

The value of a diamond is determined by four factors known as the four C's: Clarity, Color, Cut and Carat Weight. To determine the value of a stone we must consider all of them. The larger the diamond, the rarer it is; the purer the diamond, the more valuable it is; the less color in a diamond, the more beautiful; and the more precise the cut of the diamond, the more brilliant it is. Only a combination of all these individual factors determines the diamond's value, quality and beauty.

Clarity:

Clarity is a measure of a diamond's purity. The clarity grade of a diamond is based on the presence of blemishes and inclusions. Blemishes are external characteristics (on the surface), such as scratches or small chips. Inclusions are internal characteristics. The types of inclusions can range from tiny, pinpoint black spots, to fractures, to included crystals consisting of diamond and other minerals. Others may be clouds of white pinpoints, feathers (breaks), and cleavages. A VS or SI stone is usually more desirable if the inclusions are either (a) near the edge (girdle) or the stone as opposed to near the center (table), or (b) on the bottom of the stone (pavilion) and not visible through the top (crown). White inclusions are preferred over dark inclusions. Very few diamonds are entirely free from inclusions. Even fewer have neither blemishes or inclusions- these rarest of the rare are called flawless.

Generally speaking, the more inclusions a diamond has, the lower its price will be. However, inclusions in gem quality diamonds rarely affect durability or even appearance. In fact, to see the inclusions in most diamonds, we must use strong magnification and special lighting techniques. The inclusions in a diamond do serve two very important purposes: (1) they help the cutter determine the best way to fashion the rough stone, and (2) since the inclusions in each diamond are unique, they distinguish it from all other diamonds (interestingly, this cannot be said of flawless stones). Because of their negligible effect on beauty and their importance in identification, most jewelers prefer to refer to blemishes and inclusions as identifying characteristics, thus avoiding any negative implications.

The diamond industry uses very specific grading standards to set a diamond's value. Grading standards reflect "very subtle" gradations of differences---a small carbon spot, slight shift in color, or small imperfection in the cut or polish of the diamond will significantly affect its value. Once a stone gets above VS in clarity it generally appears to the unaided eye to be "perfect."

The following are the most widely accepted clarity grading terms and their descriptions:

FL-IF: Flawless, Internally Flawless

(Inclusions are too small to be illustrated)

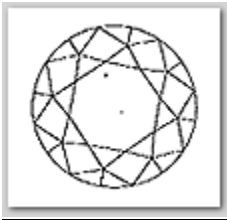
No inclusions visible under 10X. The highest clarity grade given. Some blemishes may be permitted externally thus bringing the stone to a clarity of "IF" or Internally Flawless.

VVS1-VVS2: Very, Very Slight Inclusions

(Inclusions are too small to be illustrated)

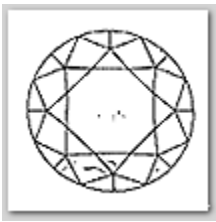
Extremely difficult to find under 10X magnification.

VS1-VS2: Very Slight Inclusions



Difficult to find under 10X magnification.

SI1-SI2-SI3: Slight Inclusions



SI1 - Can be seen easily with 10X magnification. Cannot be viewed with naked eye.

SI2 - Can be seen easily with 10X magnification. Rarely can be viewed with naked eye.

SI3 - Can be seen very easily with 10X magnification. In most cases (stones above $\frac{3}{4}$ of a carat) can be viewed with naked eye. The majority of diamonds fall into this category. SI3 - is a relatively new grade added by some laboratories to bridge the very wide gap between SI2 and I1 (imperfect).

I1-I2-I3: Imperfect



The Imperfect group is the final group on the diamond scale. Flaws in diamonds in this category are visible with the naked eye.

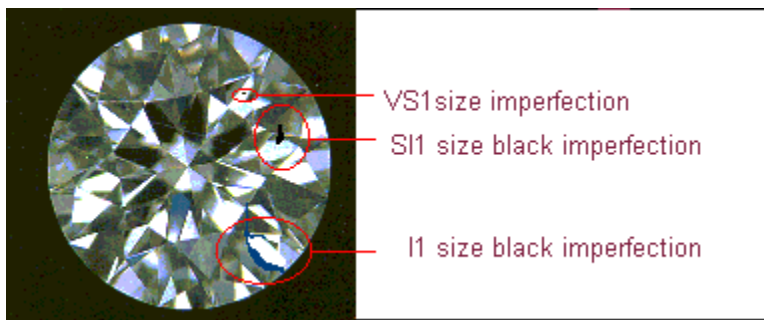
I1 - diamonds in the I1 range are still pleasing to the eye. The imperfection is not large enough to take away from the general brilliance of the stone.

I2 - diamonds in the I2 range have large imperfections that in some cases may take up a substantial portion of the stone and can be viewed with ease by the naked eye.

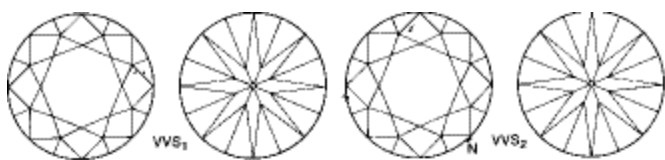
I3 - diamonds in this range are very close to be considered “rejection grade” stones. This means that such a large part of the stone is included that the stone has lost all “life” and has no appeal left it. Any stone lower than I3 would be considered an industrial grade stone.

The size and number of imperfections determine the clarity grade:

Comparative size of imperfections and subsequent grades

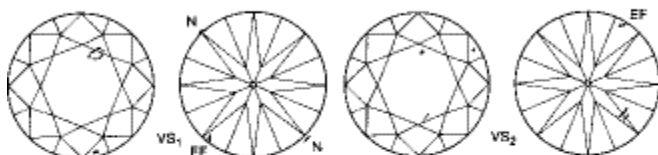


Comparative number of imperfections and subsequent grades



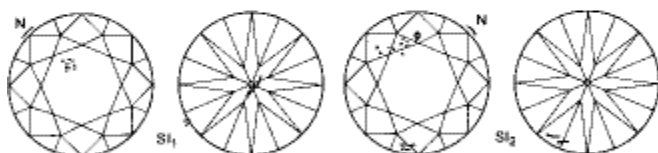
Two small pinpoints near girdle

Natural, small nick, and small feather



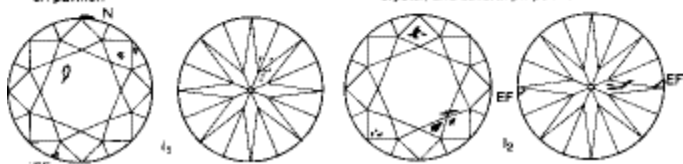
Two naturals, one extra facet, small feather, and faint cloud of pinpoints

Two opaque inclusions, one feather on table, extra facet, and two small cleavages on pavilion



Group of dark pinpoints in table, one natural, nick, and medium feather on pavilion

Two cleavages on pavilion, one natural, two feathers, included crystal, and several pinpoints



Group of pinpoints on pavilion, natural, extra facet, and three large included crystals

Two extra facets, three feathers on pavilion, and several dark inclusions