

FREE CHECKLIST · ILLEGAL TO KNOW

# Amazon FBA Product Research Checklist

24 concrete criteria across demand, competition, profitability, logistics and compliance — run every product idea through this before you commit money to inventory.

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How to use this: score a candidate product against every box below. A product that fails more than 2–3 of these is high-risk — keep researching before you order stock.  
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## A. Demand & Market Validation

- **Consistent search volume, not a single spike**

*Check the keyword's trend over 12–24 months, not just current month — tools like Google Trends or Amazon's own search-volume-adjacent data (via Brand Analytics if you have a seller account) help here.*

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- **Ranks in the top 3 pages of its category on Amazon already**

*If nothing similar sells on Amazon, that can mean untapped opportunity — or it can mean the demand simply isn't there. Cross-check against outside signals (Google/TikTok) before assuming it's a gap.*

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- **At least a handful of listings selling 300+ units/month**

*Rough proxy: use a sales-estimator tool or extension against the top 10 results for your target keyword to sanity-check real demand exists at volume.*

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- **Demand isn't purely seasonal (or you've priced that in)**

*A pure-Christmas or pure-summer product means 10 months of near-zero sales — fine if you plan inventory and cash flow around it, risky if you don't.*

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- **Search demand is roughly stable or growing, not declining**

*A steadily falling trend line over the past 1–2 years is a warning sign even if current volume looks fine today.*

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## B. Competition Analysis

- **Top 10 listings have fewer than ~500 reviews on average**

*Extremely review-heavy categories (thousands of reviews on every top listing) are very hard for a new listing to break into organically.*

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- **You can identify a real differentiation angle**

*Bundle, color/size variation gap, quality fix for a common complaint, better packaging — "identical product, different logo" is the hardest way to compete on Amazon.*

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- **No single brand dominates the whole first page**

*If one brand owns 6+ of the top 10 spots, they likely have loyalty, ad budget or supplier relationships that are hard to out-compete on day one.*

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■ **You've read the negative reviews on top competitors**

*The recurring complaints in 1–3 star reviews are your differentiation roadmap — a product that visibly fixes them has a real edge.*

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■ **Category isn't dominated by Amazon's own private-label brands**

*Amazon competing directly against you in your own category is a structural disadvantage that's very hard to out-price.*

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## C. Profitability

■ **Manufacturing/landed cost is roughly 25–30% or less of target sell price**

*Leaves room for Amazon referral fees, FBA fulfillment fees, ad spend and a real margin.*

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■ **You've calculated full landed cost, not just factory price**

*Landed cost = unit cost + freight + duties/customs + any prep/labeling — factory quotes alone routinely understate true cost by 20–40%.*

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■ **You've run the actual FBA fee calculator for this product's size/weight tier**

*Amazon's own FBA revenue calculator (free, in Seller Central) gives exact referral + fulfillment fees for your specific product dimensions — don't estimate this.*

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■ **Net margin after all fees and ad spend is realistically 20%+**

*Below this, normal return rates, storage fees and ad costs can turn a "profitable" product unprofitable in practice.*

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■ **Minimum order quantity (MOQ) fits your available capital**

*Factor in that you'll likely need 2–3 production runs of working capital before profit becomes self-sustaining.*

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## D. Sourcing & Supplier

■ **At least 3 quotes from different suppliers, not just the first one found**

*Price and quality both vary significantly between suppliers on Alibaba/1688 for the "same" product listing.*

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■ **Supplier has verifiable trade history (Alibaba Verified/Gold, or referrals)**

*Check years in business, transaction history, and ideally a video call before large orders.*

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■ **You've ordered and inspected a physical sample**

*Photos and factory claims are not a substitute for holding the actual unit.*

■ **A quality-control inspection plan exists for production runs**

*Either a third-party inspection service or a trusted sourcing agent, especially past your first order.*

## E. Logistics, Legal & Compliance

■ **Not on Amazon's restricted or gated categories list without approval**

*Check current Seller Central category requirements — some categories need pre-approval, invoices, or brand registry.*

■ **No obvious patent, trademark or IP conflict**

*A quick search on the USPTO/relevant trademark database and Amazon's own listings for existing patents in the space can save a costly takedown later.*

■ **Product meets safety/compliance requirements for its category**

*Electronics, anything for children, and consumables typically carry specific certification requirements (e.g. CPSIA, FCC) — confirm before importing, not after.*

■ **Shipping method and lead time fit your cash-flow runway**

*Sea freight is far cheaper than air but can mean 6–10 weeks lead time — plan reorders well before you run out of stock to avoid losing your listing's sales rank.*

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### Scoring guide

- **0–2 unchecked:** solid candidate — move to sampling and supplier negotiation.
- **3–5 unchecked:** proceed cautiously — address the specific gaps (usually differentiation or margin) before ordering real inventory.
- **6+ unchecked:** high risk — this is usually a sign to keep researching rather than to order stock.

*This checklist is educational and general in nature. Amazon's category, compliance and fee policies change regularly — always confirm current requirements in Seller Central before committing to inventory.*