WORKING WITH SELLERS | WEEK 7 | AGENT WORKBOOK

Preparing the Home for Market

Tuesday, October 20, 2026 | 10:00 AM Eastern



Turn observations into a preparation plan a seller can carry out.

Use this workbook with the 18-slide lesson. Capture the seller's priorities, explain the purpose of each recommendation, and leave with a realistic plan for photography and showings.

Agent name and office

Property or seller situation I will apply this to

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SLIDES 2-3 | UNDERSTAND THE HOUSEHOLD

Begin with the seller

A useful preparation plan starts with the seller's time, resources and daily needs. Ask before assigning work.

> **WHY THIS MATTERS**
>
> A plan that ignores the household is unlikely to get finished. Choose tasks the seller can realistically complete.

Target move date and anything that could change it

Comfortable spending limit and approval process

Tasks the seller can handle and help they may need

Daily routines, accessibility, children, pets and work schedules

What the seller most wants buyers to understand about the home

My opening question at the preparation appointment

SLIDES 4-5 AND 10 | DECISIONS WITH A PURPOSE

Sort the work before spending

Separate a condition that needs evaluation from a presentation task or an optional upgrade. Do not diagnose a condition outside your expertise.

Decision	Example	Next step
Investigate	An unexplained ceiling stain	Record the observation and arrange appropriate evaluation.
Improve presentation	A crowded route through the living room	Try a furniture change and review the result with the seller.
Consider an upgrade	Replacing dated but working counters	Compare estimates, timing, competing homes and alternatives.

Concern observed and what remains unknown

Who should evaluate it and by when

Lower-cost or lower-disruption alternative to consider

> **BEFORE ANY COMMITMENT**
>
> Explain the purpose and tradeoffs. Obtain the seller's approval of scope, payer and cost. Do not promise a price increase or dollar-for-dollar return.

SLIDES 6-9 | CLEANING AND PRESENTATION

Create a room by room plan

Write one specific task for each area. State what the change will help a buyer understand; avoid judgments about the seller's taste.

Area	Observation and agreed task	Why this helps
Entrance / exterior		
Living space		
Kitchen		
Bedrooms		
Bathrooms		
Storage / utility access		

> **KEEP DAILY LIFE WORKABLE**
>
> Choose a place for packed items. Keep essential items, walking routes and equipment accessible. For an autumn launch, plan for leaves and earlier darkness.

The first manageable task we will complete

SLIDES 5 AND 11 | SPEND WITH A REASON

Choose the budget and staging approach

Use the seller's goals and competing properties to decide which work deserves time and money.

Approach	What to confirm
Seller-led preparation	Which existing furnishings can stay, what will move and who can help.
Staging consultation	Consultation fee, written recommendations and who implements them.
Furnished staging	Rooms included, delivery, rental term, removal, payer and written terms.

Proposed work and the specific concern it addresses

Written estimate, timing and competing-home comparison

Seller's choice, approved amount and who pays

What happens if the work takes longer or costs more

> **SET AN HONEST EXPECTATION**
>
> Preparation may improve how a home presents. The sale result depends on the property, price, market and buyers; an improvement is not a guaranteed financial return.

SLIDES 12-13 | ACCURACY AND PRIVACY

Prepare for photographs and visits

Walk the photo route before the appointment. The images and the in-person experience should agree.

- [ ] Agreed cleaning and furniture changes are complete; unresolved conditions have a follow-up plan.
- [ ] Personal documents, visible calendars, passwords and identifying items are put away.
- [ ] Valuables, medications and firearms are appropriately secured.
- [ ] Photographer timing, access, pets and the shot list are confirmed.
- [ ] Property details and intended exclusions are checked with the seller.
- [ ] Edited images are accurate; virtual staging is clearly identified under current brokerage and MLS requirements.

Two features the photographs should help buyers understand

Privacy or access arrangements requiring follow-up

Do not digitally remove damage or invent permanent features. Do not record alarm, lockbox or other security codes in this workbook.

SLIDES 14-15 | RESPECTFUL CONVERSATIONS

Give advice the seller can hear

Ask permission, describe an observation, explain the purpose and offer a manageable choice. Learn what is behind a seller's hesitation.

> **WHEN THE SELLER HAS LITTLE MONEY**
>
> “Let's choose a few tasks using what you already have. We can get estimates before you decide on any paid work.”

> **WHEN THE SELLER LOVES THE DECOR**
>
> “May I suggest a temporary change for the photos? Moving this chair would open the path to the windows and make the layout easier to see.”

My observation about this property

The reason this matters for a buyer

A manageable option I can offer

If the seller declines: reason, choice and next follow-up

SLIDE 16 | SEQUENCE THE WORK

Build the preparation calendar

Work backward from a tentative photography date. A date is a planning target until the work and access arrangements are confirmed.

Milestone	Responsible person	Target date	Must happen first
Evaluation / estimates			
Seller approves scope / cost			
Approved work completed			
Packing and cleaning			
Readiness review			
Photography / media review			
Launch instructions confirmed			

Most likely delay and our backup plan

FOLLOW UP BEFORE A DATE SLIPS

Repairs, permits, weather or vendor availability can change the sequence. Coordinate launch changes with the seller, broker and applicable MLS requirements.

SLIDE 17 | CONFIRM WHAT IS ACTUALLY READY

Complete the final readiness review

Review the agreed plan with the seller. Record unfinished items and decisions instead of assuming everything is complete.

- ☐ Agreed tasks are finished or the seller has a documented plan for what remains.
- ☐ Repair questions have appropriate professional follow-up and records.
- ☐ Property information and intended exclusions are accurate.
- ☐ Photographs and captions accurately represent the property.
- ☐ Privacy, authorized access and pet arrangements are confirmed.
- ☐ The seller understands the next appointment and who will follow up.

Unresolved item	Next action and owner	Review date

Decision and next contact: proceed, finish tasks or obtain advice

This is a preparation review, not a property inspection or certification of condition. Bring contract and disclosure questions to the broker or attorney.

SLIDE 18 | APPLY THE CLASS

Choose your next five actions

Use one current or sample property. For each priority, write the reason, owner and deadline. A clear next step is more useful than a long wish list.

Priority and why it matters	Owner and deadline	Estimate / approval needed
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

The action I will complete in the next 24 hours

The next seller conversation I will schedule

Continue with the separate resources

Use the handout set for appointments. The Consumer Reports folder contains six original NAR guides. The Resource Index pairs each guide with the lesson and, where available, a consumer song.

Training resources