

A Verbal Description of Stamp Grades for Sound United States Stamps (excluding the 1857-61 Issue and the 1875 Reprints thereof)*

SUPERB-98: The stamp is essentially perfectly centered within margins of a normal size or margins somewhat larger than normal. Stamps that are essentially perfectly centered within very large "jumbo" margins may be expected to sell for even more than the listed values for the superb grade. Color, impression and freshness will be excellent. Essentially, this will be a perfect stamp.

EXTREMELY FINE-SUPERB-95: Extremely well centered within margins that are at least of normal size or perhaps slightly larger than normal. Close examination by unaided normal eyesight will reveal that the stamp is not perfectly centered. Extremely well-centered stamps with very large "jumbo" margins may be expected to sell for even more than the listed values for the extremely fine-superb grade. Color, impression and freshness will be very nice. All in all, an extremely choice example of the stamp.

EXTREMELY FINE-90: A very well-centered stamp within margins that are normal or slightly larger than normal. A discerning collector will be able to tell rather easily that the stamp is a little bit off in one or two directions. As with the preceding grades, good color, impression and freshness should be evident. And, again, stamps with "jumbo" margins will sell for more than the values shown. This will be a premium example of the stamp.

VERY FINE-80: The stamp is just slightly off-center on one or two sides. All frame lines will be well clear of the perforations (except

for the 1857-61 first perforated issue (Scott 18-39) and most of the 1875 Reprints of the 1857-61 issue (Scott 41-46)). With exceptions as noted in the catalogs, Very Fine is the benchmark grade valued in the Scott Standard Volume 1 and the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers*. A Very Fine stamp is, in all cases, a very desirable example of the issue.

FINE-VERY FINE-75: The stamp is noticeably off-center, with the perforations close to the design on one or two sides, resulting in margins that are narrow but with some white space between the perforations and the design. In this and lower grades, the color, impression and freshness may be somewhat below the levels of the higher grades.

FINE-70: The stamp is quite off-center, with the perforations on one or two sides very close to the design but not quite touching it. There is white space between the perforations and the design that is minimal but evident to the unaided eye.







VERY GOOD-50: The perforations just slightly cut into the design on one or two sides. This grade also is commonly referred to as AVERAGE.

*See the Illustrated Gum Chart below and also the introduction to the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* for additional information concerning gum.

Illustrated Gum Chart

For purposes of helping to determine the gum condition and value of an unused stamp, Scott Publishing Co. presents the following chart which details different gum conditions and indicates how the conditions correlate with the Scott values for unused stamps.

Used together, the Illustrated Grading Chart on the next page and this Illustrated Gum Chart should allow catalog users to better understand the grade and gum condition of stamps valued in the Scott catalogs.

Gum Categories:	MINT N.H.	ORIGINAL GUM (O.G.)				NO GUM
	 Mint Never Hinged Free from any disturbance	 Lightly Hinged Faint impression of a removed hinge over a small area	 Hinge Mark or Remnant Prominent hinged spot with part or all of the hinge remaining	 Large part o.g. Approximately half or more of the gum intact	 Small part o.g. Approximately less than half of the gum intact	 No gum Only if issued with gum
Commonly Used Symbol:	★★	★	★	★	★	(★)
Pre-1900 Issues (Pre-1890 for U.S.)	Very fine pre-1900 stamps in these categories trade at a premium over Scott value			Scott Value for "Unused"		Scott "No Gum" listings for selected unused classic stamps
From 1900 to breakpoints for listings of never-hinged stamps	Scott "Never Hinged" listings for selected unused stamps	Scott Value for "Unused" (Actual value will be affected by the degree of hinging of the full o.g.)				
From breakpoints noted for many countries	Scott Value for "Unused"					

Never Hinged (NH; ★★): A never-hinged stamp will have full original gum that will have no hinge mark or disturbance. The presence of an expertizer's mark does not disqualify a stamp from this designation.

Original Gum (OG; ★): Pre-1890 stamps should have approximately half or more of their original gum. On rarer stamps, it may be expected that the original gum will be somewhat more disturbed that it will be on more common issues. Post-1890 stamps should have full original gum. Original gum will show some disturbance caused by a previous hinge(s) which may be present or entirely removed. The actual value of a post-1890 stamp will be affected by the degree of hinging of the full original gum.

Disturbed Original Gum: Gum showing noticeable effects of humidity, climate or hinging over more than half of the gum. The significance of gum disturbance in valuing a stamp in any of the Original Gum categories depends on the degree of disturbance, the rarity and normal gum condition of the issue and other variables affecting quality.

Regummed (RG; ★): A regummed stamp is a stamp without gum that has had some type of gum privately applied at a time after it was issued. This normally is done to deceive collectors and/or dealers into thinking that the stamp has original gum and therefore has a higher value. A regummed stamp is considered the same as a stamp with none of its original gum for purposes of grading.

Illustrated Grading Chart



Superb-98



Extremely Fine-Superb-95



Extremely Fine-90



Very Fine-80



Fine-Very Fine-75



Fine-70



Very Good-50



Superb-98



Extremely Fine-Superb-95



Extremely Fine-90



Very Fine-80



Fine-Very Fine-75



Fine-70



Very Good-50