



HOME BUYER'S GUIDE

A resource to help
guide you through the
home-buying experience,
from start to finish.



A photograph of a man and a woman embracing from behind in a grassy field at sunset. The man is wearing a red and blue plaid shirt, and the woman is wearing a floral dress. The background shows a house and a fence under a warm, orange sky.

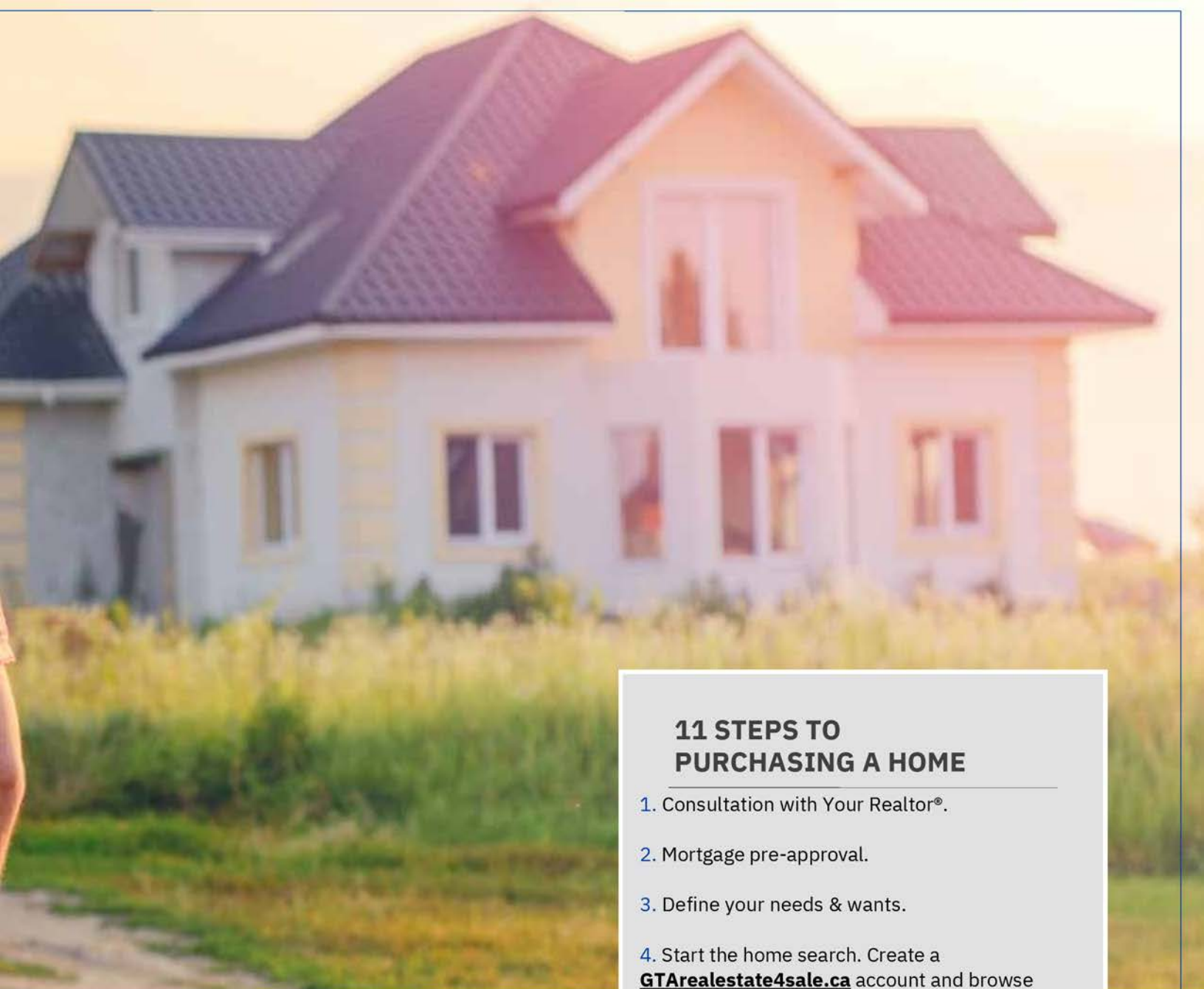
Welcome to Your Home Buying Journey

Buying a home is one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make, and it deserves to be an exciting and rewarding experience - not a stressful one.

