



CAN YOU "DECODE" YOUR CAR?

Ever wonder why there are so many letters and numerals in the serial number found on that little plate on top of your car's dashboard?

The 17-character Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) has been a standard feature on all vehicles manufactured since 1981. There's actually quite a lot of information hidden in those 17 characters. Besides the year, make, model, and manufacturer, you can also find things like the engine type, body style, transmission type and place of assembly. For example, the first character denotes the country where final assembly took place. The digit 1=USA, 2= Canada, 3=Mexico, J=Japan, W=West Germany and so on. The ninth character is a "check digit" designed to foil anyone who tries to create a phony VIN number (since only the manufacturer knows what the correct character is supposed to be.) The tenth character denotes the model year, with B=81, C=82, D=83, E=84, F=85, G=86, H=87, J=88, K=89, L=90, M=91, N=92, P=93, R=94, S=95, T=96, U=97, V=98, W=99, X=00. The final six digits (or a letter followed by five digits) represent the sequential serial number for your particular vehicle.