

## When we talk about the clarity of a diamond, what exactly do we mean?

Clarity of a diamond refers to presence or absence of imperfections that may be in the diamond, or on its surface. The amount, position, colour, and type of imperfections individually or collectively can affect how the gem is polished and plays a major part in determining the selling price. Clarity grading is done using a ten-power loupe, indicated as (10x). This 10 times magnification is the worldwide accepted magnification standard and is accepted by all gem grading laboratories.



There is an internationally recognised **clarity grading system** of the American based GIA (Gemmological Institute of America) that has been in use since 1969. There are some systems based in Europe that are similar but have some wording and grading standard variances. For discussion purposes only, I will refer to the GIA system, which is universally recognised, but with the inclusion of the SI3 grade which is universally accepted but not by the GIA and HRD (The Hoge Raad voor Diamant) who are based in Belgium.

Diamond graders will examine a diamond for clarity and assign it a clarity grade per the chart below.

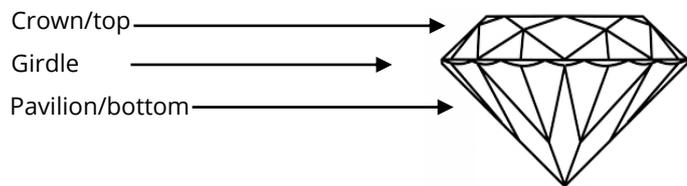
### Clarity grades

IF	Internally flawless - Stones in this category are free of all inclusions but may possess very minor surface blemishes.
VVS1/ VVS2	Very, very slight inclusions - These grades contain minute inclusions which are so small or insignificant that they are difficult to locate under 10X by a skilled observer. If they are difficult to locate and only visible from the pavilion side/ bottom, then the VVS1 grade applies. A minute inclusion seen face-up/ top will lead to a VVS2 grade.
VS1/VS2	Very slight inclusions - Grades contain a minor inclusion or inclusions that are somewhat easier to locate under 10X. Small included crystals, small feathers and distinct clouds characterize the VS grades.
SI1/SI2	Small incusions - These grades contain noticeable inclusions that are easily visible under 10X. Normally, the inclusions will be centrally located and noticed immediately when the stone is examined. Stones in these grades (particularly the SI3 grade) may sometimes be seen with the unaided eye when placed table-down on a white background.
I1/I2/I3	Included - These imperfect categories contain obvious inclusions when viewed and are visible to the naked eye in the face-up position. These grades will vary, depending on the ease with which one can see the imperfections with the unaided eye. Serious imperfections may affect durability.

## Detail of clarity grade categories and sub categories

GRADE	EXPLANATION
IF	Internally Flawless- no blemishes within the diamond
VVS1	Very, very small inclusion 1- seen only through the pavilion/back of the diamond
VVS2	Very, very small inclusion 2 - seen through the crown of the diamond
VS1	Very small inclusion 1 - seen through the crown - small
VS2	Very small inclusion 2 - seen through the crown, small but larger in size or number than VS1
SI1	Small inclusion 1- seen through the crown with relative ease
SI2	Small inclusion 2- seen through the crown- larger in number or size than SI1
SI3	Small inclusion 3- seen through the crown- larger in number or size than SI2
I1	Included 1- inclusions clearly visible with the naked eye
I2	Included 2- inclusions clearly visible with the naked eye and often reflects across the gem
I3	Included 3- inclusions clearly visible with the naked eye and clearly reflects across the gem

### THE THREE MAIN SECTIONS OF A DIAMOND



When buying a diamond or diamonds, the major factors that influence the price are shape, weight, colour, clarity, proportions, polish, and symmetry. Price is, in most cases, the most important factor but not the only one that needs to be addressed. Factors such as the type and size of the piece or pieces of jewellery must be considered. If it is a ring setting, the physical size of the wearer, particularly the hands, is important. So, when buying a diamond, it is advisable to approach a reputable jeweller and/or diamond dealer who can give you advice specific to meet your requirements.