

A.N.A. Grading Standards

for Uncirculated (Mint State) Coins

The American Numismatic Association commissioned a panel of professional numismatists to define each coin grade using the Sheldon scale of coin grading as their basis.

Here are the official ANA grading definitions as defined by the ANA and published in "The Official American Numismatic Association Grading Standards for United States Coins."

Mint State graded coins are judged on four criteria:

- **Contact Marks:** The small nicks and abrasions found on the surface of a coin resulting from the handling and manufacturing process.
- **Hairlines:** Small minute scratches across the surface of a coin usually resulting from coming in contact with a cloth or some other material that is slightly abrasive.
- **Luster:** This is the sheen on the surface of a newly minted coin. When rotated under a single light source, the light will spin and dance across the surface of the coin.
- **Eye Appeal:** This is the overall look of the coin. It is how all the other aspects of a coin come together to give it either that eye-popping and take your breath away look or the feeling of a common uncirculated coin with nothing special about its looks.

The Official Definitions for Mint State Coins are as follow:

MS-70

A coin graded MS-70 is the perfect coin. Has a very attractive and sharp strike. The original luster is of the highest quality for the date and mint. No contact marks are visible under magnification. There are no noticeable hairlines, scuff marks, or defects. Eye appeal is attractive and outstanding. If copper, the coin is bright, with full original color and luster. If silver, the coin may exhibit some natural toning especially if it is more than 100 years old.

Contact Marks: None show under magnification.

Hairlines: None show under magnification.

Luster: Very attractive. Fully original.

Eye Appeal: Outstanding.

Also Known As: Mint State 70, MS70, Perfect Uncirculated

MS-69

A coin graded MS-69 has a very attractive sharp strike and full original luster for the date and mint, with no more than two small non-detracting contact marks or flaws. No hairlines or scuff marks can be seen even under magnification. The coin has exceptional eye appeal. If copper, the coin is bright, with original color and luster. Classic silver U.S. coins may show some attractive toning that does not detract from the coin's eye appeal.

Contact Marks: 1 or 2 minuscule. None in prime focal areas.

Hairlines: None visible.

Luster: Very attractive. Fully original.

Eye Appeal: Exceptional.

Also Known As: Mint State 69, MS69, Choice Gem Uncirculated, Superb Gem Uncirculated, Superb Gem Brilliant Uncirculated, CH GEM BU, CH GEM UNC, Superb GEM BU

MS-68

A coin graded MS-68 has a beautiful sharp strike and full original luster for the date and mint, with no more than four light scattered contact marks or flaws. No hairlines or scuff marks show on the surface of the coin. It has exceptional eye appeal. If copper, the coin is lustrous and has original color. It is acceptable for silver coins to have attractive toning.

Contact Marks: 3 or 4 minuscule. None in prime focal areas.

Hairlines: None visible.

Luster: Attractive. Fully original.

Eye Appeal: Exceptional.

Also Known As: Mint State 68, MS68, Choice Gem Uncirculated, Superb Gem Uncirculated, Superb Gem Brilliant Uncirculated, CH GEM BU, CH GEM UNC, Superb GEM BU

MS-67

A coin graded MS-67 has original luster and normal strike for date and mint. May have three or four very small contact marks and one more noticeable but not detracting mark. On comparable coins, one or two small single hairlines may show, or one or two minor scuff marks or flaws may be present. Eye appeal is above average. If copper, the coin has luster and original color.

Contact Marks: 3 or 4 minuscule. 1 or 2 may be in prime focal areas.

Hairlines: None visible without magnification.

Luster: Above average. Nearly full original.

Eye Appeal: Exceptional.

Also Known As: Mint State 67, MS67, Choice Gem Uncirculated, Superb Gem Uncirculated, Superb Gem Brilliant Uncirculated, CH GEM BU, CH GEM UNC, Superb GEM BU

MS-66

A coin graded MS-66 has above average quality of surface and mint luster, with no more than three or four minor or noticeable contact marks. A few light hairlines may show under magnification, or there may be one or two light scuff marks showing. Eye appeal is above average and very pleasing for the date and mint. If copper, the coin displays original or lightly toned color (which must be designated).

Contact Marks: Several small; a few may be in prime focal areas.

Hairlines: None visible without magnification.

Luster: Above average. Fully original.

Eye Appeal: Above average.

Also Known As: Mint State 66, MS66, Gem Uncirculated, GEM BU, GEM UNC

MS-65

A coin graded MS-65 shows an attractive high quality of luster and strike for the date and mint. The coin may have a few small scattered contact marks, or two

larger marks may be present. One or two small patches of hairlines may show. Noticeable light scuff marks may be seen on the high points of the design. Overall quality is above average and eye appeal is very pleasing. If copper, the coin has some attractive luster with original or darkened color, as designated.

