

# What is the Definition of an Antique Auto?

Definitions surrounding titles bestowed upon old cars can be confusing.

*There are several classifications that are applied to old automobiles. "Vintage," "Classic," "Collectors" and "Antique" are the main ones. Each of these has a specific definition, but it often varies from one source or expert to another. Because there are legal qualifications for the "Antique" label, it is one that's more clearly defined than others, but even that label can be a moving target.*

## 1. Antique Car Era

- Among auto enthusiasts a non-legal definition for "antique auto" applies the title to cars manufactured in a period they refer to as the "antique car era." This is an example of a "moving target" classification. Some experts (for instance [greatoldcars.com](http://greatoldcars.com)) consider it to run from 1886 to 1915, Some others ([antiquecar.com](http://antiquecar.com), for example) consider anything built before 1950 to be from the antique era.

## Definitions by Organization

- The Classic Car Club of America considers any car that is twenty five years old or older to be an antique car. Their definition of classic car, however, gets into a list of cars they publish (if the car is on the list it qualifies as classic, those not on the list don't). The Antique Auto Club of America includes vehicles from the same period as antique, but they extend it to motorcycles and trucks.

## Other Criteria

- Organizations like the Antique Automobile Club of America and Classic Car Club of America have some other rules that limit which vehicles qualify as antique by their definitions. The biggest one of these involves restoration. In order to qualify under their rules a vehicle can be restored, but only to original manufacturer specifications. For example, if a car didn't come equipped with a sun roof from the manufacturer, a sun roof equipped vehicle wouldn't be antique.

## Insurance Company Definition

- A more legal definition is the one applied by insurance companies. You can often get special insurance for an antique automobile. For that reason, insurance companies establish guidelines for what is and what is not an antique auto. Of course, this classification varies from one insurance company to another. The general time frame is vehicles 15 to 25 years or older qualify, depending on the company. There are other qualifications for the insurance, like storage concerns and miles driven per month.

## State Definitions

- Perhaps the most important legal definition comes from state law. States provide special license plates and registration for antique vehicles. In order to qualify, though, cars must meet certain criteria. These rules vary from state to state. In general most put the cut-off dates somewhere between 15 and 30 years old (but 25 is most common). In other words, to qualify a car needs to be at least 15 years old or older. There are usually rules about driving limitations (similar to insurance rules) involved, too. Check with your state's DMV for specific details.