

Date _____ Mileage _____ Price _____ Seller _____

What matters most: Manual or DSG? The 7-speed dry-clutch DSG (DQ200) is the biggest risk on this car. Manual gearbox models are significantly more reliable.

BEFORE THE VIEWING

- Check recall status with VIN**
Call a Volkswagen dealer with the VIN to check for open recalls. The Takata airbag recall is safety-critical and covers many production years. Rear coil spring and DSG shift lever recalls also apply.
- Ask for full service history**
Look for oil changes every 15,000 km or annually using VW 502 00 or 504 00 spec oil. For DSG cars, ask specifically about gearbox fluid changes, ideally every 40,000-60,000 km.
- Confirm gearbox and engine variant**
Ask whether the car has a manual or DSG gearbox. Also check the power output: 140/150 hp versions have ACT cylinder deactivation, which adds a small extra risk at higher mileages.

AT THE CAR

- Tyres and exterior condition**
Check tread depth and sidewall date codes on all four tyres. Standard sizes are 195/65 R15 or 205/55 R16. Look for uneven inner-edge wear, which can point to worn front suspension bushings.
- Cold engine start and listen**
Start the engine fully cold. Listen for metallic rattling around 2,000 rpm in the first minute, which can point to the turbo wastegate linkage corroding. A brief rattle that fades is worth noting.
- Coolant level and leak check**
With the engine cold, check the coolant expansion tank (left side of the engine bay). Low coolant or white residue around the thermostat housing can point to the plastic housing cracking, the most common issue.
- Oil level and dipstick check**
Pull the dipstick (yellow handle, front of the engine). Oil dropping noticeably between services can point to piston ring issues, especially on 2013-2014 models. The oil should not smell of fuel.

DURING THE DRIVE

- DSG behaviour at low speed**
If the car has a DSG, drive in stop-and-go traffic for at least 10 minutes. Jerky shifts, shuddering from a standstill, or hesitation when pulling away can point to mechatronic unit problems.
- Turbo response and power delivery**
Accelerate firmly from low revs in a higher gear. The turbo should build boost smoothly without hesitation. Hold steady speed at around 2,000 rpm and listen for a metallic rattle from the engine bay.
- Dashboard warnings after 20 minutes**
Drive for at least 20 minutes including some faster roads. Watch for the EPC light, coolant temperature warnings, or check engine light. These may only appear once the engine is fully up to temperature.

NOTES

THIS CAR AT A GLANCE

Petrol Golf, built 2012-2020. The EA211 engine is generally solid. Main risks are the plastic water pump housing and, on automatics, the DQ200 DSG gearbox.

KNOWN WEAK POINTS

Water pump/thermostat leak
Plastic housing cracks, 60k-120k km
€400-1,000

DQ200 DSG mechatronics
Valve body splits, jerky shifts
€1,200-3,000

Turbo wastegate rattle
Linkage corrodes, rattle at 2,000 rpm
€50-1,500

Carbon buildup on valves
Direct injection, rough idle over time
€350-600

ACT rocker arm failure
140/150 hp only, high mileage risk
€1,500-3,500

