

LITTLETON'S U.S. COIN GRADING STANDARDS



Jim Reardon, Littleton's Chief Coin Buyer, examining recently purchased coins

Littleton's grading standards are widely recognized to be among the most stringent in the profession. Our goal is to consistently bring you the highest-quality product within a designated coin grade.

Grade: When referring to a coin that has been in circulation, grade represents the amount of wear a coin has received. For Uncirculated coins without rub or wear, grade represents the coin's level or quality

of preservation. Coin grading is a subjective measurement. Generally speaking, the higher the coin's grade, the more valuable the coin becomes, and the greater the asking price. A coin's grade is one factor in determining value, while popularity or demand and scarcity are just as important. You don't have to be an expert grader to enjoy collecting

coins, but increased grading knowledge can be helpful over time for you to develop an appreciation for the nuances of coin grading. Learning the grading terms utilized is a first step. Please see the end of this grading guide for recommendations of further reading on the subject of grading.

Littleton's Grading Expertise and Consumer-Friendly Business Practices let you order with confidence

When you order from Littleton, you will receive a quality coin that is right for the grade, backed by the Littleton 45-day money back guarantee of satisfaction and our guarantee of authenticity. Our expert graders have more than 100 years of U.S. coin grading experience among them and, through their direction, ensure every coin in our stock is graded accurately and consistently so that you can order with confidence.

Standards Used by Littleton to Grade U.S. Coins

Littleton employs a combination of the Official ANA Grading Standards established by the American

Numismatic Association and those utilized in the reference *Photograde*. These are two of the most respected coin grading standards used today. Many factors make up the grade of a coin, but those of primary importance are wear, marks, luster, strike and eye appeal. Grading is an expert interpretation of attributes expressed by published authorities in the field. Today, depending on preference, both words and numerals are used to describe a coin and its grade. For coins in circulated condition, Littleton's experts use words or abbreviations, such as VG for "Very Good," XF for "Extra Fine," etc., to describe the appearance of a coin, while certification services use a combination of abbreviations with the addition of a numeric scale for all coin grades. Both are correct. So a coin graded Very Good (VG) by Littleton would be designated a VG-8 by a certification service. A different coin graded Very Fine/Extra Fine (VF/XF) by our staff would be designated VF-30 or VF-35 by a certification service.

Littleton's Select Quality

When you buy from Littleton, you receive coins that well represent the designated grades, not coins that barely make it. As a matter of course, our grading experts accept only 50% of the coins they evaluate as meeting Littleton's Select Quality standards. These coins are described by Littleton with the grading definitions shown in the box to the right and in the following explanations:

**Littleton
SELECT
Coin Quality**

#2 Quality: These coins are clearly labeled as #2 quality within the designated grade... we price them according to condition, at a discount appropriate to the grade. Each is a very collectible coin, and otherwise right for the grade, but has one or several slight imperfections (such as a stray mark, rim ding or blemish) or has been lightly cleaned. Uncirculated and Proof coinage with flaws and imperfections are also designated as #2 quality.

Average Circulated (AC) Quality: These coins have a nice appearance, with common wear, rim bruises, and/or minor imperfections. Their condition is the result of normal circulation, with expected wear or handling characteristics earned in the process. These coins do not meet the standards to be graded Good or better; however, they are highly appealing to many of our customers and we price them according to condition at a discount appropriate to the grade.

Genuine Quality: These coins exhibit noticeable flaws and imperfections due to wear or damage, excessive cleaning or a combination. Most dates, mint marks and lettering are readable; however, some characteristics of the coin surface may reflect handling damage or heavy wear from circulation. These coins do not meet the standards to be graded Average Circulated quality (note that Uncirculated and Proof coins with flaws and imperfections may also be included in Genuine quality). However, Genuine quality coins play an important role for many collectors; they are an affordable way to add coins to a collection that may not otherwise be attainable due to scarcity or budget.

Certified encapsulated coins offered by Littleton:

A coin grade is an opinion, and grading coins is an art and necessarily subjective. Littleton does not always agree with every certified coin we examine and will reject those with grades that don't meet our standards. Therefore, we only offer you encapsulated and certified coins that already meet Littleton's high standards for grade and quality.