For over 10 years, we have been guiding families, first-time buyers, and downsizers through the GTA and Vaughan market with one goal in mind: making sure your move feels simple, clear, and empowering. With a background in advanced negotiation (MCNE), seller and buyer representation (SRS, ABR), and senior specialist training (SRES), we don't just help you find a house - we help you find the right home, on the right terms, with peace of mind at every step.

This guide will walk you through the process, but more importantly, it's here to remind you: you're not doing this alone. We will be beside you from our first conversation to the day you get the keys.

Let's start this journey together.



Because It Matters Who You Work With

Choosing the right Realtor® makes all the difference. Buying a home is personal and one of the biggest decisions in your life. It's about trust, guidance, and having someone who puts your needs first. The right team makes the process smoother, protects your best interests, and ensures you feel confident every step of the way. With our team, you don't just get one Realtor®, you get three committed professionals working together for you.

11 STEPS TO PURCHASING A HOME

1. Consultation with Your Realtor®.
2. Mortgage pre-approval.
3. Define your needs & wants.
4. Start the home search. Create a **GTArealestate4sale.ca** account and browse homes online.
5. Identify homes you like and schedule home tours.
6. Make an offer.
7. Negotiate.
8. Accepted offer & deposit.
9. Firm up on the purchase - satisfy the conditions.
10. Final legal reviews and preparations.
11. Move-In!

Meet Your Team

About Maria Zarechnev Broker

With over 10 years of experience as a trusted real estate professional, Maria is passionate about helping clients find not just a house, but a place they'll love to call home. Her extensive knowledge of the market, combined with advanced certifications including **MCNE (Master Certified Negotiation Expert)**, **ABR (Accredited Buyer's Representative)**, **SRES (Senior Real Estate Specialist)**, **SRS (Seller Representative Specialist)**, and **E-PRO® (Digital Marketing Proficiency)**, allows her to deliver exceptional results for buyers and sellers alike.



About Michael Mezheritsky REALTOR

Michael is a seasoned real estate professional with extensive experience in both residential and commercial real estate. His expertise goes beyond helping clients find the perfect property. He specializes in providing tailored financial assistance, including guidance on mortgages, business financing, and other essential resources.

About Lina Mezheritsky REALTOR

With over a decade of experience in the real estate industry, Lina has built a reputation for guiding clients through the complexities of buying and selling homes with confidence and ease. Her unique expertise lies in providing tailored financial assistance to buyers, helping them navigate mortgage options and find solutions that fit their goals and lifestyle.



Let Us Be Your Guide

A close-up photograph of two hands building a small house out of light-colored wooden blocks. The house has a triangular roof and a chimney. The hands are positioned on either side of the structure, with one hand holding a block in place.

- With over 10+ years each in real estate we're proud of the clients who return to us again and again. Many are happy to share their experiences - just ask, and we'll connect you.
- From in-depth market analysis to off-market opportunities, trusted mortgage broker and inspector referrals, and personalized home tours, we provide every tool you need for a confident purchase.
- We'll map out each step of the home buying journey with you. You'll always know what's next, what's expected of you, and where we can take the weight off your shoulders.
- With three agents on your side, one of us is always available. We'll check in regularly by your preferred method, call, text, or email, to keep you fully updated.
- Our loyalty is to you, the buyer. We act in your best interest at every negotiation table and make sure your needs come first.
- Each of us brings a unique specialty, from first-time buyers and investors to downsizing and relocations. Together, we cover Vaughan and the broader GTA with insider knowledge.
- In the last year alone, we've successfully helped dozens of families buy their homes. What matters most to us isn't the number, it's that each family felt supported and celebrated when they got their keys.

WHAT MOST BUYERS ASK (AND HOW WE ANSWER):

1. *How much experience do you have and can you provide references?*
2. *What services and resources do you offer?*
3. *How will the home-buying process work and what's expected of me?*
4. *How much time can you devote to my needs and how often will you communicate with me?*
5. *Who will you represent, me or the seller?*
6. *What types of homes are your specialty and are you familiar with the neighbourhoods that interest me?*
7. *How many homes have you helped clients buy in the last year?*

Dedicated to Your Journey

Too many agents juggle more clients than they can handle, leaving buyers feeling overlooked. With our team approach, you'll never have to compete for attention. We've designed our systems to make sure you feel like our only client. Because during your home search, that's exactly how you should feel.

