Teach Yourself the 4C's

By Andrew Moquin
President/Andrews Jewelers
CEO/Rokstok.com

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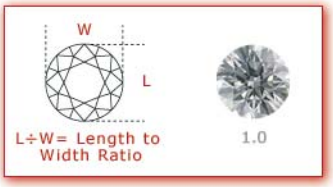
Shape

Years ago there were very limited choices for diamond shapes available for diamond engagement rings and diamond jewelry, modern advances in today's cutting techniques have created many different shapes. These shapes range from traditional round diamonds to the very popular Asscher and princess diamonds. It's not enough to pick the shape that you like, knowledge of length to width ratios and diamond proportions can affect how the shape of the diamond looks and how the light is reflected. Read further in this category to know more about length to width ratios, we'll cover more about proportions in the Cut section.

Select your Shape

Every woman has different desires and needs that help determine what's the most appropriate diamond shape for them. A conservative or more traditional woman might lean more toward a round diamond while a more contemporary or edgy woman may like a princess cut. Regardless of what your personality is like, you can bet there is a diamond that will be perfect for you. At any point during your research feel free to contact a GIA Trained Andrews Jewelers Consultant and they'll be happy to find a diamond that's right for you.



Round

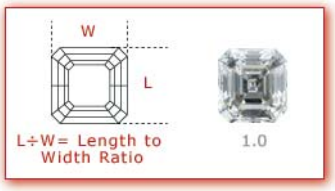
The round brilliant cut diamond is named "brilliant cut" because it is the most brilliant and reflective of all shapes. Brilliant cut diamonds consist of princess, oval, pear, marquise, and heart. A brilliant cut diamond regardless of the shape is cut with the same facet patterns on the top and bottom of the diamond. This gives the diamond very similar reflective properties even though the shapes are different. A round diamond has been around for over 100 years however, advances in cut design have taken the shape to new and amazing limits. Today you can purchase what is called an ideal cut diamond, an ideal cut diamond is one of the world's most perfectly cut diamonds and is only available in the round shape. A round diamond is the most popular shape and you'll always have more to choose from, this will give you a better chance at finding the right balance of price, color, clarity, and size. To view the worlds most perfectly cut round diamonds search the Andrews Jewelers AAA Round Diamonds.

Princess

Next to the round diamond the princess cut is the most popular shape of diamond purchased. It's beautiful shape lends itself to many of the designer engagement ring settings that are on the market today and they look great when set. A princess cut will look slightly smaller than a round diamond of the same carat weight because princess cuts are cut deeper in order to form the shape. Princess cuts are available in square or rectangular shapes although the square shape is most notable when considering a princess cut diamond. To determine if a princess cut is rectangular or square you'll need to examine the length to width ratio. For a princess cut to look square it should have a ratio of 1.00 and 1.10. When looking for a rectangular princess cut you should look for a ratio of 1.11 and greater. To view a brilliant collection of princess cuts search the Andrews Jewelers AAA Princess Diamonds.

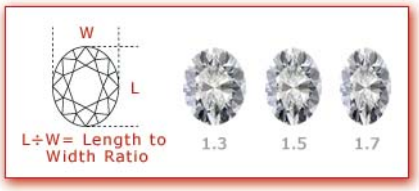
Emerald

The emerald cut diamond has been around for many years and once was a popular choice for royalty and affluent people. Some of the most famous and valuable diamonds have been cut in the emerald shape. An emerald diamond is a member of the step cut family of diamond shapes, which include baguettes, Asscher, trapezoid, and bullet cut diamonds.The step cut diamond gets it's name because the pavilion has a series of facets that run parallel to one another to form steps. Emerald diamonds have fewer yet larger flashes of light while round and princess diamonds have more yet smaller flashes of light. An emerald diamond looks like a prism and a round or princess looks like a kaleidoscope. Emerald cuts should typically look rectangular in shape however can vary from thick squatty shapes to long slender shapes. It is purely up to the wearer of the diamond to determine what is best for them. For a true emerald shape, look for a length to width ratio between 1.30 and 1.40. For a great selection of truly amazing emerald cut diamonds search the Andrews Jewelers AAA Emerald Diamonds.



Asscher

The Asscher brothers of Holland created the Asscher cut diamond over 100 years ago. In the beginning only the world's most affluent and powerful people could own an Asscher diamond. Now this beautifully designed diamond is available to anyone who appreciates its beauty. The Asscher cut is considered a member of the step cut family because the pavilion facets run parallel to one another in a series of steps. It is cut very much like the emerald cut except that the Asscher cut is square while the emerald is rectangular. When looking at an Asscher cut you'll notice that the diamond's cut seems to go on forever, this effect draws the eye into the center of the diamond. Because the viewer focuses very intently on the diamond it is important to select a diamond of at least an SI1 quality or higher when designing your diamond engagement ring. Inclusions in an Asscher cut diamond that is graded less than an SI1 will be easily seen to the naked eye. An Asscher cut diamond looks best when it is very square. It is important to select a diamond that has a length to width ratio of 1.00 and 1.10. To view an amazing collection of Asscher cut diamonds search the Andrews Jewelers AAA Asscher Diamonds.



