

WILLIAM BRIEFS

The 12-Point Guide Quality Checklist

How to judge whether a paid PDF contains real value before you buy it.

Use this when:

A guide promises to save money, simplify a process, compare products, or reveal hidden information.

The core idea

A useful micro-guide is not valuable because the information is secret. It is valuable because the author found the right sources, checked conflicting claims, removed irrelevant detail, and turned the result into a decision you can act on.

Score each item from 0 to 2. A strong guide should reach at least 18 out of 24.

The 12-point checklist

Check	Question	Score
1. Specific problem	Does the guide solve one clearly defined problem rather than a broad topic?	0 1 2
2. Clear outcome	Does it state what you should be able to decide or do after reading?	0 1 2
3. Current version date	Is the last reviewed or updated date visible?	0 1 2
4. Source quality	Does it rely on official documentation, primary sources, or clearly identified evidence?	0 1 2
5. Source transparency	Can you tell which claims are facts, user reports, or the author's judgment?	0 1 2
6. Contradictions addressed	Does it explain why different sources disagree instead of hiding the conflict?	0 1 2
7. Actionable structure	Are there steps, a checklist, decision tree, comparison table, or worksheet?	0 1 2
8. Costs included	Does it identify fees, accessories, subscriptions, or hidden ownership costs?	0 1 2
9. Limitations stated	Does it explain who should not use the recommendation or when it may fail?	0 1 2
10. Preview quality	Does the preview show real pages, useful formatting, and concrete content?	0 1 2
11. No padding	Is the guide concise, or is it filled with generic definitions and repeated advice?	0 1 2
12. Price-to-risk fit	Is the price reasonable compared with the time, money, or mistake it may help you avoid?	0 1 2

How to interpret the score

Score	Interpretation
20-24	Strong. The guide appears specific, transparent, current, and actionable.
15-19	Mixed. Buy only when the problem is urgent or the preview proves the content is unusually useful.
0-14	Weak. The product is likely too broad, too vague, outdated, or padded.

Five warning signs

1. The title promises “everything” but the preview contains only definitions.
2. The guide has no update date for a fast-changing topic.
3. Every recommendation is an affiliate link with no alternatives.
4. The author presents anonymous online comments as verified facts.
5. The guide avoids costs, limitations, and situations where the advice does not apply.

A practical buying rule

Buy a guide when its likely value is at least five times its price. A \$4.99 guide should plausibly save about \$25, prevent a meaningful mistake, or replace at least an hour of frustrating research.

William Briefs

Clear answers. Fewer costly mistakes.

This free checklist may be shared as an intact file. It may not be resold or republished as another product.