Get Pre-Approved



Get Pre-Approved With Confidence

We understand that getting pre-approved for a mortgage can feel intimidating, but with the right guidance, it doesn't have to be.

The first step is connecting with a mortgage professional you can trust. We've established relationships with some of the best mortgage agents in the industry, and they're ready to get you pre-approved as soon as you're ready. Working with a trusted lender means clear communication, honest advice, and a smooth process from start to finish.

When you apply for pre-approval, your lender will look at three key areas:

1. *Credit History* – Your score (300–900) shows your financial habits and helps determine eligibility.
2. *Employment & Income* – Proof of steady income and work history reassures lenders you can manage monthly payments.
3. *Assets & Debts* – Tax records, bank statements, and details of existing debt help calculate what you can comfortably afford.

Quick Checklist: What Lenders May Ask For

- ID – Driver's license or passport
- Proof of Income – A recent pay stub or employment letter
- Taxes – Last year's Notice of Assessment (or T4 slip)
- Bank Info – A recent bank statement
- Debts – Credit card or loan statements (if any)

💡 **If you're self-employed or buying with investments, lenders may ask for a bit more.**



💡 **Pro Tip: What Not To Do Until Your Closing**

- **DO NOT** change jobs, become self-employed, or quit your current job.
- **DO NOT** buy or lease a car, boat, or RV.
- **DO NOT** use your credit cards excessively or miss payments.
- **DO NOT** transfer balances or open new cards.
- **DO NOT** close any credit accounts.
- **DO NOT** withhold debts or liabilities from your loan application.
- **DO NOT** open new credit accounts to purchase new furniture, appliances, etc.
- **DO NOT** make any inquiries into your credit.
- **DO NOT** pay your bills late.
- **DO NOT** make large deposits or withdrawals from your bank accounts.
- **DO NOT** change banking accounts.
- **DO NOT** co-sign any loans for anyone.
- **DO NOT** spend money set aside for closing costs.

Inquire with your lender before considering any of the above.



Start Your Home Search

Defining Your Must-Haves

Choosing a home isn't just about bedrooms and bathrooms. It's about how the space fits your lifestyle today and in the years ahead. To stay focused:

- *Budget*: Set a price range that keeps you comfortable long term.
- *Location*: Narrow it down to 2–3 neighbourhoods that fit your lifestyle (schools, commute, community feel).
- *Space*: Decide on the bedrooms, bathrooms, and square footage you really need.
- *Must-haves vs. nice-to-haves*: Be clear about deal-breakers (like parking or a home office) vs. extras you'd love but could live without.
- *Outdoor living*: Think about whether you want a yard, balcony, or terrace, and how much maintenance feels right.

Once your list is set, browse homes at www.GTArealstate4sale.ca, then send us your favourites by text, email, or social media. We'll coordinate showings and help you compare them side by side.



Viewing Homes Online: What to Watch For

Online listings are a great first step, but photos don't always tell the full story. Here are four things to keep in mind:

1. *Photos & Layout*: Pay attention to windows, light, and flow, not just finishes.
2. *Future Fixes*: Don't be turned off by cosmetic details like paint or flooring; focus on what would be costly to change.
3. *Outdoor Space*: Look at lot size, balcony use, or yard maintenance. Think year-round.
4. *Virtual Tours*: Use 3D tours or video walkthroughs to get a real sense of layout before visiting in person.

💡 Pro tip: Send us the MLS number or screenshot of any property you're curious about. We often have extra insights not listed online, like updates, fees, or neighbourhood details, that can save you time.

Home Styles



Storey-and-a-half

This style has a deep pitched roof and clean, simple design. Dormers can be added to a pitched roof to add windows or usable space on the upper level.



Split Level

This home style typically has two short sets of stairs running up and down from the point of entry. It may, or may not, have living space at entry level.



Single-Level

Also referred to as a bungalow is known for a long, low design with all or most living space on ground level. Many have a basement level which may be finished into additional living space. A lower level walk-out includes a door to the exterior.