Oval

The oval diamond has always been a favorite for people who have longer and more slender fingers. The longer length of an oval diamond will compliment a long and slender finger. The oval is considered to be a brilliant cut stone because it is cut very much like a round brilliant cut, this adds to the diamond's brilliance. Oval diamonds look great in a variety of length to width ratios and what you decide on is truly a personal preference. For the most appealing oval shape you should choose a diamond with a length to width ratio of 1.30 and 1.70. Search Andrews Jewelers Oval Diamonds.

Marquise

The marquise diamond can be one of the largest looking diamonds when compared to other shapes of the same carat weight. There are many engagement settings that look good with a marquise, particularly ones set with trillians or pear shapes on the side. The style of setting that you choose can sometimes determine the length to width ratio for a marquise. A well-cut marquise shape diamond will have a length to width ratio between 1.75 and 2.00. Search Andrews Jewelers Marquise Diamonds.

Pear

The pear shape diamond is considered a brilliant cut diamond and has very similar characteristics as the marquise cut. The diamond tends to look bigger than other shapes of the same carat weight and it also looks great with trillians or additional pears on the side of an engagement ring. There is no set rule for what is the best length to width ratio for pear shapes, however a nicely cut diamond will typically be between 1.50 and 1.75. Search Andrews Jewelers Pear Diamonds.

Radiant

A radiant cut diamond is very much like a princess cut and most people find both equally attractive. The major difference between the princess cut and radiant cut is that the radiant cut has angled cut corners. Although the radiant cut is a beautiful shape it tends to look smaller than other shapes of the same weight. Be sure to find radiant's with smaller depth percentages to maximize the size. There are no agreed upon guidelines for a radiant cut when it comes to length to width ratios. Some people like square radiants and some like rectangular. If you like a squarer look try to stay around 1.00 and if you like a rectangular look go as high as 1.50. Search Andrews Jewelers Radiant Diamonds.

Cushion

The cushion cut diamond is a very unique diamond shape and looks great in today's vintage style engagement ring settings. The corners of the diamond have a gentle curve or rounded look and the diamond is cut with large facets that add big flashes of light. Cushions cuts are sought in square and rectangular shapes. There is no agreed upon guidelines for a cushion cut because some people like a square look and some like a rectangle. For a rectangle, look for a ratio between 1.15 and 1.30, and for a square 1.00. Search Andrews Jewelers Cushion Diamonds.

Heart

The heart shape is a diamond indicative of romance and passion. The heart shape diamond looks great in engagement rings and also looks great as a solitaire necklace. A good length to width ratio is critical when choosing a great looking heart diamond. A perfect heart shape diamond should be between .90 and 1.10. Search Andrews Jewelers Heart Diamonds.

Cut

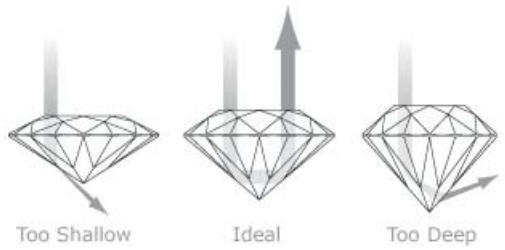
Diamond Tip

In some cases the color and clarity grade for a diamond can have less effect on the diamond's brilliance and beauty than the cut. Andrewsjewelers.com carries the finest cut diamonds chosen specifically for their brilliance, regardless of color or clarity.

Many people confuse the cut as simply being the shape of a diamond and while the shape is part of the cutting process, it is just the beginning. The cut can be defined as the proportions of the diamond including all the facets and their placement in respect to one another. All of these things combined have a diverse affect on the brilliance and fire of a diamond. Even if a diamond has perfect color and clarity it still may not be a brilliant stone if the diamond is poorly cut. Without faceting and cutting a diamond can have no brilliance and every facet matters when unleashing the fire of a raw diamond.

There are many factors that affect the light performance of a diamond, however the stone's proportions are the largest factor in creating the roadway for the light to travel. The proportions of a diamond are measurements that include the depth or height, length and width, the table size and pavilion height.

Diamond Proportions



Too Shallow: Light will escape out the bottom and diamond will look dark from the top.

Too Deep: Light will escape out the sides of the diamond and it will look dull. It also makes the diamond look smaller.

Ideal: Light is properly directed through the table and the diamond will have optimal size and brilliance.

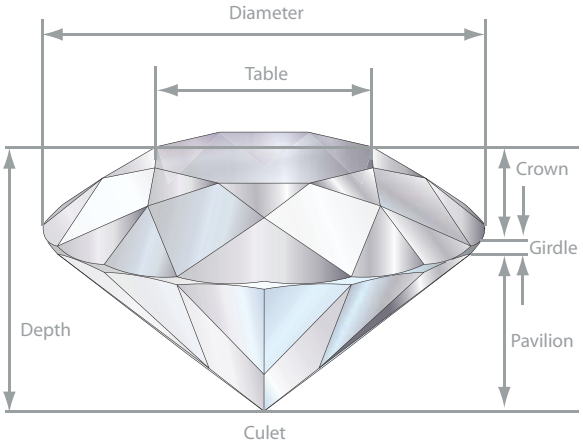
Diamond Tip

A general rule of thumb for good depth and table percentages is 60/60. This means a round diamond with a 60% table or 60% depth is considered a better proportioned diamond.

Engineering the Cut

Diamond cutters examine the rough (an uncut diamond) to determine what shape will retain the most diamond material without waste. Once the shape is determined the cutter will masterfully cut the dimensions of the diamond including the height, length and width. With recent advances in computer-aided design, cutters can create very precise models of how the diamond will look before placing the first facet on the diamond. This helps the cutter decide what the dimensions of the diamond should be in order to create the most brilliance.