Contact Marks: Light and scattered without major distracting marks in prime focal areas.

Hairlines: May have a few scattered.

Luster: Above average. Fully original.

Eye Appeal: Very pleasing.

Also Known As: Mint State 65, MS65, Gem Uncirculated, GEM BU, GEM UNC

MS-64

A coin graded MS-64 has at least average luster and strike for the type. Several small contact marks in groups, as well as one or two moderately heavy marks, may be present. One or two small patches of hairlines may show. Noticeable light scuff marks or defects might be seen within the design or in the field. Overall quality is attractive, with a pleasing eye appeal. If copper, the coin may be slightly dull. Color should be designated.

Contact Marks: May have light scattered marks; a few may be in prime focal areas

Hairlines: May have a few scattered or a small patch.

Luster: Average.

Eye Appeal: Quite attractive.

Also Known As: Mint State 64, MS64, Choice Uncirculated, CH BU, CH UNC

MS-63

A coin graded MS-63 has a mint luster that may be slightly impaired. Numerous small contact marks and a few scattered heavy marks may be seen. Small hairlines may be visible without magnification. Several detracting scuff marks or defects may be present throughout the design or in the fields. The general quality is about average, but overall the coin is rather attractive. Copper pieces may be darkened or dull. Color should be designated.

Contact Marks: May have distracting marks in prime focal areas.

Hairlines: May have a few scattered or a small patch.

Luster: May be slightly impaired.

Eye Appeal: Rather attractive.

Also Known As: Mint State 63, MS63, Choice Uncirculated, CH BU, CH UNC

MS-62

A coin graded MS-62 will have an impaired or dull luster that may be evident. Clusters of small marks may be present throughout with a few large marks or nicks in prime focal areas. Hairlines may be very noticeable. Large unattractive scuff marks might be seen on major features. The strike, rim, and planchet quality may be noticeably below average. Overall eye appeal is below average. If copper, the coin will show a diminished color and tone.

Contact Marks: May have distracting marks in prime focal areas and/or secondary areas.

Hairlines: May have a few scattered or a noticeable patch.

Luster: May be somewhat impaired.

Eye Appeal: Generally acceptable.

Also Known As: Mint State 62, MS62, Uncirculated, UNC, BU, Brilliant Uncirculated, Beautiful Uncirculated

MS-61

A coin graded MS-61 will have a mint luster that may be diminished or noticeably impaired, and the surface may have clusters of large and small contact marks throughout. Hairlines could be very noticeable. Scuff marks may show as unattractive patches on large areas or major features. Small rim nicks and striking or planchet defects may show, and the quality may be noticeably poor. Eye appeal is somewhat unattractive. Copper pieces will be generally dull, dark, and possibly spotted.

Contact Marks: May have a few heavy (or numerous light) marks in prime focal and/or secondary areas.

Hairlines: May have a noticeable patch or continuous hairlining over surfaces.

Luster: May be impaired.

Eye Appeal: Unattractive.

Also Known As: Mint State 61, MS61, Uncirculated, UNC, BU, Brilliant Uncirculated, Beautiful Uncirculated

MS-60

A coin graded MS-60 will be unattractive, dull, or washed-out mint luster may mark this coin. There may be many large detracting contact marks or damage spots, but no trace of circulation wear. There could be a heavy concentration of hairlines or unattractive large areas of scuff marks. Rim nicks may be present, and eye appeal is very poor. Copper coins may be dark, dull, and spotted.

Contact Marks: May have heavy marks in all areas.

Hairlines: May have a noticeable patch or continuous hairlining overall.

Luster: Often impaired.

Eye Appeal: Poor.

Also Known As: Mint State 60, MS60, Uncirculated, UNC, BU, Brilliant Uncirculated, Beautiful Uncirculated

Grading Uncirculated Coins

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Cover

The Official A.N.A. Grading Standards for United States Coins, 7th Edition 2013
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The ANA has not established equivalent official adjectives for the listings within the MS-60 to MS-70 range. Commercially, MS-70 coins are often called Perfect Uncirculated, MS-65 coins Gem Uncirculated, and MS-63 coins Choice Uncirculated. In the past, these and other adjective have been used to designate various grades of condition.

While the preceding guidelines will undoubtedly prove useful to the reader, it is strongly advised that viewing actual coins in the marketplace will enable you to better determine grading practices affecting the series which interest you most. For example, the collector of Morgan silver dollars would do well to examine Morgans graded by a variety of services and sellers in order to determine in general what is considered to be MS-63, MS-64, MS-65, and higher grades.

Coins minted prior to 1836 often show minor weaknesses or friction spots even though they may never have been used in circulation. Such coins are often graded as Mint State rather than About Uncirculated when they have superior eye appeal, luster, strike, or appearance.

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