The use of **PCGS**, **NGC** and **ANACS** in a coin item description in this publication denotes coins in our inventory that meet our exacting grading standards and additionally have been certified by an independent grading service. These grading services (**PCGS**, **NGC** and **ANACS**) have certified and encapsulated each coin in a sonically sealed holder, with a bar coded identification insert noting the coin, variety, date and coin grade.

Coins in certified holders offered by Littleton and designated as "Premium" are high-end coins that offer exceptional quality or above-average eye appeal for the grade.

PCGS Graded by Littleton Coin and the Professional Coin Grading Service

NGC Graded by Littleton Coin and the Numismatic Guaranty Corporation of America

ANACS Graded by Littleton Coin and the ANACS Grading Service

Color Designations that accompany the numeric grade of a Mint State or Proof copper coin:

Red (RD) Red (RD) means the coin displays full mint bloom, with original color as struck, and only slight diminishing of the luster or reflectivity.

Red-Brown (RB) Red-Brown (RB) means the coin has lost some (5 to 95%) of its original mint color.

Brown (BN) Brown (BN) means the coin has 5% or less of its original color.

Visit our learning center at LittletonCoin.com for more information on grading U.S. Coins & Paper Money and Ancient Coins.

GRADING TERMS & NUMERICAL RATINGS

Grade Descriptions Non-Certified & Certified Coins	Abbreviations	
	Non-Certified Coins	Certified Coins
Poor	PO	PO-1
Fair	FR	FR-2
About Good	AG	AG-3
Good	G	G-4
Good/Very Good	G/VG	G-6
Very Good	VG	VG-8
About Fine	AF	VG-10
Fine	F	F-12
Fine/Very Fine	F/MF	F-15
Very Fine	VF	VF-20, VF-25
Very Fine/Extra Fine	VF/XF	VF-30, VF-35
Extra Fine	XF	XF-40
Extremely Fine	EF	EF-40
Extra Fine/About Uncirculated	XF/AU	XF-45
Extremely Fine/About Uncirculated	EF/AU	EF-45
About Uncirculated	AU50	AU-50, AU-53
Choice About Uncirculated	AU55	AU-55, AU-58
Borderline Uncirculated	BL58	*
Uncirculated	MS-60	MS-60
Select Uncirculated-61	MS-61	MS-61
Select Uncirculated-62	MS-62	MS-62
Choice Uncirculated-63	MS-63	MS-63
Very Choice Uncirculated-64	MS-64	MS-64
Gem Uncirculated-65	MS-65	MS-65
Gem Uncirculated-66	MS-66	MS-66
Superb Gem Uncirculated-67	MS-67	MS-67
Superb Gem Uncirculated-68	MS-68	MS-68
Superb Gem Uncirculated-69	MS-69	MS-69
Perfect Uncirculated-70	MS-70	MS-70
MS-60 - MS-70 Prooflike	PL-60 - PL-70	PL-60 - PL-70
MS-60 - MS-70 Deep Mirror Prooflike	DMPL-60 - DMPL-70	DMPL-60 - DMPL-70
Proof	PR-60	PR-60, PF-60
Select Proof-61	PR-61	PR-61, PF-61
Select Proof-62	PR-62	PR-62, PF-62
Choice Proof-63	PR-63	PR-63, PF-63
Very Choice Proof-64	PR-64	PR-64, PF-64
Gem Proof-65	PR-65	PR-65, PF-65
Gem Proof-66	PR-66	PR-66, PF-66
Superb Gem Proof-67	PR-67	PR-67, PF-67
Superb Gem Proof-68	PR-68	PR-68, PF-68
Superb Gem Proof-69	PR-69	PR-69, PF-69
Perfect Proof-70	PR-70	PR-70, PF-70

*Not used by certification services

“I have dealt with other coin companies before, and Littleton Coin Company has them beat by a mile... The selection and quality of your merchandise has more than met my expectations.”

J.F., Whitestone, NY