Parts of a Diamond



Diameter: The measurement of a diamond from one end of the girdle to the other.

Table: The flat surface on the top of a diamond

Crown: The entire upper portion of a diamond north of the girdle

Girdle: The thin rim around the diamond where the crown meets the pavilion.

Pavilion: The entire coned shape area south of the girdle.

Culet: The sharp point at the bottom tip of the Pavilion. This should come to an exact point and not be seen to the eye.

Depth: The height of a diamond measured from the culet to the table

Diamond Tip

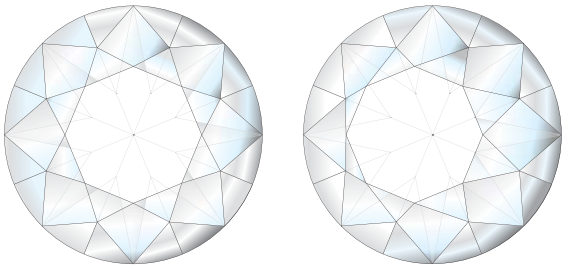
A diamond with very good – excellent polish and symmetry is the mark of an expert diamond cutter. It shows that the cutter has a sharp eye for details and quality.

What is Polish & Symmetry?

Consumers often overlook the importance of the polish and symmetry and how it affects the quality of the cut grade and the diamond's brilliance. The polish grade provides information about how well the diamond's surface has been created during the cutting process. If a diamond has a poor polish grade you may see polishing lines on the surface of the stone or small pitting. This can be compared to the surface polish of poorly made furniture, when wood is not sanded well you'll see grinding or sanding marks in the wood's surface. In contrast, high quality furniture has a glossy and brilliant finish that can sometimes cast your reflection. A diamond with a high polish grade glimmers more while one with a lower grade will be duller looking.

Symmetry determines how accurately the facets are aligned to one another as well as how balanced the stone is. A diamond with a poor symmetry grade may not properly reflect light and therefore will be less brilliant than a diamond with a higher symmetry grade. To make it more simple to understand think about making paper snowflakes when you were a child. First, you would fold the paper in half and then you would cut a pattern in one side of the snowflake. If the paper was perfectly folded in half your snowflake had a much sharper shape and true snowflake pattern. In theory, if you could fold a diamond in half all the facets on the left side should look exactly like all the facets on the right side. When this occurs your diamond will be more brilliant than a stone that is not as balanced.

Polish & Symmetry



Polish and symmetry are graded using the following grading descriptions, (EX) excellent, (VG) very good, (G) good, (F) fair, (P) poor. These grades can be found on the details sections of the certifications from GIA, AGS, and EGL grading laboratories. When considering a diamond's overall cut you must take in account the proportions, polish, and symmetry. This can be somewhat confusing so Andrews Jewelers has created a system to classify a diamond's overall cut and brilliance using information from the proportions, polish, and symmetry. This mathematical system was devised using the years of hands on experience that Andy Moquin (Andrews Jeweler's founder) has gained buying and selling over $20,000,000 in diamonds for use in diamond engagement rings and diamond jewelry.

Diamond Tip

You don't necessarily need an Ideal cut or Andrews Jewelers AAA diamond to achieve good sparkle and shine. Choosing a diamond in the very good or good cut class can provide a nice combination of brilliance and cost savings.

Andrews Jewelers Diamond Cut Grades

- **Andrews Jewelers AAA** – Diamonds that receive this cut grade are considered the World's most brilliant and perfectly cut diamonds. These diamonds are very rare and prized works of art. No diamond can receive a higher grade than this.

- **Ideal cut** – These diamonds are rare and receive high marks for proportions. Almost all light coming through the diamond is reflected back at the viewer. Only 5 out of 100 diamonds will receive this grade.

- **Very good cut** – This is a great combination of value and quality because it is almost as brilliant as an ideal cut diamond, but it can be purchased at a better price. Typically, only 20 out of 100 diamonds will receive this grade.

- **Good cut** – This diamond will reflect a large amount of the light back at the viewer and comparatively will be very aggressively priced. On average only 25 out of 100 diamonds will receive this grade.

- **Fair cut** – This diamond begins to loose measurable amounts of light however it is still a very good-looking diamond. This diamond cut grade is perfect for the person who wants to get the biggest looking diamond for their money while still maintaining ample amounts of light reflection.

- **Poor cut** – This diamond is generally a diamond that has been cut too deep or too shallow. When this occurs the diamond will lose significant amounts of light. A major benefit of this type of diamond is the price. A diamond that is a poor cut will be significantly lower in price than any other cut grade.

How do I know what cut grade to choose?

- If you are a discriminating buyer and can really appreciate the finer things in life then we would suggest that you purchase a Andrews Jewelers AAA diamond. These diamonds are cut to the absolute highest quality standards for proportions, polish, and symmetry. This will assure you the most brilliant diamond your money can buy.

- For the best combination of brilliance and price so that you won't break the bank. We suggest that you consider looking at diamonds with an ideal cut, very good cut, or good cut.

- If you are looking for the biggest carat diamond you can buy without being terribly concerned about quality, then we suggest that you select a diamond with a fair cut grade. Search for Diamonds.

