

WHAT'S THE REAL COST OF YOUR FIRST CAR?

Seventeen-year-old Lanna bought a car for \$1,800. Lanna was thrilled and felt that she got a great deal on the monthly payment. But six months later, her "really cool car" sits in the driveway most of the time because she can't afford to drive it. Figure out the REAL cost of car ownership, starting with this list.

1. Gas. Lanna needs about \$25 every week for the gasoline to drive her car to work and school. You can't control gasoline prices, but compact cars are more fuel-efficient than trucks and vans.
2. Oil. Changing your oil every three months takes only about 30-45 minutes and \$20-\$30 (a lot less to do it yourself), but the consequences of neglecting it can be serious.
3. Maintenance. It cost Lanna \$225 to replace her muffler. If you're buying a used car with higher mileage, think about frequently used and exposed parts: exhaust system, windshield wipers, brakes, tires, lights, and so on. Repairs can be costly, so be prepared by saving for them.
4. Insurance. Most states and most lenders require auto insurance and Lanna's cost \$120 a month. Many insurers charge teenagers double or triple premiums because new drivers are a higher risk. Ask about discounts for such things as earning good grades in school.