Two-Storey Home

A two storey home has two full levels of living space. A traditional two-storey will have a ground level, with an often equal sized floor directly above. Often you will find living space on the ground level, with the main suite and additional bedrooms on the second floor. There may also be a basement level.



Condominium

An owned unit in a large property complex that consists of many individual units. Often has a fee that covers shared monthly expenses for the upkeep of the building and facilities.



Townhouse

An owned unit in a row of houses all attached to one another. Often has a condominium fee that covers shared monthly expenses for the upkeep of the exterior and any shared facilities.



CHECKLIST

Bedrooms: ☐ 2+ ☐ 3+ ☐ 4+
Bathrooms: ☐ 1+ ☐ 2+ ☐ 3+ ☐ 4+
Dedicated Office Space: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Central Air Conditioning: ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐
☐

Garage: ☐ 1-car ☐ 2-car ☐ 3+ car
☐ Attached ☐ Detached ☐ None
☐
☐

Kitchen Features:
☐ Gas Stove/Cooktop ☐ Gas Oven
☐ Microwave Walk-In ☐ Dishwasher
☐ Pantry Updated ☐ Eat-In Kitchen
☐ Countertops
☐ Fully Renovated
☐
☐

Bedroom Features:
☐ Walk-in closet ☐ Master Bathroom
☐
☐

Bathroom Features:
☐ Double Vanity and Sinks
☐ Bathtub ☐ Double Shower
☐
☐

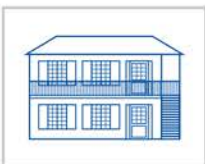
Additional Indoor Features:
☐ Gas Fireplace ☐ Wood Fireplace Main
☐ Mudroom Alarm ☐ Level Laundry Smart-
☐ System ☐ Home Tech.
☐ Mounted TV or Sound System Wiring
☐ Dedicated Dining Room
☐ Basement
☐
☐

Outdoor Features:
☐ Yard Space ☐ Wooded Lot ☐ Balcony
☐ Pool ☐ Fence ☐ Shed
☐ Balcony or Deck
☐ Outdoor Entertaining Area
☐
☐



Semi-Detached

This home has two single family dwellings that are separated by one common wall and have mirror image layouts. Semi-detached homes typically have two separate street addresses and can be owned by two different home owners. Since outdoor maintenance is the responsibility of the homeowners, it is important to consider shared expenses that may need to be addressed such as house siding and windows as well as use and upkeep of common spaces such as the yard, landscape or a shared driveway.



Duplex

A duplex is a home consisting of two separate dwellings that are either side by side or stacked on top of each other. They typically have identical layouts or a mirror image of each other. A duplex typically has one street address with unit numbers and one property owner.



Beyond the Purchase Price

Here are some common expenses home buyers should plan for:

Land Transfer Tax (LTT)

- Paid on closing to the province (and the City of Toronto if applicable).
- First-time buyers may qualify for a rebate.

Legal Fees & Disbursements

- Expect around \$1,500–\$2,500 depending on the complexity.

Home Inspection

- Typically \$400–\$700.

Title Insurance

- Protects against fraud, survey errors, or title defects. Approx. \$300–\$500 (one-time cost).

Appraisal Fee

- Some lenders require an appraisal. Typically \$400–\$600.

Mortgage Insurance (if less than 20% down)

- CMHC, Sagen, or Canada Guaranty fees are added to your mortgage.

Adjustments

- You may need to reimburse the seller for prepaid property taxes, utilities, or condo fees.

Moving Costs

- Movers, truck rental, or storage fees. Budget \$500–\$2,000+ depending on your move.

Home Insurance

- Required before closing if you have a mortgage. Costs vary based on property type and coverage.

Utility Set-Up Fees

- Hook-up charges for hydro, gas, water, internet, or cable.

★ First-Time Buyer Benefits

• **Land Transfer Tax Rebate**

-up to \$4,000 off the provincial Land Transfer Tax

• **Home Buyers' Plan**

-Withdraw up to \$35,000 from your RRSP (per buyer, \$70,000 for a couple) tax-free

• **First-Time Home Buyer's Tax Credit**

-\$5,000 federal non-refundable tax credit, about \$750 back at tax time

• **GST/HST New Housing Rebate** (new construction)

-Partial rebate on the HST portion of your new home purchase.