Color

Diamond Tip

When creating a ring or jewelry in white gold, platinum, or palladium be sure to choose a diamond that grades at least "I" in color. A diamond that grades "J" or lower could show too much yellow in contrast to the whiteness of the precious metal.

Many consumers are surprised to hear that diamonds come in a wide range of colors. Recently, fancy colored diamonds like pink, blue, and green have become very popular for diamond jewelry and engagement rings. These diamonds are considered to be very rare and valuable however, they are not what most people envision when considering a traditional diamond purchase. For the most part, the normal diamond color range consists of the colorless (lack of any color), very light yellow, and light browns. The diamond industry has created a universally accepted scale that rates the various shades and depth of color that a diamond may have within this normal range.

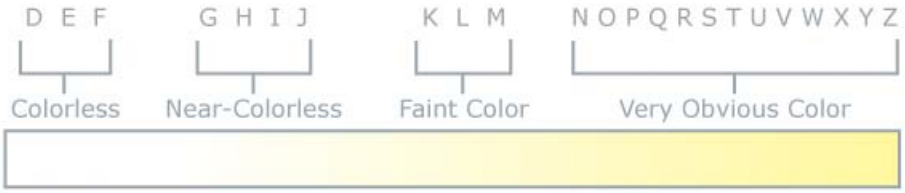
Diamond Color Grading Scale

The Gemological Institute of America devised the color grading system in the 1950's using what is now known as the "D-Z" scale. The "D-Z" scale describes the normal color range D (colorless) to Z (light yellow or brown). The D-Z scale will not describe actual colors, or hues such as brown, yellow, white, and blue. Each letter will represent a range of intensity or specific presence or lack of presence. Some diamonds have no color at all and some diamonds have a lot of color. For example, if you were to look at an ice cube made of tap water you would notice that is has no color (D). If you were to examine an ice cube made of lemonade you would notice that is has a slight yellow color (Z). You could also examine an ice cube made of root beer and notice that is has a slight brown color and this too could be (Z). When using the D-Z scale, the color grade of a diamond is not affected by the actual color yellow, brown, gray, etc.

The grade is affected by the intensity or depth of whatever color the diamond has. The root beer ice cube could be made with a partial solution of 50% water and 50% root beer and then the intensity of the brown may drop to a (U). It's still brown but a much lighter brown because you have diluted the depth of color. A very good analogy for understanding the diamond color chart is that (D) is icy cold and (Z) is very hot and anything in the middle is lukewarm.

Diamond Tip

A diamond's color is something even an inexperienced person notices. If you're on the fence as to which is more important, color or clarity. Keep this in mind, you need a microscope to see the difference between an SI2 and VS2. However, you can easily see the difference between an F and I with the naked eye.



D: Colorless, The highest color grade possible, transparent in color.

E: Colorless, only experienced grades can find virtually undetectable amounts of color.

F: Colorless, slight amounts of color can be barely seen by experienced graders.

G-H: Near-colorless, noticeable amounts of color can be seen only when placed next to colorless diamonds but not evident when viewed by itself.

I-J: Near-colorless, slightly noticeable amounts of color can be seen when viewed by itself. Nice diamond and good value.

K-M: Faint color, noticeable color can be seen by inexperienced grader.

The reason for the sub categories is because the color grades within each category look more closely like one another than neighboring colors. When compared side by side, a diamond graded (G) color looks more like an (H) than a diamond that is graded (F) even though the (G) neighbors both colors. You might say that color grades grouped in the colorless range are brothers & sisters and the neighboring near colorless group are their cousins.

The actual diamond color grading process is done using a side-by-side comparison under controlled conditions. The un-graded diamond is compared to a collection of round diamonds of known color. These comparison diamonds are called master-stones and each color represents the least amount of color in its color range. Accurate color grading is extremely dependent on the master-stones, the environment, and the grader. While gemological advancements have aided in the color grading process, each color grade actually represents a range of color not an exact color. Sometimes a diamond will fall on the borderline between two color grades and the grader is challenged with the decision of where to place the diamond on the grading chart. There is no exact science to color grading and sometimes the same diamond can receive different grades from different gemologists. That is why it is very important to have your diamond certified by a creditable gemological laboratory like the Gemological Institute of America or the European Gemological Laboratory. Even then the grade should not be taken literally because diamond grades for color and clarity are only a matter of opinion; they are not an exact science.

Diamond Tip

Fluorescence is often overlooked by diamond shoppers. When comparing prices between multiple diamonds, always check for high levels of fluorescence. A diamond with Strong to Very Strong fluorescence can be valued as much as 20% less than a similar diamond with the same color and clarity that doesn't have fluorescence.

When choosing the color grade that will best suit your needs you should consider how the diamond fits in your budget and how the diamond will look in the metal type you have decided on. Of course everyone desires the highest quality diamond possible however, not everyone can afford a (D) color. Platinum, white gold, and palladium jewelry will hold a diamond as low as (I) color nicely and then anything below that starts to show large amounts of yellows or browns. A good rule of thumb is to consider diamonds of (I) color and better when choosing a white metal. Yellow gold jewelry on the other hand can hold diamonds as low as (KL) color and still look quite nice while saving you considerable amounts of money. When diamonds are set it is very difficult to determine exact color grades and that's why it's not imperative to have the highest quality color grade.

What is Fluorescence?

