

Kbb.com's 2011 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars: Editors Rank Top Five New, Top Five Used Rides for Students

Kbb.com Editors Recommend Fun, Affordable, Versatile Vehicle Choices; Offer Car-Buying Advice

IRVINE, Calif., Aug. 9, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- The expert editors from Kelley Blue Book's www.kbb.com, the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, today name the [2011 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars](#). In a new twist on an annual list published by Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com, this year the editors chose five new cars and five used cars for the Top 10 list, and ranked their top choices from five to one in each category. The No. 1 new car for back-to-school 2011 is the [2012 Hyundai Accent](#), and the No. 1 used car for back-to-school 2011 is the [2007 Suzuki SX4](#).

With students heading back to high school and college campuses nationwide, the expert kbb.com editors offer their top recommendations for getting to and from class in a fun, economical, versatile and reliable vehicle. The editors also provide car shopping and buying tips to aid both students and parents in this all-important purchase decision.

Choosing the right kind of car can be a difficult process, especially when parents and their children are at odds with what they need versus what they want in a set of wheels. While features such as reliability, safety, affordability and practicality are important to any parent, how quickly their car accelerates, how tech-savvy it is and how cool it looks when cruising to the school football game are often bigger concerns for students.

The good news is that there are plenty of vehicles out there that can please both parties. Those considering a new entry-level vehicle will find the latest and greatest safety and technology advancements, a full warranty and, of course, that new-car smell. If saving money places higher on the "must" list, then there are plenty of dependable used cars out there that would suit the needs of any young adult.

"Each year we have more great choices to consider for our top back-to-school rides list, because auto manufacturers continue to outdo themselves with the features and amenities they offer on vehicles that are optimal for students," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. "With so many vehicle choices, the key to shopping smart is finding a set of wheels that pleases both parent and child, which is no small task.

The good news is the recently redesigned kbb.com provides a host of tools to help find the best car and get the best deal possible."

Vehicles on kbb.com's 2011 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars list were chosen with the following criteria in mind: safety, affordability, versatility, reliability, cost of ownership and fuel efficiency, along with the ever-subjective 'fun-to-drive' and 'good-looking' factors. Each new car on the list is available for \$18,000 or less, using Kelley Blue Book's exclusive Fair Purchase Price as the yardstick (Kelley Blue Book's Fair Purchase Price is the price consumers typically are paying for a car, based on actual new-vehicle transactions and updated weekly for changing market conditions). For the used cars on the list, the kbb.com editors chose the newest model year available that still kept the value at \$12,000 or less, using Kelley Blue Book's Suggested Retail Value.

Kbb.com's 2011 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars: Five New and Five Used Picks, Each Ranked from Five to One

Top Five New Vehicles for Back-to-School 2011:

5. [2011 Chevrolet Cruze](#)

Want to impress your friends? The 2011 Chevrolet Cruze is nice enough inside that they might think you're borrowing your more sophisticated older brother's car. In addition to a well-appointed and quiet cabin, the [Cruze](#) can comfortably seat five and has a large trunk for books and gear...

4. [2011 Fiat 500](#)

The 2011 Fiat 500 also appeared on this year's list of the 10 Coolest Cars Under \$18,000, where it finished at the head of class. Affordable, adorable and easy on the gas, the retro-inspired Fiat 500 is a smart – and surprisingly comfortable – little commuter car.

3. [2012 Ford Focus](#)

The 2012 Ford Focus is the kind of car young drivers love: It looks cool on the outside, modern on the inside, handles with more than a hint of sportiness and offers advanced audio and information technology...

2. [2011 Honda Fit](#)

Playful and nimble in both its look and road manners, the 2011 Honda Fit is a wicked-smart choice for either the college-bound undergrad or his empty-nesting parents (or both)...

1. [2012 Hyundai Accent](#)

Like its bigger brothers the [Sonata](#) and [Elantra](#), the 2012 Hyundai Accent appeals to a finely-tuned sense of value, putting a lot of equipment into a stylish, roomy package that competes more than favorably with competitors like the [Ford Fiesta](#), [Mazda Mazda2](#) and [Honda Fit](#)...

Top Five Used Vehicles for Back-to-School 2011:

5. [2007 Nissan Sentra](#)

For the practical-minded pupils that just need a way to get around town, we recommend the compact, four-door 2007 Nissan Sentra. With seating for five friends, plenty of cargo room and a shift-less CVT transmission that helps it achieve up to 33 mpg on the highway...

4. [2007 Ford F-150](#)

Ask any student who has tussled with a member of the football team. Mass counts. For parents who subscribe to a bigger-is-better safety philosophy, we present the 2007 Ford F-150. Beyond sheer size, the [F-150](#) boasts five-star NHTSA front crash ratings, beefy good looks and all the practical hauling and towing abilities afforded by a proper pickup truck.

3. [2007 Kia Sedona](#)

Students love minivans. No, wait, that's a lie. However, the 2007 Kia Sedona has a lot of things that a thinking student could get a healthy crush on. You mean like the looks? No. The [Sedona](#) is still pure [minivan](#), inside and out. But think about it: Students are made out of "stuff I gotta haul" and "friends I gotta haul around..."

2. [2008 Chevrolet HHR](#)

Fond of sporting yesteryear's fashions ironically? Prove that you're not messing around by picking up some 1949-era sheet metal design in the form of the 21st-century 2008 Chevy HHR...

1. [2007 Suzuki SX4](#)

The 2007 Suzuki SX4 is the least-expensive all-wheel-drive vehicle on the market, making it a smart choice for anyone who doesn't have a lot of money to burn but

needs something that can take on the cruelest of winters. Plus [Suzuki](#) allows for its no-deductible, 100,000-mile, seven-year powertrain warranty to be transferred to subsequent owners...

To see all of the information about this year's Back-to-School Cars list, including full editorial commentary and reasoning behind each of the editors' picks, visit the [2011 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars](#) story in kbb.com's Latest News section at http://www.kbb.com/car-news/all-the-latest/top-10-back_to_school-cars-2011/.

Car Shopping and Buying Tips for Students and Parents:

Arguably some of the vehicles on the list may be cooler than others (but cool is, after all, in the eye of the beholder), and some are more practical, but each offers a balance of attributes that qualifies it as a great option for a 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 kbb.com, including expert reviews, consumer reviews and ratings, real-world values, side-by-side comparisons, safety and reliability ratings and more. There are even tools like an enhanced Perfect Car Finder®: Photo Edition that can help you decide exactly what ride is best for you.
- **Know What It Is Going to Cost You** - Once you've narrowed it down to a few models that you are interested in, be sure to check out not only what it will cost you up front to buy the car, but also what it will cost you over time to own the vehicle. Kbb.com's all-new Reality Check tool and Total Cost of Ownership information for new cars can help you determine both.
- **Consider Buying Certified Pre-Owned (CPO)** - When you buy a CPO vehicle, you get the value of buying a used car with the peace of mind that comes from getting new-car-like features, such as a manufacturer-backed vehicle warranty, full vehicle inspection and more. Learn more about buying CPO, compare all manufacturer CPO programs and even search for CPO vehicle inventory in your local area on kbb.com here: www.kbb.com/certified-pre-owned/.
- **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 to compare, 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 Fair Purchase Price, not Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price, as your basis for comparing vehicles and negotiating with the dealer. Kelley Blue Book's Fair Purchase Price 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.

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