Pro Tip

Plan for an additional 3–5% of the purchase price to comfortably cover closing costs and extras. That way, there are no surprises on closing day.



BUYING PROCESS

1.



Consultation with Your Realtor®

We'll sit down together to talk about your goals, budget, preferred neighbourhoods, and current market conditions. This is where your journey begins.

2.



Mortgage Pre-Approval

Work with a mortgage broker or your bank. They will work with you on what you require to submit an application. Once approved, this will determine how much you can afford to spend on a new home.

3.



Define Your Needs & Wants

Make a list of must-haves, nice-to-haves, and deal-breakers (budget, location, size, lifestyle features).



6. Make an Offer

We'll prepare the Agreement of Purchase and Sale (APS), tailored to your needs—price, closing date, inclusions, and any conditions (financing, home inspection, or sale of buyer's property).



5. Decide on a Home

Once you've found the right fit, we'll review recent comparable sales, neighbourhood stats, and property details so you can make a confident decision.



4. Start the Home Search

We'll send you listings, arrange showings, and guide you through open houses—online and in person.



7. Negotiate

If the seller counters, we'll negotiate on your behalf to secure the best possible terms and price.



8. Accepted Offer & Deposit

Once the seller accepts, you'll provide a deposit (usually 5% of the purchase price) held in trust until closing. This shows your commitment and is applied toward your purchase at closing.



11. Closing & Move-In

On closing day, your lawyer transfers the funds, the title is registered in your name, and the keys are released.

Congratulations—you're officially a homeowner!



10. Lawyer's Role

Your real estate lawyer will conduct a title search, review documents, calculate adjustments, and prepare closing paperwork. A few days before closing, you'll meet your lawyer, sign the documents, and provide the balance of funds.



9. Fulfill Your Conditions

Complete financing approval, home inspection, appraisal, or other conditions within the agreed timelines.

Homebuyer's Glossary

By familiarizing yourself with these home-buying basics, you'll be better equipped to make informed decisions and a wise investment.

1. Amortization: The length of time allotted to paying off a loan – in home-buying terms, the mortgage. Most maximum amortization periods in Canada are 25 years.

2. Balanced Market: In a balanced market, there is an equal balance of buyers and sellers in the market, which means reasonable offers are often accepted by sellers, and homes sell within a reasonable amount of time and prices remain stable.

3. Bridge Financing: A short-term loan designed to “bridge” the gap for homebuyers who have purchased their new home before selling their existing home. This type of financing is common in a seller's market, allowing homebuyers to purchase without having to sell first.

4. Buyer's Market: In a buyer's market, there are more homes on the market than there are buyers, giving the limited number of buyers more choice and greater negotiating power. Homes may stay on the market longer, and prices can be stable or dropping.

5. Closing: This is the last step of the real estate transaction, once all the offer conditions outlined in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale have been met and ownership of the property is transferred to the buyer. Once the closing period has passed, the keys are exchanged on the closing date outlined in the offer.

6. Closing Costs: The costs associated with “closing” the purchase deal. These costs can include legal and administrative fees related to the home purchase. Closing costs are additional to the purchase price of the home.

7. Comparative Market Analysis: Comparative market analysis (CMA) is a report on comparable homes in the area that is used to derive an accurate value for the home in question.

8. Home Inspection: The home inspection is performed to identify any existing or potential underlying problems in a home. This not only protects the buyer from risk, but also gives the buyer leverage when negotiating a reduced selling price.

9. Condominium Ownership: A form of ownership whereby you own your unit and have an interest in common elements such as the lobby, elevators, halls, parking garage and building exterior. The condominium association is responsible for maintenance of building and common elements, and collects a monthly condo fee from each owner, based on their proportionate share of the building.

10. Conditions: This term refers to conditions that have to be met in order for the purchase of a home to be finalized. For example, there may be contingencies that the mortgage loan must be approved or the appraised value must be near the final sale price.

11. Deposit: An up-front payment made by the buyer to the seller at the time the offer is accepted. The deposit shows the seller that the buyer is serious about the purchase. This amount will be held in trust by the agent or lawyer until the deal closes, at which point it is applied to the purchase price.