Diamonds often emit a color reaction when subjected to ultraviolet light. Diamond fluorescence is graded on a scale from "None" to "Very Strong." Most often diamonds fluoresce a blue color, however other colors are possible. If the fluorescence of a diamond is stronger than "Faint", most grading laboratories will note the color of the fluorescence on the report. Fluorescence can add an interesting quality to a diamond and can actually help diamonds look nicer when they have a lower color grade as in K-M, however, a very strong fluorescence can negatively affect its value.

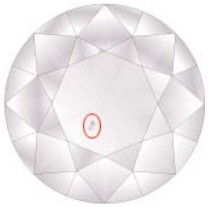
What Color Grade Should I Choose?

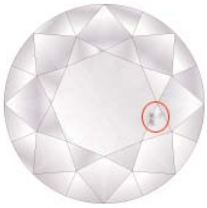
The best-kept secret in the jewelry business are (H) and (I) color diamonds. These diamond color grades can stand up against even the highest of color grades while maintaining their beauty and saving you money. When shopping for diamonds be sure to look at actual diamonds that have been certified for color; examine diamonds from the colorless, near colorless, and faint color categories. Use the side-by-side comparison to see if you can notice the differences from one diamond to another and then consider the price difference to decide if it is justifiable to invest more. You may decide that only a higher color quality will make you happy; everyone has different needs and taste but careful investigation is the only way to reach a safe and proper conclusion.

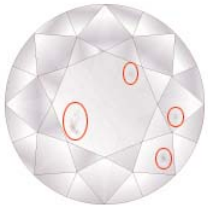
Clarity

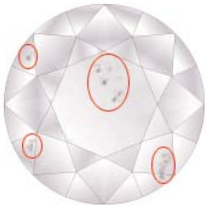
VVS1

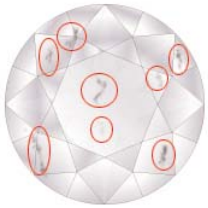
VVS2

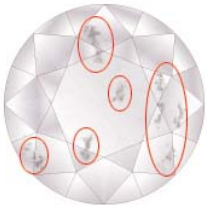

VS1


VS2


SI1


SI2


I1


I2

I3

The clarity of a diamond can be defined as the internal imperfections that can be seen to the naked eye or under 10x's magnification. These imperfections are called inclusions and there are many different types and sizes. Inclusions can be other minerals that are trapped in the diamond, material that did not crystallize, and tiny cavities. When a diamond has many or intense inclusions it's beauty can be greatly affected. This occurs when the inclusions become so numerous that the light is unable to pass through the diamond properly, leaving it looking dull. The GIA, EGL, & AGS use a clarity grading system to rate a diamond's purity based on the number, size, and placement of inclusions.

FL, IF: Flawless stones have no internal or external inclusions. Internally Flawless stones have no internal inclusions and may have surface blemishes.Very rare and prized.

VVS1, VVS2: Very, Very Slightly Included – Inclusions are extremely difficult to see under 30x's magnification. These are considered excellent quality diamonds.

VS1, VS2: Very Slightly Included – Inclusions are not seen to the naked eye and difficult to see under 10x's magnification. Great combination of quality and value.

SI1, SI2: Slightly included – Inclusions are easily seen under 10x's magnification and sometimes visible to the naked eye. The most often sold diamond quality.

I1, I2, I3: Included – Inclusions are easily seen to the unaided eye and sometime greatly affect the brilliance of a diamond. Some I1 diamonds can still be quite beautiful looking.

More On The Clarity Grading System

When comparing diamonds graded in the same clarity grouping, for example SI1 and SI2, you should know that the lower the number the higher the quality. So an SI1 has fewer or smaller inclusions than an SI2. Diamonds are graded from the top of the diamond or through the table and not from the bottom. Diamonds of even the highest quality grades can have inclusions that are visible to the unaided eye when viewed through the pavilion or bottom of the stone. This occurs because a diamond is designed to allow light to enter the bottom of the diamond and this makes it very easy to look inside the diamond from its backside.

Diamond Tip

A diamond is graded through the top of the stone not through the back. Diamonds can receive a clarity grade of SI2/SI1 while still showing inclusions through the back of the diamond. If you don't want inclusions visible underneath the diamond you should choose a diamond graded at least VS2.

The grading is done under 10x's magnification using a microscope or jewelers loupe. The number of inclusions, the size of the inclusions, and the position of the inclusions determine the final clarity grade. For example, two diamonds may have the same number and size inclusion and yet have different clarity grades. This can occur when one diamond's inclusion is in a more obvious place like the center of the stone. The higher clarity grade may have the same size inclusion but it's in an inconspicuous place like the outer edge of the diamond.

Accurately graded diamonds should have a gemological certification from an accredited laboratory like GIA or EGL. This gives you assurances that gemological professionals have graded the diamond accurately. Diamonds that have been graded SI2 and higher are indistinguishable from clarity grades of even the highest quality. To the un-trained person the only way to see the difference is to view the diamond under magnification. The diamond's beauty or brilliance is not affected as much by the clarity once you reach quality grades of SI1 and higher, keep this in mind when choosing a diamond for your engagement ring or jewelry.

What Clarity Grade Should I Choose?

When selecting a clarity grade consider what you'll be using the diamond for, or what type of jewelry you'll be setting the stone in. Certain clarity grades are more appropriate for specific types of jewelry; for example, a diamond engagement ring generally requires a better clarity rating. This of course is because people will examine the diamond at very close distances and the imperfections will be easier to see. Necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and wedding rings usually don't require as high a clarity rating because the diamonds are either much smaller or won't be viewed at close ranges.

