

Do you foresee any life changes that would cause you to move in the next six or seven years?

- downsizing or upgrading your living space
- marriage or divorce
- birth of a child
- change in employment status

yes

Buying and selling a home cost money that won't necessarily be recouped in equity. If you're unable to stay put for more than six years, you may be better off renting.

no

Now may be the time to buy.

Do you know the cost of and can you afford ...

- the mortgage payment
- maintenance
- taxes, insurance, homeowners association dues, and/or private mortgage insurance

yes

You're savvy; you know that homeownership costs more than just the mortgage payment.

no

Take some time to familiarize yourself with all of the extra expenses associated with owning and maintaining a home.

Do you have ...

- a good credit score
- stable employment
- money for down payment, closing costs, and more

yes

Your chances of securing financing are higher—and it appears that you're financially ready to buy a home.

no

Take some time to improve your financial situation.

Should you **Rent**
or **Buy**?

Do you think of a house primarily as a place to live and not as an investment?

yes

You wisely realize that a home isn't a guaranteed cash cow.

no

The housing bubble proved that real estate isn't the sure thing many once thought. A home can still be a great asset, but building a nest—not a nest egg—should be your main concern.

If you answered **"yes"** to all four, you're in the market to ...

Buy

You've done your homework and established a solid foundation. It sounds like you might be ready to take the plunge into homeownership.

If you answered **"no"** to one or more, you're in the market to ...

Rent

For the time being, consider enjoying the many perks and amenities of being a renter: calling someone else for maintenance, moving or relocating easily, and not worrying about property taxes.