

Paper Money Grading Guide

GEM UNC - Gem Uncirculated. A perfect note, no defects of any kind visible or felt at close inspection. Well centered and quality printed.

UNC - Uncirculated. A note that has never been in circulation. Fresh and crisp with clean paper and sharp corners. Maybe a slight compression defect from the pack or other single defect not related to the manufacturing process. Notes without defects are referred to as 'Choice UNC' or 'CU'.

AU - About Uncirculated. A note that has been in circulation for a very brief period of time (or a UNC note with more than one minor defect). Fresh and crisp with clean paper and sharp corners. A few more noticeable compression or handling defects. There could be a light bend on one of the corners or a light center fold that doesn't 'break' the surface of the note, but not both.

XF - Extremely Fine. A very attractive note with light handling. There could be a maximum of 3 light folds or 1 strong crease.

VF - Very Fine. An attractive note with more handling and wear. There could be many light folds and creases. There are no tears in the border area and the paper is still relatively crisp and not floppy. The corners are not fully rounded.

FF - Fine. A well circulated note with many folds, creases, and wrinkles. Note is not excessively dirty and may have some softness. Small tears in the border area that do not extend into the design. There is no center hole due to excessive folding, or any other holes from age, abuse or mishandling.

VG - Very Good. A heavily circulated note, abused but still intact (no missing pieces). Note is excessively dirty and will be soft but not totally limp. Larger tears in the border area that extend into the design. There may be a small center hole due to excessive folding, staple and pinholes are probably present.

G - Good. A very heavily circulated and abused note. No large pieces missing. Note is extremely dirty and will be soft or totally limp. Larger tears, dull colors and a center hole due to excessive folding. Staple holes and pinholes are probably present.

FAIR - Extreme heavy circulation and abuse has made this grade of note totally limp. Larger tears, missing pieces, graffiti, dull colors and a center hole due to excessive folding. Staple holes and pinholes can be present.

PR - Poor. Everything mentioned in the Fair note grade and worse. Tape, trimmed edges, large pieces missing, and falling apart. Sometimes you can't even tell what the note is. Just a nasty rag that should be burned!

Grading banknotes is a matter of opinion; the descriptions above are meant only as a guideline to help you determine the condition of any banknote you have or are considering for your collection.