of insulation (R-11) in exterior walls and 6 inches in the ceiling (R-19) between living area and attic.)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is weatherstripping and caulking in good condition?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the house oriented so that the living areas (indoor and outdoor) face east or south or, if the living areas face west, is there proper sun and wind control (overhangs, trees)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is insulating glass used, or are there storm windows and doors?  |

- If there is a fireplace, does it have a good draft, a damper and a nearby source for outside air?
- Are there vents under the overhangs and close to the roof-ridge or in the gable ends of the house?
- Is the heating/cooling system adequate and efficient? (Check to see if the type of fuel used and the heating system are most economical for the area.)
- Can the air filter be removed easily for cleaning?
- Does the duct system look well designed?
- Is the water heater adequate for your needs? (40-gallon tanks are adequate for the average family.)

### **Living Areas**

- | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the living room situated to avoid cross traffic?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the living room visually separated from the front door?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the living room 12 to 15 feet wide and at least 16 feet long? (This provides room for one conversation circle plus space for circulation.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the living/dining area closely related to the outdoor living areas?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are windows and doors located to provide ample space for furniture?   |



- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is electrical capacity adequate?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is there an adequate number of electrical outlets?

### **Bedrooms and Bathrooms**

**Yes    No**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are there enough bedrooms of sufficient size to meet your needs? (Bedrooms designed for a double bed should be at least 120 square feet; bedrooms with twin beds should be at least 150 square feet.)
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are closets built between rooms?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is there at least 4 feet of clothes closet rod space for each member of your family?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Do clothes closets and general shelf storage have a minimum depth of 24 inches?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are windows and doors placed conducive to furniture arrangement and privacy?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are bedroom doors at least 32 inches wide?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is there at least 12 to 18 inches of counter space at the lavatory for cosmetics and toilet articles?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Are bathrooms located so you cannot see into them from living areas?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is ventilation in bathrooms adequate?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Is there a sufficient number of bathrooms for your family?

## Kitchen and Dining Area

- | Yes | No  |   |
|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | Are there sufficient cabinets and counter space in the kitchen? (6 to 10 linear feet of wall for base cabinets and appliances are considered minimum, but the most important consideration is whether there is enough for you.) |
| ___ | ___ | Is there space in the kitchen for the appliances you now own or may want to buy later?  |
| ___ | ___ | Is the work triangle (refrigerator to sink to range) in proper order, and between 12 to 20 feet?  |
| ___ | ___ | Does the house have the type of eating areas you want?  |
| ___ | ___ | Does the kitchen connect directly with dining and service areas?  |
| ___ | ___ | Is kitchen ventilation adequate?  |

## Other Inside Features

- | Yes | No  |  |
|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | Is there adequate storage for tools and leisure equipment?   |
| ___ | ___ | Are laundry facilities convenient for your needs?  |
| ___ | ___ | Can some of the rooms be multiple use; for example, master bedroom/sitting; living/dining; dining/study; or guest/study? |
| ___ | ___ | Are locks on exterior doors adequate?  |

- — Are stairways and halls at least 3 feet wide and without obstructions? (A 42-inch width is desirable for long halls where a wheelchair might be used regularly or for a large house to give a feeling of spaciousness.)
- — Are all stairways well lighted with a handrail on at least one side?
- — Is the plaster or drywall well finished and free of cracks, depressions and ridges? (Examine the walls to see if any major patching has to be done.)
- — Is the floor covering suitable for where it is used? (Durable, easily maintained flooring is usually advisable in spite of higher cost.)
- — Does trim fit snugly around doors and windows and fit tightly against the floor? (High-quality finish carpentry is desirable.)
- — Are there enough 220-volt electrical outlets for such items as clothes dryer, range, air conditioner, etc.?
- — Are doors located to avoid undesirable views to other rooms?
- — Are floor coverings, wall treatments, countertops and light fixtures in harmony?

*Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic level, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.*

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