



Credit checks are common when you apply for loans or credit cards, but you may wonder what a credit check actually reveals about you. When lenders run credit checks, they're trying to assess what kind of borrower you'll be, and going over your credit score and report can help them understand how you've historically managed credit. Late payments, maxed-out credit cards and accounts in collections may paint you as an unreliable borrower.

### What Lenders Look at on Your Credit Report

Your credit report provides a detailed record of how you manage credit. For lenders who are just getting to know you, a credit report tells a lot about your experience with various kinds of credit. The best way to visualize what your credit report says is to check it yourself. You can access your credit report for free from all three credit bureaus

at [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com) or get a free [Experian credit report](#) anytime. You can also read up on what [a typical Experian credit report contains](#). A few highlights:

- a) Personal information, including any names associated with your credit, current and past addresses and date of birth
- b) Current and past employers that have been listed on past credit applications
- c) Open loans and revolving credit accounts with credit limits, dates of late payments and current status
- d) Collection accounts, both open and resolved
- e) Bankruptcies, which are the only public record listed on your credit report
- f) Credit inquiries, including those from prospective lenders and credit card issuers

Lenders don't necessarily expect to see a flawless credit report. But a history of late payments, accounts in collections or a flurry of recent credit inquiries can raise red flags, lower credit scores, and may disqualify you from getting the best rates and terms or from being approved at all.