Homebuyer's Glossary (cont'd)

12. Down Payment: The down payment is the amount of money paid-up front for a home, in order to secure a mortgage. Down payments less than 20% of a home's purchase price require mortgage loan insurance. The selling price, minus the deposit and down payment, is the amount of the mortgage loan.

13. Dual Agency: Dual agency is when one agent represents both sides, rather than having both a buyer's agent and a listing agent.

14. Equity: The difference between a home's market value and the amount owing on the mortgage. This is the portion of the home that has been paid for and is officially "owned."

15. Fixed-Rate Mortgage: A fixed-rate mortgage guarantees your interest rate and for a pre-determined amount of time, typically 5 years. When the term expires, you have the option to stay with the same lender or switch to a different one.

16. Land Transfer Tax: This is the tax payable by the buyer to the province and/or municipality in which the transaction occurred upon transferring land. The amount varies depending on the region, the size of the land and other factors.

17. High-Ratio Mortgage: A high-ratio mortgage is a mortgage where the borrower has less than 20% of the home's purchase price to make as the down payment. A high-ratio mortgage with a down payment between 5% and 19% of the purchase price requires mortgage loan insurance. In Canada, 5% is the minimum amount required for the down payment.

18. Home Appraisal: A qualified professional provides a market value assessment of a home based on several factors such as property size, location, age of the home, etc. This is used to satisfy mortgage requirements, giving mortgage financing companies confirmation of the mortgaged property's value.

19. Home Buyers' Amount: This is a \$5,000 non-refundable federal income tax credit on a qualifying home, providing up to \$750 in tax relief to assist first-time buyers with purchase-related costs.

20. Home Buyers' Plan: A federal program allowing first-time homebuyers to withdraw up to \$35,000 interest-free from their Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) to help purchase or build a qualifying home. The borrowed amount must be repaid within 15 years to avoid paying a penalty.

21. Land Survey: A land survey will identify the property lines. This is not required to purchase a home, but it is recommended and may be required by the mortgage lender to clarify where on the property the owner has jurisdiction. This is important if issues arise between neighbours or the municipality, should the owner wish to make changes in the future such as installing a pool, fence or other renovations involving property lines.

22. Freehold Ownership: A form of ownership whereby you own the property and assume responsibility for everything inside and outside the home.

23. Porting: Transferring your mortgage (and the existing interest rate and terms) from one property to another.

24. Seller's Market: In a seller's market, there are more buyers than there are homes for sale. With fewer homes on the market and more buyers, homes sell quickly in a seller's market. Prices of homes are likely to increase, and there are more likely to be multiple offers on a home. Multiple offers give the seller negotiating power, and conditional offers may be rejected.

25. Virtual Deals: The home-buying process completed by means of technology in place of face-to-face contact. Some common digital tools include 360 home tours and video showings, video conference calls, e-documents, e-signatures and e-transfers.



26. Mortgage Pre-approval: A mortgage pre-approval helps buyers understand how much they can borrow before going through the mortgage application process. Allows you to make an immediate offer when you find a home, since you know how much you'll be approved for with this lender, and locks in the current interest rate for a period of time insulating you against near-term rate increases.

27. Title Insurance: Title insurance is not mandatory in Canada, but it is highly recommended to protect both the buyer and the mortgage lender against losses related to the property title or ownership, such as unknown title defects, existing liens against the property's title, encroachment issues, title fraud, errors in surveys and public records, and title-related issues that could prevent you from selling, leasing or obtaining a mortgage. Your lawyer can advise you on this.

28. Mortgage Loan Insurance: If your down payment is less than 20% of the purchase price of the home, mortgage loan insurance is required. It protects the lender in case of payment default. Premiums are calculated as a percentage of the down payment, changing at the 5%, 10% and 15% thresholds.

29. Offer: An offer is a legal agreement to purchase a home. An offer can be conditional on a number of factors, commonly conditional on financing and a home inspection. If the conditions are not met, the buyer can cancel their offer.

30. Variable Rate Mortgage: A variable rate mortgage fluctuates with the prime rate. Your monthly payments remain the same, but the proportion of your payment going toward principal versus interest can change.

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Let our experience be your guide

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