Engagement rings usually require diamond clarity grades of SI and higher, this is the most commonly purchased diamond quality for a center stone when set in a ring. It is also the best value in the jewelry industry today, you'll get a bigger diamond for less and to the average person it will look as brilliant as even the highest clarity rating. For the consumer who is "quality" minded and would prefer a higher clarity grade we recommend that you choose clarity grades of VS2 and higher. Keep in mind though that higher clarity grades don't always equate to more light performance or brilliance. The quality of the cut can have more to do with the brilliance and beauty of a diamond than clarity, to learn more about a diamond's cut read the cut section of Teach Yourself The 4C's Handbook.

Carat Weight

Diamond Tip

A big misconception is that diamonds weighing shy of full carat increments (ex. .99ct or 1.99ct) are much less in cost than 1.00ct or 2.00ct. This is not entirely true because diamonds are sold by a "price per carat" not by carat weight ranges. If a 1 carat diamond is valued at $5000 per carat then a weight savings of .01ct will only change the price by a mere $50.

There are some misconceptions when considering the carat weight of a diamond. Many people assume that a diamond is for example a 1 carat in “size” and although this is partially true there is more to understand. Using the term size when relative to diamonds implies that a diamond is sold or categorized by measurements of length or width, this of course is not true. Diamonds are actually valued and categorized by the mass or carat weight.

The term carat is a unit of measurement indicating the weight or mass for a diamond, the name was derived from the use of carob seeds. Ancient jewelers used carob seeds to balance their scales and determine how much a diamond weighed. One carob seed was the smallest unit of measurement for a diamond. Carob seeds were used as weights on precision scales because of their reputation for having a uniform weight. Today the “carat” is a universally accepted metric measurement.

A full or exact 1 carat diamond is 200 milligrams or 1/5 of a gram. There are 100 carat points to a full carat as there are 100 cents to 1 dollar. Half a dollar is 50 cents and half a carat is 50 carat points or .50ct for short. Diamond carat weights are grouped in to weight category ranges, for example the 1/2ct range is considered .45ct to .57ct. Use the following chart to learn the accepted carat weight groupings when considering your diamond engagement ring or diamond jewelry purchase.

Accepted Carat Weight Groups

1/4ct	.23ct – .28ct
1/3ct	.29ct - .37ct
3/8ct	.38ct - .44ct
1/2ct	.45ct - .57ct
5/8ct	.58ct - .68ct
3/4ct	.69ct - .82ct
7/8ct	.83ct - .95ct
1ct	.96ct – 1.10ct
1 1/4ct	1.23ct – 1.28ct
1 1/3ct	1.29ct – 1.37ct
1 3/8ct	1.38ct – 1.44ct
1 1/2ct	1.45ct – 1.57ct

Diamonds are valued on a per carat price and then multiplied by the actual carat weight to get the exact selling price. For example, a 1-carat diamond may be valued at $4000 per carat and if the diamond weighs exactly 1.05ct you would take $4000 and multiply it by 1.05ct to get the final selling price. $4000/ct x’s 1.05ct = $4200 final selling price. This is a good tool to use when comparing diamonds for value. You can take the selling price of a diamond and divide it by the exact carat weight to determine what you are paying “per carat” and then compare it to other diamonds you are considering.

Diamond Tip

When deciding on a diamond weight for your engagement ring, work backwards. Think about the style of setting you want first, then find a carat weight that will look suitable in the ring. Some settings look better with larger diamonds while others look fine with any size diamond.

What Carat Weight Should I Choose

Choosing the perfect carat weight for your diamond engagement ring should be based on several factors. This decision can't be made in a vacuum, consider the type of setting she likes, her finger size, and the type of person she is. Certain settings look better with smaller diamonds while others require bigger looking diamonds. A classic solitaire diamond engagement ring will accentuate the size of a diamond because the setting is thinner, so in the end you don't need as large a stone in this type of setting. A wider diamond engagement setting with many diamond side stones may require a larger looking diamond because the width of the ring is wider.

If her personality is more daring or outgoing, then a larger diamond may be more suitable for her flair while on the other hand if she's shy or reserved then a medium to smaller diamond may be more appropriate to her style. Also consider her finger size, a smaller finger size (size 5.50 or smaller) does not require as large a diamond to look big on her finger. A larger finger size (7.50 and larger) can afford to have a larger setting style or diamond size worn on it.

The two months salary guideline is a very good place to start when trying to decide what size diamond is best for you. Take your monthly salary and double it and this is usually an acceptable amount to invest on your diamond engagement ring. Next you can decide what is more important cut, clarity, & color, or carat weight. If you want the biggest diamond your money can buy while maintaining a good quality consider an SI2/SI1 and I or J color.

In the end the best way to decide is to discuss what she is dreaming of. If you are planning a surprise proposal then read our Engagement Ring Handbook for ideas on how to discuss diamonds with her. Remember our GIA Trained Andrews Jewelers Consultants are ready and waiting to give you any advice that you need. Search for diamonds.

Certification

Diamond Tip

The most creditable diamond grading labs are known as the "Big Three". This includes EGL, GIA, and AGS, any other lab is considered less notable in the jewelry industry.

