

How to Select Diamond Clarity



10x loupe for manual clarity marking

Diamond Clarity

The clarity of a diamond is determined by its absence of flaws. As a critical part of diamond grading, the accepted standard for determining diamond clarity is to examine the stone using a 10X microscope along with the trained naked eye. The level of visibility, the location, and the nature of inclusions (flaws) in a diamond determine the diamond clarity grade. Since no two stones are identical, a diamond clarity grade can sometimes be subjective. It is often necessary for multiple gemologists to concur in order to establish a clarity grade.

It is important to note that two diamonds having the same diamond clarity grade are not necessarily equal in value. It is not unusual for one stone of equal diamond clarity to be more attractive than another, even when other attributes are equal. Some diamonds score the same in clarity yet have less noticeable inclusions and command higher value. Likewise some dealers will buy the less desirable stones at discounts in order to appear as though they are offering diamonds at seemingly lower prices.

Flawless Diamonds

Not Visible under 10X magnification

There is no higher diamond clarity than that of a flawless diamond. When viewed under a 10 power magnification by a gemologist, flawless and internally flawless diamonds have no visible internal inclusions. These stones are the rarest of rare.

With the exception of elite jewellery retailers and collectors, most people will find these stones prohibitive in cost. s often choose to save money or allocate the money toward the size and/or improve the level of diamond color.

VVS Diamond Clarity

Very difficult to see under 10X Magnification

The VVS classification is broken into 2 categories; VVS1 and VVS2. The suffix of 1 denotes that a VVS1 score higher than VVS2. The numeric designation added to the clarity grade relates to either the quantity, shape or the type of inclusion in the diamond. Inclusions in VVS stones are not easy to detect, and the layperson often has difficulty seeing them even under 10X magnification. As in the case with flawless stones, most people will find the VVS stones prohibitive in cost, and choose to either save money or use their allocated money toward improved diamond cut, size, and/or color.

VS Diamond Clarity

Moderately visible under 10X Magnification

Once again, the VS classification is broken into 2 categories; VS-1 and VS-2, with VS1 being the better of the two grades. When viewing a 10X magnification the average person can see inclusions in a VS stone with the help of a jewellers eye. VS diamonds are very practical because they are flawless to the naked eye, and the [diamond pricing](#) is lower than the higher grades.

SI Diamond Clarity

The SI clarity rating is also broken in 2 categories: SI-1 and SI-2. There are some jewellers and laboratories that acknowledge the classification "SI3", but this classification is not accepted by the Gemological Institute of America-GIA.

The SI1 classification is a little more difficult to navigate. Stones smaller than 1 carat and at the high end of this class are typically flawless to the naked eye. When mounted in jewellery, SI1 diamonds of up to 1.5 carat in size can be pleasing with inclusions that are not noticeable to the average person. SI2 stones can contain flaws that although slightly noticeable under close scrutiny as loose diamonds, may be attractive when mounted in jewellery. Some stones in the SI2 clarity range look better to the eye than others. This can be very subjective, and you should examine stones in this class very carefully before deciding on this grade.

Stones that are classified "SI3" are typically stones that would otherwise be classified I1 by GIA standards, but are above average in their class. SI-3 stones typically exhibit characteristics or flaws that are visible to the naked eye.

The type and location of flaws in these stones have a lot to do with their appeal therefore they can vary greatly in value. SI diamonds, when carefully selected, can provide an optimal look at significantly lower cost than high clarity diamonds.

I Diamond Clarity

"I" Clarity is broken into 3 categories: I-1, I-2 and I-3. At the top end of the scale, I1 diamonds have visible inclusions to the naked eye. At the low end of the scale, I3 diamonds have inclusions that are visible from across the room. The primary reason

stones in this class are purchased is because they can offer “Big for Less.” I clarity diamonds trade at significant discounts from gem grades. Be careful of this enticement. After their purchase, some people become disenchanted with the clarity of the stone and regret their purchase over time.

