



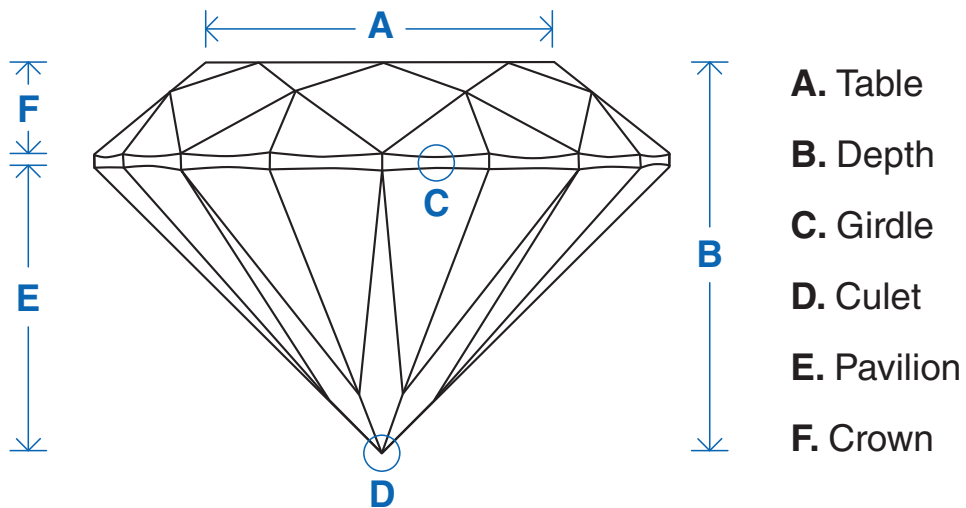
For your bench. At your side.

Diamond Buyer's Guide: The Four Cs Explained

Many of your customers will know something about how diamonds are evaluated and graded. They may have heard of the "the 4 Cs" (cut, color, clarity and carat) but struggle to understand what they are and how they relate to a diamond's worth. They may know what a diamond looks like but not understand the technical terms that are used to describe its anatomy.

Being able to clearly explain how diamonds are evaluated and priced will help you educate your customers, turning them into confident diamond consumers and building their trust in you and in your services.

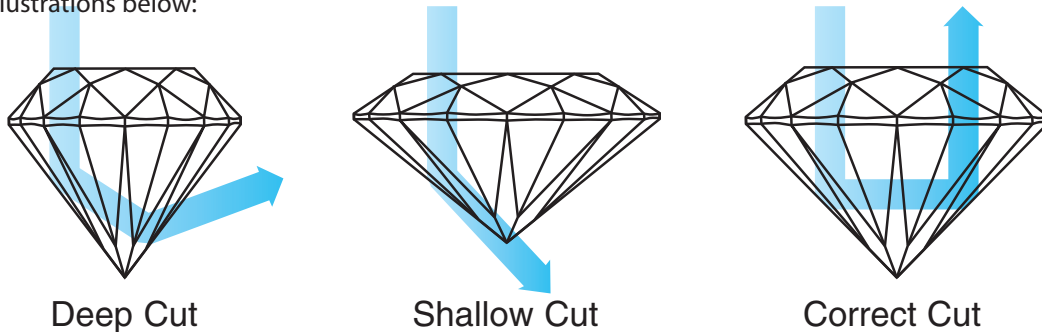
Anatomy of a Diamond.



Cut

The cut of a diamond is about much more than its shape. How a diamond is cut has to do with how well its facets will catch and reflect light. It is this reflection of light that makes a diamond "sparkle," which is why cut is such a critical component in evaluating a diamond.

Consider the illustrations below:



If a diamond is cut too deeply, light will escape from the pavilion, and the diamond will not sparkle. Sometimes called "nailheads," these stones are usually unnecessarily heavy (and thus expensive) and have poor light performance.

If the cut is too shallow, the light will pass through the stone without being reflected back to the eye. Often diamonds with a shallow cut will appear "spread" and have a large table facet. In shallow-cut diamonds, you can sometimes see a reflection of the girdle through the table. These poorly cut stones are referred to as "fish-eyes."

In a stone with a correct cut, the light will bounce back toward the eye through the facets, creating fire, brilliance and scintillation—the characteristics that give a diamond its "life" and make it such a prized gemstone.

Color

The Gemological Institute of America is the preeminent source for diamond knowledge. GIA's diamond color grading scale is used at all levels of the diamond trade. Their diamond color grading scale ranges from D to Z+, with D being colorless and Z+ being a fancy yellow.