Purchasing a diamond certified by an accredited grading laboratory is your assurance that an un-biased third party has graded your diamond. These grading laboratories don't engage in diamond selling nor do they care what happens to the diamond after it has been graded. They simply call it as they see it and this is a mark of true diamond value because it has been priced based on accurate diamond grading.

In order to grade diamonds while employed at a diamond grading laboratory you must have studied at GIA the Gemological Institute of America and be a Graduate Gemologist or otherwise known as a G.G. Almost all Diamonds available at Andrews Jewelers have been graded and certified by either the GIA, AGSL the American Gem Society Laboratories, or EGL the European Gemological Laboratories. These grading laboratories are considered to be the world's foremost authorities on diamond grading and gemological services. Andrews Jewelers will partner with only the most creditable grading laboratories, ones that carry and honor the highest ethics and integrity in the jewelry industry. In addition to your certification all Andrews Jewelers diamonds come with a Andrews Jewelers Appraisal that gives you a complete description of the jewelry you have purchased as well as a replacement value for insurance purposes.

More About Certification

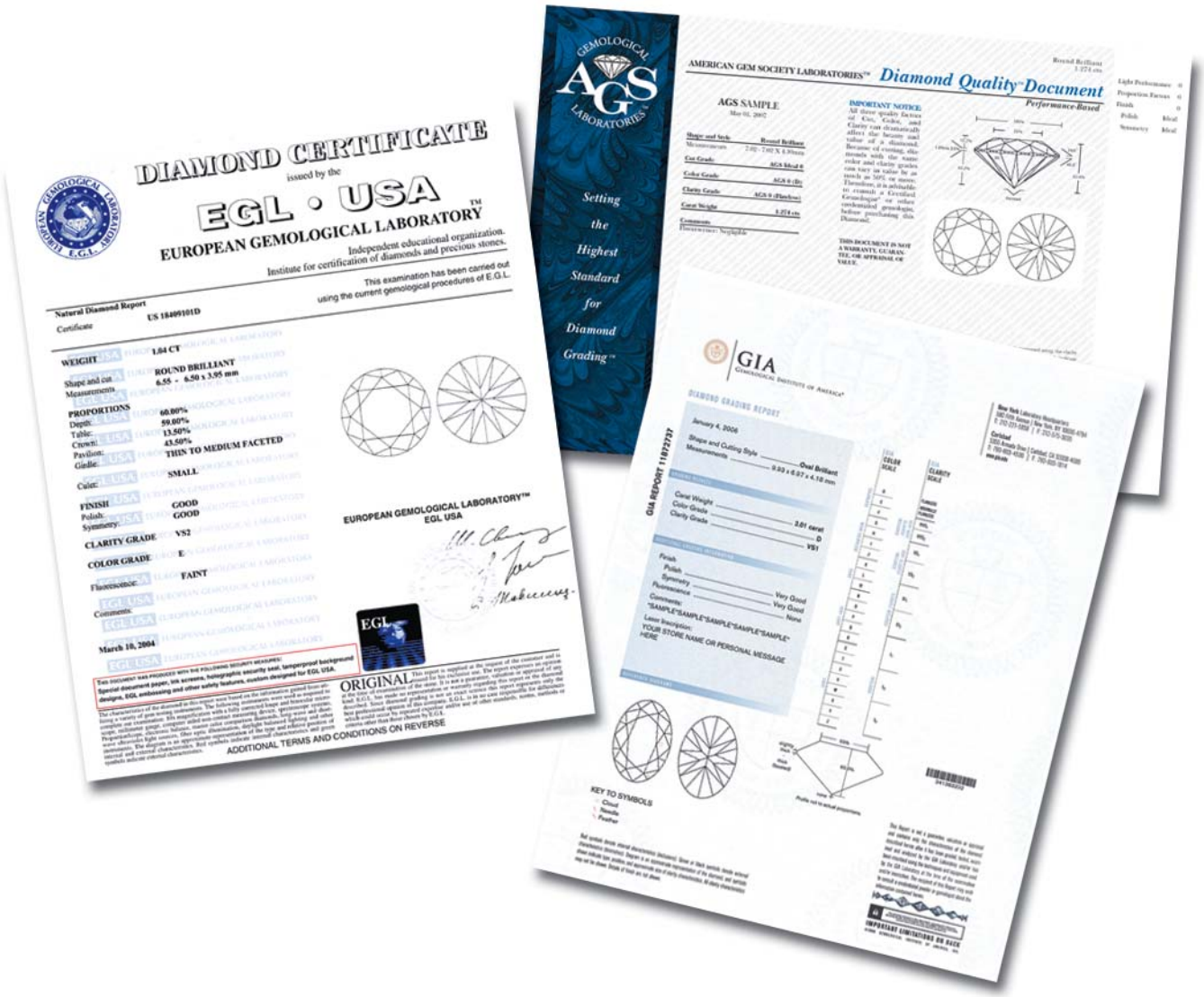
A diamond certificate will include important diamond characteristics such as color, clarity, carat weight, proportions, and cut. The diamond is evaluated using gemological equipment including tools like a jeweler's loupe, microscope, colorimeter, and millimeter gauge to name a few. Diamonds submitted for certification are normally examined by a minimum of four highly trained and experienced diamond graders and gemologists. As the diamond moves through the grading process senior graders examine the diamond grades for accuracy. Once the diamond analysis has been completed the grading report is sent to a computer file and a serial number for identification purposes is permanently placed on file for future reference. A tamper proof certificate is printed and signed by the staff gemologists. In many cases the serial# of the grading report is laser inscribed on the girdle of the diamond and can only be seen under 30x's magnification. This prevents certification forgery from occurring and it also provides permanent identification so in the event that your diamond engagement ring is lost or stolen you can prove that the diamond belongs to you.

