

Kelley Blue Book, kbb.com Name Top New & Used Back-to-School Rides

Editors Offer Parents and Teens Tips for Choosing and Buying a Car

With school bells just about to ring students back in session, the expert editorial staff at Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com, the leading provider of new- and used-vehicle information, names the best cars for students heading back to campuses across the country. For both parents and students, choosing the right vehicle is often one of the most difficult purchases.

"Kids these days want a cool car their friends will covet, while parents want a vehicle that will keep their kids safe in unforeseen circumstances," said Jack R. Nerad, Executive Editorial Director, Kelley Blue Book and kbb.com. "The good news, though, is that there has never been a better crop of safe, stylish, economical new and used vehicles on the market. One is bound to satisfy both parents and kids."

When you combine the varying needs and wants of students with the parents who often have a financial say in the matter, the only vehicles likely to make the cut are those that are affordable, reliable, safe, practical and offer some measure of 'cool.' The quest for the right ride is further complicated by the fact that buying new and buying used each offer compelling advantages. New vehicles offer a full warranty, the latest safety and technology advancements, and the allure of that new-car shine and smell. Buying a used car, especially one with a good reliability record and/or a remaining warranty, gives buyers the option of spending less, getting more or both. Each path is attractive enough that kbb.com's Back-to-School list for 2007 is now two lists: one new, one used. Whether you are looking for a truck, an SUV or a sporty sedan, the editors at kbb.com have found something for you.

Top 10 Back-to-School Vehicles: New

In addition to their full warranties, up-to-the-minute technologies and perfect paint, all of the new vehicles on this year's Back-to-School list feature a starting New Car Blue Book Value of less than \$18,000. (All New Car Blue Book Values represent transaction prices during the last week in August 2007. All vehicle prices listed include automatic transmission unless noted. Less expensive manual transmission trims are available on most vehicles).

2007 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 REGULAR CAB

For students living at home, a back-to-school vehicle purchase might be a great opportunity to augment the family fleet with something that can pull double duty. In addition to a rugged persona and daily driver dependability, the Chevy Silverado has what it takes to tackle big weekend projects.

MSRP: \$17,815 New Car Blue Book: \$17,459

2007 HONDA FIT SPORT

The sub-compact Honda Fit blends five-door functionality with clever interior flexibility, highway fuel economy up to 35 miles per gallon and enough enthusiasm to warrant an available sport model with steering wheel-mounted paddle shifters.

MSRP: \$16,565 New Car Blue Book: \$16,731

2008 JEEP PATRIOT SPORT

Jeep's newest nameplate is both a perfectly sensible commuter car and a terrific camping companion, offering a unique balance of economy, comfort and capability. (Manual transmission)

MSRP: \$16,035 New Car Blue Book: \$16,035

2007 KIA RIO5 SX HATCHBACK

Available as a four-door sedan or a five-door hatchback, the Rio's sub-\$12,000 starting price and impressive fuel economy combine to reduce both monthly payments and gas bills. Six standard airbags and a 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty help ease the minds of buyers wary of less-familiar brands.

MSRP: \$15,220 New Car Blue Book: \$14,916

2008 MAZDA3 i SPORT SEDAN

Even as they enter their fifth model year, the MAZDA3 sedan and hatchback still deliver a combination of fun, style, versatility and affordability unmatched in the category.

MSRP: \$15,390 New Car Blue Book: \$15,313

2008 MITSUBISHI LANCER DE

Sporty and economical is a winning combination for image-conscious but cash-strapped young drivers, and the all-new Lancer offers a compelling mix of both.

MSRP: \$16,515 New Car Blue Book: \$16,350

2008 NISSAN VERSA S SEDAN

By combining roomy accommodations, a comfortable highway ride and technologies like Bluetooth hands-free phone connectivity and remote-sensing unlock and start, the Versa sedan and five-door deliver a small taste of luxury at dorm-room prices.

MSRP: \$13,975 New Car Blue Book: \$13,975

2008 SCION xB SPORT WAGON

Scion's second-generation "box-on-wheels" is larger, more powerful and less square than its predecessor. In addition to air conditioning and power windows/locks/mirrors, the xB's standard equipment list includes such back-to-school essentials as iPod integration and a six-speaker Pioneer sound system.

MSRP: \$17,220 New Car Blue Book: \$17,306

2007 SUZUKI SX4 HATCHBACK

As the least expensive all-wheel-drive vehicle sold in America, the SX4 offers exceptional value for those studying in the Snow Belt. Combined with its versatility and scrappy good looks, the SX4 is the sleeper hit of the back-to-school season.

MSRP: \$16,724 New Car Blue Book: \$16,640

2008 VOLKSWAGEN RABBIT

It doesn't take a semester abroad to understand why the Rabbit is a perennial best-seller in Europe (where it's still called the Golf). In addition to hatchback sensibility, the Rabbit combines a spunky five-cylinder engine, eager handling and a level of interior refinement unmatched in the price range.

MSRP: \$17,205 New Car Blue Book: \$17,205

Top 10 Back-to-School Vehicles: Used

Whether you're looking for a lower payment, more features or some combination of both, today's used vehicle market is filled with more desirable options than ever. All of the following vehicles have a Kelley Blue Book Suggested Retail Value -- the asking price you can expect from a dealer, from which you can negotiate downward -- of less than \$12,000.

