

How to Read a Real Estate Listing

Decoding the Language Agents Use to Describe Homes

Real estate listings are designed to spark interest — but sometimes they say more in what they don't mention than what they do. Learning to read between the lines helps you spot red flags, set realistic expectations and save time during your home search.

BUZZWORDS TO WATCH

Certain words appear frequently in listings, but their meanings can be vague or overly optimistic. For example:

- “Cozy” often means small
- “Charming” may indicate older
- “Needs TLC” signals repairs required
- “As-is” means no repairs will be made before closing

On the other hand, words like “updated kitchen,” “new roof” or “move-in ready” are more specific and usually backed up by photos or details.

Agents often use phrases like “won't last long” or “motivated seller” to create urgency. That doesn't always mean the home is a great deal — it may just be a competitive market.



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LOOK AT WHAT'S MISSING

A listing that highlights the backyard but doesn't mention the number of bathrooms? That's worth a second look. When important features are omitted, it could mean they're not in great shape or don't

meet standard expectations.

Pay attention to how recent the photos look. If there are no interior shots or the listing uses overly filtered images, it may signal that the home needs work.

Also check how square footage, number of bedrooms and

bathrooms are listed. If a basement or bonus room is counted as a bedroom, make sure it meets legal requirements.

Finally, cross-check the description with a map. Terms like “convenient location” or “quiet street” are sub-

jective — what's quiet to one buyer might be noisy to another.

By reading carefully and learning how to interpret the language of real estate, you'll become a smarter shopper — and better prepared to spot the listings worth visiting.



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REAL ESTATE 101



HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

Photos Tell Part of the Story — Words Tell the Rest

Don’t rely on pictures alone. Read the listing description closely to understand what’s being emphasized, what’s left out and whether the home fits your needs.

Listing Description: A listing description is the written portion of a real estate advertisement that highlights a home’s features, style and selling points. It’s created by the agent to attract potential buyers.

AD SPACE