Because it is the absence of color that makes a diamond valuable, customers who want the highest-quality diamond will look in the D-E-F range. For many customers, near-colorless (G-H-I-J) diamonds are a good option because they are more affordable but still offer a diamond's sought-after colorless properties.

Prices will drop as you go down the scale, with the exception of "fancy" colors.

GIA* Color Grading Scale

D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	Z+
Flawless			Near colorless				Faint color		Very light yellow					Light yellow					Fancy yellow				

*Gemological Institute of America—creators of the International Diamond Grading System™

Clarity

Because diamonds are formed under intense heat and pressure, it is common to find internal features (called inclusions) in them. Surface features (called blemishes) are even more common.

As with color grading, GIA provides the industry-accepted standard for grading a diamond's clarity.

GIA* Clarity Grading Scale

FL	IF	VVS1	VVS2	VS1	VS2	SI1	SI2	I1	I2	I3
Flawless	Internally flawless	Very, very slight inclusions		Very slight inclusions		Slight inclusions		Imperfect		

*Gemological Institute of America—creators of the International Diamond Grading System™

Flawless and internally flawless diamonds are extremely rare and not commonly available. When they do become commercially available, they are very expensive.

Fortunately, VVS and VS stones are more commonly found, and many customers will struggle to see the distinguishing characteristics that define their grade. These diamonds are the perfect grade to offer customers who want the finest diamonds that are readily available.

Diamonds in the SI1–SI2 range are also popular among consumers. While they have inclusions that are clearly visible under 10x magnification, they appear clean to the naked eye (and are referred to as "eye-clean"). Diamonds in the I1-I2-I3 range have inclusions that are considered "eye-visible" and that may affect the brilliance of the stone.

On the GIA grading scale, there are two SI (or slightly included) grades. Some members of the diamond trade have attempted to high grade their inventory by inventing an unauthorized SI3 grade. Diamond vendors who use this grade are usually trying to sell diamonds that would be more strictly graded as I1 on the authorized GIA scale. At Rio, we never use the term SI3 to describe diamonds. We are strong proponents of faithfully using the true GIA clarity grading scale.

Carat

Not to be confused with karat (a measurement of purity used with gold), a carat is a measurement of weight. One carat (or ct.) is equal to 200 milligrams.

Diamonds less than 1 carat are commonly referred to by point size. You can think of a point like a penny. There are 100 points in one carat, and a one-point diamond is equal to 0.01 carat.

It is important to emphasize to your customers that a carat is a unit of weight, not of size. Diamonds with the same carat weight can have different size measurements, depending on how they are cut. The chart at right shows Rio Grande’s acceptable carat range, as well as the equivalent range in millimeters, for diamonds up to .50 carats.

Sizing Round Diamonds		
Carat Size	Normal Range (ct.)	Normal Range (mm)
.01	.0071-.012	1.2-1.4
.015	.013-.017	1.5
.02	.0175-.023	1.61-1.75
.03	.026-.035	1.9-1.95
.04	.036-.045	2.0-2.2
.05	.046-.065	2.25-2.4
.07	.066-.085	2.55-2.7
.10	.086-.115	2.85-3.0
.12	.116-.135	3.1-3.2
.15	.14-.17	3.25-3.5
.20	.18-.22	3.6-4.0
.25	.23-.27	3.9-4.2
.33	.30-.35	4.25-4.6
.40	.38-.43	4.5-4.9
.50	.48-.55	4.9-5.3

Shape

Diamonds are available in a variety of shapes and faceting patterns. Round, brilliant-cut diamonds are the most common and the best known. Other typical diamond shapes and faceting patterns are outlined below.



Round



Oval



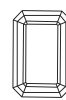
Marquise



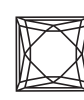
Pear



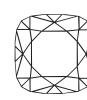
Heart



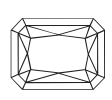
Emerald



Princess



Asscher



Radiant

Fancy Color

Most diamonds are graded according to the absence of color. But what if color is what you're seeking? Fancy color diamonds are available in a wide range of hues—including yellow, pink, blue and more.

As with colorless diamonds, the rarer a colored diamond is, the more valuable it is. When it comes to colored diamonds, saturation, or how rich the color is, also comes into play. Natural, highly saturated colored diamonds tend to be the most valuable.

Service

We consider ourselves true diamond experts here at Rio. Our GIA-trained gemologists love working closely with customers to find just the right diamond for their needs. You can reach us at **1-800-257-7026** or at **gemstones@riogrande.com**. We're looking forward to hearing from you!