2005 CHEVROLET COBALT SEDAN

Available as a sporty two-door coupe or a more friend-friendly four-door sedan, Chevy's comfortable and fuel-efficient compact car makes an especially appealing used vehicle thanks to marginal resale values.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$11,650

2004 FORD FOCUS ZX3 HATCHBACK

Available in three-door, four-door, five-door and wagon body styles, each of which combines varying levels of economy, versatility and zip, the Focus lineup offers a custom fit at off-the-rack pricing.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$9,755

2003 FORD MUSTANG 2D COUPE

A sneaky way for parents to enjoy the Mustang they never had -- or wish they'd kept -- is to buy one for their kid. A true muscle car when equipped with the V8, a V6 Mustang makes for a more economical, more justifiable first car.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$11,600

2003 HONDA CIVIC DX COUPE

Built on a foundation of unquestioned reliability, the Civic owes much of its well-deserved reputation to fuel economy, interior quality and varying amounts of style and sprightliness.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$11,865

2006 HYUNDAI ACCENT GLS SEDAN

The only 2006 model on our list was redesigned just as recently and combines an impressive list of standard safety equipment with smart sub-compact styling. A 10-year/100,000-mile warranty and lower-than-average resale values make this high-value new car an even better value used.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$11,600

2003 MAZDA TRIBUTE DX

Mazda's version of the Ford Escape/Mercury Mariner compact crossover SUV offers available all-wheel drive along with enough cargo room to swallow all the provisions of a spring break road trip.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$11,615

2003 MAZDA PROTEGE5 Not quite as stylish or sporty as their successor, the Protege sedan and five-door Protege5 nevertheless blend many of the same elements that have made the Mazda3 such a big hit, including a generous helping of fun-to-drive.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$11,915

2005 NISSAN SENTRA SEDAN

It drives well, rides comfortably and sips gas, but Nissan's well-built, entry-level sedan doesn't command the same resale values as category stalwarts Honda Civic or Toyota Corolla -- making it a smart used-car purchase.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$11,450

2004 PONTIAC VIBE SPORT WAGON

Products of a joint venture between GM and Toyota, the Pontiac Vibe is a fraternal twin to the Toyota Matrix. While both models offer the same cargo-hauling versatility and great fuel economy, the Pontiac is the better used-car value as it commands slightly lower resale values than the model with the Toyota badge.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$11,945

2003 TOYOTA TACOMA SHORTBED

The previous-generation Tacoma is just as bulletproof as today's model, and just as eager to haul, tow and get dirty. The fact that you can move an entire dorm room full of stuff in one trip only boosts its appeal.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK USED RETAIL VALUE: \$11,030

TIPS FOR PARENTS AND TEENS

Arguably some of the vehicles on the lists are cooler than others, and some are more practical, but each offers a balance of attributes that qualifies it as a bona fide back-to-school ride. To help ensure driving and ownership satisfaction into the coming school year and beyond, follow these guidelines for getting the right car at the right price:

- Do Your Research - All the information you need to put together a short list of favorite vehicles is available at <http://www.kbb.com/>, including expert reviews, real-world values, side-by-side comparisons, safety and reliability ratings and more.
- Drive Two or Three Different Models - It's easy to enjoy a test drive in the vehicle at the top of your list, but without driving one or two others you might easily miss out on something you'd like even more.
- Buying Used? - Whether buying from a private party or a dealer, it's always a good idea to have any used vehicle checked out by a reputable independent service shop. When purchasing from an individual, print the private-party value from kbb.com as well as Kelley Blue Book's 27-point Vehicle Condition Quiz to take with you. These items will help you determine the "actual" condition and value of the vehicle.
- Buying New? - Always use a vehicle's New Car Blue Book Value, not Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price, as your basis for comparing vehicles and negotiating with the dealer. New Car Blue Book Value reflects real-world selling prices, which are often hundreds or even thousands of dollars less than MSRP.
- Parents: Don't buy a car for your teen without driving it yourself, as your experience can help you identify problems or shortcomings that your teen may not notice. Also, trust your own judgment and don't let your teen talk you into buying a vehicle with which you're not fully comfortable.
- Teens: Do all of your homework before you meet with mom or dad; show them you are responsible and ready for a car, and make it easy for them to say "yes" to your well-researched choice.

About Kelley Blue Book (<http://www.kbb.com/sitemap>)

Since 1926, Kelley Blue Book, The Trusted Resource®, has provided vehicle buyers and sellers with the new and used vehicle information they need to accomplish their goals with confidence. The company's top-rated Web site, kbb.com, provides the most up-to-date pricing and values, including the New Car Blue Book® Value, which reveals what people actually are paying for new cars. The company also reports vehicle pricing and values via products and services, including software products and the famous Blue Book® Official Guide. Kbb.com is rated the No. 1 automotive information site by Nielsen//NetRatings and the most visited auto site by J.D. Power and Associates eight years in a row. No other medium reaches more in-market vehicle shoppers than kbb.com; nearly one in every three American car buyers performs their research on kbb.com.

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