How to grade a mineral

Minerals are works of art, each mineral is totally unique
and can be judged by a multitude of criteria.
Some criteria are subjective (in the eye of the beholder),
while others can be quite concrete.
This grading system is a guide designed to help collectors
assess how any given specimen ranks among its peers.
As a guide it provides reference points while still leaving
open the possibility that a specimen can be beautiful and
treasured simply due to the fact that you enjoy
its appearance or that it moves you.
It is here that the worlds of art and nature meet.

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Glossary

Below is a list of words and terms that are
often associated with minerals.

Matrix: *A rock or mineral that has an embedded crystal or crystals emerging from it.*

Specimen: *A mineral of interest to collectors or scientists.*

Termination: *The end of a crystal face, the defined ending of a crystal.*

Contact: *The place where two crystals come together or meet.*

Mineral: *Minerals are usually solid, inorganic, have a crystal structure, and form naturally by geological processes. They posses a chemical structure made up of elements. A mineral can be made of a single chemical element or more usually a compound. Elements can sometimes also be minerals, e.g., gold, diamond, copper, and silver.*

Crystal: *The three dimensional form exhibited by a mineral, with defined sides and angles which are positioned based on its inherent atomic structure.*

How this grading system works

There are two sections to the guide.
Section **A** with five criteria, and section **B** with four criteria.

Each individual criteria is graded out of ten,
ten being the best possible and most desirable score.
Add up all nine criteria and then divide that sum by nine.
This will give you an average score.

Of course there are some specimens where specific
criteria are not applicable. In those cases,
add up your individual criteria scores,
then divide by the number of criteria used
to get to your average score.

Average Scores

9-10 - Exceptional quality

8-8.9 - Very good quality

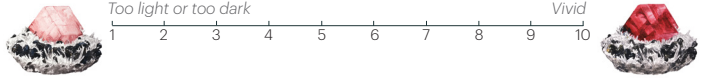
7-7.9 - Good quality

6.9 > not of collectible quality

*Please note that this guide is simply to help collectors assess their collections.
A high score does not necessarily dictate a high monetary value.

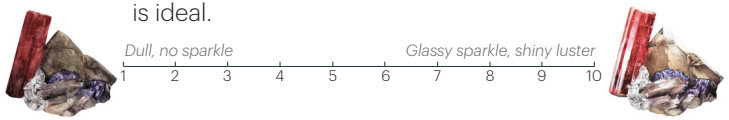
This first section, section **A**,
is focused on the quality of the crystal.

i. **Color:** Vivid is the most desirable and cherished color.
Too light or too dark are not ideal.

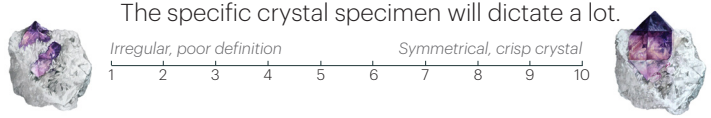


ii. **Transparency:** Little to no impurities or inclusions make
the crystal more desirable.

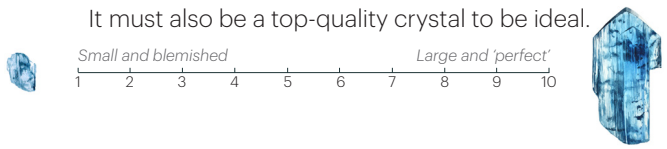
iii. **Luster:** Does the crystal sparkle? A glassy, shiny look
is ideal.



iv. **Form and Definition:** Symmetry, well-defined
terminations, and clean isolated crystals are prized.
The specific crystal specimen will dictate a lot.

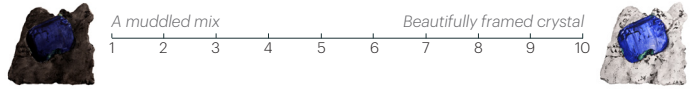


v. **Crystal Size:** Size alone is not the most desirable aspect.
It must also be a top-quality crystal to be ideal.



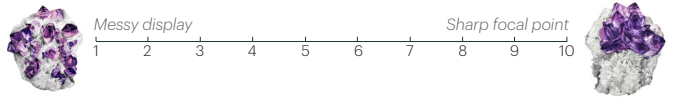
This second section, section **B**,
is focused on the quality and relationship between
both the crystal and the matrix.

i. **Contrast:** A clear distinction between the
crystal and the matrix is prized. A matrix that
clearly frames the crystal is ideal.



ii. **Balance:** The overall harmony of the specimen.
Do the crystal and the matrix complement
each other?

iii. **Aesthetics:** An arresting focal point is most desirable.
Clean lines with a clear intelligible shape are prized.



iv. **Perfection:** No visible damage to either the matrix or the
crystal is ideal.