

Questions for Seller Worksheet

[Here are some basic questions you and your agent will want to ask about a particular house, in terms of repair needs, utility costs, and neighbors. Add anything else to this list of interest—for example, if you have specific questions about the garden. You'll most likely ask the seller's agent these questions, but if the seller is there, or is selling without an agent, ask the seller directly.]

1. How long has the house been on the market? _____

2. What repairs have been done in the last few years? _____

What are the house's major or most immediate repair needs? _____

3. Does the seller use a particular repairperson, plumber, electrician, or pest control person? If so, please provide their names: _____.

4. How much money does the owner pay for monthly utilities (gas, garbage, electricity, water) and, if applicable, for association fees?

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

Are there any other ongoing costs? \$ _____

5. Has the owner had any problems with water or dampness in the basement or any other part of the house?

6. Is there a furnace and a central A/C system, and if so, when was it installed?

7. How are the neighbors? Are there issues regarding fences, trees, or property lines?

NOTES:

How to evaluate the answers:

1. If it's more than a few weeks (depending on how fast houses are moving in your market), ask whether there's been a price drop and whether any offers have fallen through and why. Maybe it's overpriced and ripe for you to make a lower bid on.
2. Some of these repair problems may be stated in the pest or other inspection report, but it's helpful to have the agent summarize them for you. Don't hesitate to be direct and ask things like "Have there been any roof leaks?"
3. Any use of repairpeople can reveal repair issues the seller didn't mention when answering Question #2. The information will also be useful if and when you move in!
4. If you're stretching just to buy the house, make sure it doesn't come with unusually high ongoing costs.
5. The basement and attic are likely suspects here. Moisture problems are hard to repair and hard to insure.
6. Installing a new furnace or A/C can be another major expense—and one that's important to deal with soon, for the sake of your personal comfort.
7. Difficult neighbors can't be repaired. Specifically ask about their level of noise; cooperation regarding fence, tree, or parking issues; and any behavioral problems or oddities.