

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1980 Jeep CJ-7 Restoration Guide

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RESTORATION ESSENTIALS

1980 Jeep CJ-7

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

RestorationEssentials single-year guide · Model year 1980 only · CJ-7 (AMC era),
93.4-inch wheelbase

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- **Model year covered:** 1980 only. This guide does not cover other years except where differences from 1980 are explicitly noted.
- **Engine:** GM 151 cu in I4 'Iron Duke' — 82 hp at 4,000 rpm; 125 lb-ft at 2,600 rpm (JP Magazine / marque engine table)
- **Engine:** 258 cu in I6 — 110 hp in the documented 1980 specification (marque year tables)
- **Engine:** 304 cu in V8 — 125 hp; 220 lb-ft (1980–81, range guide)
- **Engine:** Isuzu C240 diesel (export) — Export-only; 4.10 axles (range guide)
- **Transmission:** SR-4 and T-176 4-speed manuals (JeepTech); Chrysler TF999 automatic (six/V8) and TF904 (four) — the TH400 era is over.
- **Transfer case:** Dana 300 — NEW for 1980: 2.62:1 low range, self-contained oil (JP Magazine).
- **Axles:** Dana 30 front (narrow-track); AMC 20 rear. A Dana 44 rear is documented on a small number of 1980 Laredo cars (range guide) — verify by the housing, never the listing.

1. Manufacturer history: Jeep

AMC's CJ-7 arrived for 1976 as the CJ for people who used doors: a 93.4-inch wheelbase against the CJ-5's 83.5, squared door openings, an available molded hardtop and steel doors, and — a first for the CJ line — an optional automatic transmission, made possible by the extra length. The frame's rear section stepped outward so springs and dampers sat closer to the wheels — the stability fix the CJ-5 never got. AMC built 379,299 CJ-7s over eleven model years. The CJ-7 is simultaneously the most restorable CJ (parts, knowledge, and numbers) and the most modified vehicle in this guide series — which makes documentation, not scarcity, the restorer's core skill.

2. Model history: where 1980 sits

The CJ-7 ran 1976–86 in three drivetrain eras: 1976–79 (Dana 20, heavy-duty manuals, Quadra-Trac), 1980–81 (Dana 300 arrives, SR-4 era, the 304's last years), and 1982–86 (wide-track axles, five-speed, four-cylinder base). Trim ran Renegade throughout, Golden Eagle in the V8 era, Laredo from 1980, Limited for 1982–83, and the numbered 1982 Jamboree. This guide covers one year only; the year-change register in Section 3 states exactly what this year changed, what it kept, and what it ended.

3. What is unique about the 1980 Jeep CJ-7

- The Dana 300 transfer case arrives — the single most wanted drivetrain change of the run, with a 2.62:1 low range and self-contained lubrication (JP Magazine).
- The Iron Duke four becomes the base engine — a fuel-economy-era CJ-7 that is factory-correct on four cylinders.
- Laredo debuts as the trim flagship, and the tub changes mid-year: a dual-wall door opening replaces the angle supports, greatly increasing stiffness (JP Magazine). Early and late 1980 tubs legitimately differ.
- The heavy-duty transmissions are gone: 1980 reorganizes the gearbox line around the SR-4 / T-176 and the Chrysler automatics (JeepTech).

Year-change register — 1980 vs. the year before:

- NEW: Dana 300; GM 151 four (base); SR-4 / T-176; TF999 / TF904 automatics; Laredo package; dual-wall tub (mid-year); export diesel program begins.
- DELETED: Dana 20, Quadra-Trac, T-150, T-18, TH400, 232 six.
- CARRIED OVER: 258 and 304 (304 not sold in California); narrow-track axles; 13-character serial (final year).

4. Technical restoration data — 1980 Jeep CJ-7

4.1 Specification table (1980)

Item	1980 specification
Transmission	SR-4 and T-176 4-speed manuals (JeepTech); Chrysler TF999 automatic (six/V8) and TF904 (four) — the TH400 era is over.
Transfer case	Dana 300 — NEW for 1980: 2.62:1 low range, self-contained oil (JP Magazine).
Axles	Dana 30 front (narrow-track); AMC 20 rear. A Dana 44 rear is documented on a small number of 1980 Laredo cars (range guide) — verify by the housing, never the listing.
Brakes	Front discs standard (1979-on specification).
Trim / packages	Laredo DEBUTS for 1980: chrome package, better seats, tilt wheel, instrument details (range guide). Renegade continues; Golden Eagle ends with this era.
Production	Per-year production not stated in the sources consulted — none printed (run total 379,299).

Engines (1980):

Engine	Rating	Notes
GM 151 cu in I4 'Iron Duke'	82 hp at 4,000 rpm; 125 lb-ft at 2,600 rpm (JP Magazine / marque engine table)	NEW base engine — the four-cylinder CJ returns for 1980 (JeepTech). Pontiac-built, Chevrolet bellhousing pattern.
258 cu in I6	110 hp in the documented 1980 specification (marque year tables)	Optional; the volume engine.
304 cu in V8	125 hp; 220 lb-ft (1980–81, range guide)	Optional — but NOT sold in California for 1980 (emissions, JP Magazine).
Isuzu C240 diesel (export)	Export-only; 4.10 axles (range guide)	Documented rarity, 1980–82 export program.

4.2 VIN and serial decoding

1976–80 CJ-7s carry the 13-character Jeep serial: J (Jeep), a year digit (6 = 1976 ... 0 = 1980), a transmission letter (A automatic, F 4-speed manual in the documented cars), model digits 93 (CJ-7, 93-inch class), a GVW letter, an engine letter, and the six-digit serial. Documented examples in the range guide: J6A93EH078115 (a 1976 304 car) and J6F93AA071236 (a 1976 258). Engine letters of the era: A/C for the 258 (1-1/2-barrel), E for the 232, H for the 304 V8. Photograph the plate before anything else — on a Jeep this modified, the serial is the restoration's foundation document.

4.3 Year-correct procedures and finishes (1980)

- Transfer-case identification is the first 1980 check: a Dana 20 in a 1980 is a swap; a Dana 300 in a 1979 is a swap. The case and the year must agree or the file must explain why not.
- Tub construction splits inside the year — record which door-opening construction the individual Jeep carries before ordering tub panels.