

LITTLETON'S U.S. COIN GRADING STANDARDS



Ken Westover, 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. With more than 100 years of U.S. coin grading experience among our expert buyers, their direction ensures every coin in our stock is graded accurately and consistently.

Grade: When referring to a coin that has been in circulation, grade represents the amount of wear a coin has received. For Uncirculated coins, grade represents the coin's level or quality of preservation. Coin grading is a subjective measurement. 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 scan the QR Code at the end of this grading

guide for further information on the subject.

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. 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. 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. Additional grade designations are provided below.

**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.

Details Graded: These coins are clearly labeled with the Details designation (ie., "XF Details"). They are right for the grade and priced at an appropriate discount compared to #2 Quality grades. They will exhibit more noticeable imperfections or flaws, yet still offer an attractive alternative to many collectors. Details Graded coins are an affordable way to own coins that may not otherwise be attainable due to scarcity or budget

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.

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 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** Professional Coin Grading Service
- NGC** Numismatic Guaranty Corporation of America
- ANACS** American Numismatic Association Certification Service

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

- Red (RD)** Red (RD) – displays full original color.
- Red-Brown (RB)** Red-Brown (RB) – has lost some (5 to 95%) of its original mint color.
- Brown (BN)** Brown (BN) – has 5% or less of its original color.

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/VF	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 thru 62	MS-61-62	MS-61-62
Choice Uncirculated-63	MS-63	MS-63
Very Choice Uncirculated-64	MS-64	MS-64
Gem Uncirculated-65 thru 66	MS-65-66	MS-65-66
Superb Gem Uncirculated-67 thru 69	MS-67-69	MS-67 to 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/PF-60
Select Proof-61 thru 62	PR-61-62	PR/PF-61-62
Choice Proof-63	PR-63	PR/PF-63
Very Choice Proof-64	PR-64	PR/PF-64
Gem Proof-65	PR-65	PR/PF-65-66
Superb Gem Proof-67 thru 69	PR-67-69	PR/PF-67-69
Perfect Proof-70	PR-70	PR/PF-70

*Not used by certification services

“I feel safe buying coins because of your meticulous attention to grading.”
R.L., Brooklyn, NY

Scan here for more grading information, or visit LittletonCoin.com/GradingGuides