Certified Andrews Jewelers Diamonds

Examples of what the certifications look like are listed below, while you are viewing Andrews Jewelers diamonds you can click on the links to get more information about how your diamond has been graded.

- EGL Diamond Certificate
- AGSL Diamond Quality Document
- GIA Diamond Grading Report
- GIA Diamond Dossier
- Andrews Jewelers Appraisal

If for whatever reason you have trouble finding the certification image on our website when considering a diamond, give us a call at 716-630-7091 and we'll email or fax the image to you for your careful review.



Care

Diamond Tip

In addition to having your jewelry cleaned and checked regularly, you should practice good jewelry wearing habits. Stay proactive in the care of your jewelry by following the andrewsjewelers.com jewelry safety precautions.

Although diamonds are the hardest substance on earth and can't be scratched by any other material except by another diamond they can chip or break. A blunt blow or sharp strike against a hard surface can damage your diamond as well as your jewelry or diamond engagement ring. Many people think that diamonds are indestructible and this is not the case. Diamonds are very durable and it is very unlikely that you'll damage them however you should minimize your risk by taking the following precautions.

Safety Precautions For Your Jewelry

- **Working out at home or at the gym** – There are a lot of hard objects and surfaces in the gym and your hands are moving in many quick directions that could cause you to strike or hit the diamond. Also, when lifting or squeezing the barbells or equipment you can quickly wear away the platinum or gold on your engagement setting. Remove your diamond and put it in a safe place before working out.

- **Sleeping or in bed** – While at rest some people have a tendency to move in their sleep. The fabrics in the bed linens or your clothing can catch under the prongs and pry them from the diamond. Because you are not aware of your movements while asleep you may damage your ring. Place your jewelry in your jewelry box or in a safe place while resting.

- **Poking or probing diamonds** – Many people become concerned about losing their precious diamonds and continuously check the stones in their jewelry or engagement rings by probing them or wiggling them. They use their fingernails, tweezers, needles, or writing instruments. This can be bad for the diamonds because the constant wear against the stone can chip or break the stone as well loosen the diamond from its setting. If you are concerned about the tightness of your diamond you should take it to your local jeweler for occasional cleaning and inspection. Do not poke or probe.

- **Cosmetics** – Many cosmetics such as lotions, makeup, foundation, hair dyes, blush, etc., have harsh ingredients that can stain or damage the diamond in your ring as well as the platinum or gold. Take your jewelry off before applying makeup, lotions, hair products, and nail polish. These products are very harmful to your diamond jewelry can even prematurely wear away the precious metal.

- **Pools & Jacuzzis** – Maintenance of pools and Jacuzzis require the use of common bleach and chlorine products. Long term exposure to chlorine can cause your diamond to change colors and permanently stain gemstones and precious metals such as platinum, gold, and white gold. The chlorine will also corrode the weld joints or solder joints used to attach parts to your jewelry like the prongs, clasps, and earring backings. Once the solder joints corrode they can weaken and break off causing you to lose your diamonds or gemstones or even the entire jewelry item.

Diamond Tip

Don't poke or probe your diamonds. Some women become overly cautious and think that constant checking of their diamonds will prevent loss. You can loosen a diamond by pressing objects such as pens, fingernails, and tweezers against them. Trust your jeweler to do that for you.

- **Frequent Sizing** – When a ring is sized, it must be filed and polished in order to bring back the original shine that is lost during the sizing process. Every time a ring is filed and polished it loses significant amounts of platinum, white gold, or yellow gold. When you have a ring sized too many times the prongs and shank can become thin and weak causing them to break. Choose one size that you are happy with and stick with it, even if your finger size fluctuates from time to time.

Cleaning Your Diamonds & Jewelry

The best cleaning method to use is a visit to your local jeweler or jewelry store for a professional cleaning and inspection. However, if you are between visits and would like to clean it at home, a long soak in Windex is a great method. Take a small bowl and fill it with the glass cleaner and let the ring or jewelry soak in the bowl for about an hour. Afterwards, use an old worn out toothbrush (a new one is too stiff and could damage the prongs) and gently scrub the diamonds. Finally rinse the ring under cold clean water, don't rinse in the sink as you could lose a loose diamond or entire ring down the drain, pat the jewelry dry with a paper towel.

Storing Your Diamonds

Andrews Jewelers suggests that you store all diamonds and diamond jewelry in soft pouches to prevent the jewelry items from rubbing or scratching against one another. Constant rubbing can cause abnormal wear of the platinum, white gold, or yellow gold. If the diamonds are rubbing against one another it can cause the diamonds to dull or lose their brilliance. For security purposes we recommend that you invest in a small home safe. When not at home you can store your jewelry there, protecting it against would be thieves. In addition, we recommend that you attain some form of jewelry insurance to protect you from, stone loss, damage, or theft. For more information visit our Andrews Jewelers Jewelry Insurance Page. Now that you have read the Teach Yourself The 4C's Handbook, you are ready to search for diamonds.