



The color of a diamond has the second biggest impact on its price, after carat weight. Did you know that diamonds come in every color of the rainbow?

Grading color in the normal range involves deciding how closely a stone's body color approaches colorlessness. Most diamonds have at least a trace of yellow or brown body color. With the exception of some natural fancy colors, such as blue, pink, purple, or red, the colorless grade is the most valuable.

GIA	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	Colorless			Near Colorless			Faint Yellow			Very Light Yellow			Light Yellow										
AGS	0	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0	9.5	10		

If a diamond does not have enough color to be called fancy, then it is graded in a scale of colors ranging from Colorless to Light Yellow, "D" through "Z" or "0" through "10" depending on which lab you use. A diamond with a "D" color is considered to be colorless. If the color is more intense than "Z", it is considered fancy. A fancy yellow diamond fetches a higher price than a light yellow diamond.

The gem laboratories only grade diamonds that are unmounted, or "loose", and they do so under special light using color master sets to compare against. Once a loose diamond is mounted on a ring, even the trained professional cannot always tell the difference between, say a "D" color and an "E" or "F" color diamond.

Cost is sometimes referred to as the fifth "C" and for good reasons. It is probably the most important factor in your customer's mind. Let's take a typical diamond and see what happens when we take it through different color grades. We'll start with a 1.00 carat diamond of K color and VS1 Clarity. If you move up to an H

color, you will pay approximately an extra \$1,700 per carat. Move up to F color, the increase will be approximately yet another \$1,000 per carat. Improve the color to D and the increase will be approximately another \$900 per carat.

The high prices commanded by colorless stones result from their extreme rarity rather than from any appreciable effect of body color on beauty. To the consumer, the color grades of diamonds are almost unimaginably subtle; for example, very very slight differences in the colors of two diamonds – undetectable to all but specially trained technicians working under carefully controlled conditions – may result in a price difference of several thousand dollars for the two stones. For this reason, you should be careful not to let your appreciation of color affect your sales presentation. Some people see lightly tinted diamonds as warmer and more attractive than colorless stones; using terms like “off color” or “poor color” may destroy your customer’s admiration of a truly beautiful gem.

Typically you will see stones with a color grade D,E,F,G,H,I,J in finer quality jewelry. Color grades of K,L,M,N are very common in promotional quality jewelry and tend to look dingy in daylight. When diamonds are graded properly it is done inside in a room with windows facing north only to get natural north lighting. If this is not possible illumination inside the grading rooms are color corrected to emulate natural north light. The great Diamond Trading Bourses have their trading rooms with windows on the North side of the building - perfect conditions for viewing diamonds. When millions of dollars of diamonds in a single trade are on the line, second-rate lighting just won't cut it. Grading lamps that diamond graders use also emulate this light.

Probably the most important reason for color grade variations between labs and even between different graders in the same lab is simply the narrow size of individual grades. The differences between colors are literally at the edge of human discernment. While under optimum conditions graders can generally get within a quarter grade of one another, on lab documents the best reproducibility graders can probably attain is plus or minus one full grade. Thus today’s F could be either tomorrow’s righteous E or disastrous G.

Fluorescence



Some gem-quality diamonds fluoresce: they emit light when exposed to long-wave ultraviolet light. How does this fact affect a diamond's appearance and value? In the past, some people in the diamond trade have considered moderate to strong fluorescence as a negative value factor for fine diamonds and a positive value factor for diamonds with a lower body color. Why? The trade perceives diamonds without fluorescence as "more pure" than diamonds with it. There is a perceived rarity for diamonds of fine color without fluorescence. Fine quality diamonds with strong fluorescence may be undervalued because rare extremely strongly fluorescent diamonds known as "overblues" have a visible haziness that makes them appear almost cloudy in light with strong ultraviolet content. Dealers have theorized that strong fluorescence may affect apparent clarity. At the same time, strongly fluorescent diamonds with a yellowish body color have long been considered to appear to have a better color because the blue of the fluorescence makes them appear more white in sunlight, which is a source of ultraviolet light.

Lower-color diamonds with strong fluorescence sometimes command a premium. The Gemological Institute of America's Gem Trade Laboratory (GIA-GTL), the country's leading diamond grading lab, lists fluorescence as an identifying characteristic, not a grading factor. Based on a GIA-GTL random sample of data for 26,000 diamonds, diamonds with fluorescence are more rare than non-fluorescent stones: 65 percent of diamonds have no reported fluorescence. Listed below is GIA's list of abbreviations for strength of fluorescence as well as their meanings:

N	No Fluorescence
F or FB	Faint or Faint Blue Fluorescence
SL	Slight Fluorescence
M	Medium Fluorescence
S	Strong Fluorescence
EF	Extreme Fluorescence

Fluorescent diamonds are nothing new. In fact, in the old days diamond dealers used the term "blue-white" to refer to colorless (D,E,F) diamonds with strong blue fluorescence. The term actually became sort of a status symbol amongst the public and to this day people will occasionally ask for a blue-white diamond. Rule 28 of the Federal Trade Commission's Trade Practice Rules for the Jewelry Industry addresses this issue:

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Rule 28 Misuse of the term "Blue White"

"It is an unfair trade practice to use the term "blue-white," or any other term, expression, or representation of similar import, as descriptive of any diamond which under normal, north daylight or its equivalent, shows any color or any trace of any color other than blue or bluish."

In other words, only a diamond with blue fluorescence can be represented as blue-white. Avoid the term in your sales presentations.

As you might imagine, fluorescence can be a jeweler's best friend or worst nightmare. When looking at a diamond, always view the diamond under long wave ultra violet light. The GIA DiamondLite is equipped with an ultra violet light source as are many other products available to the trade. If the diamond picks up a light neon blue cast under the ultra violet light, it probably has faint fluorescence that will have little effect on the diamonds appearance or color grade. If it displays a strong neon blue color, it has strong blue fluorescence, which will most likely affect its color and may cause the diamond to appear oily or foggy. Once again, the keyword here is "may".

Fluorescence can add to or detract from a diamonds appearance. The thing to do is determine whether a diamond has it or not, and then decide if it effects the diamonds appearance or brilliance in a way that is acceptable to you.