



The condition of coins according to numismatic guidelines

How to evaluate the overall impression of a coin

Appearance of the coin surface	Examining the significant points	Checking the authenticity
Studying the fine details	Assessing the characteristics	Examining the patina
	<p>Fine (F) The contours of the stamp are no longer fully visible, nevertheless, the inscriptions are still legible and the entire motif must be clearly identifiable.</p>	
	<p>Very Fine (VF) The contours of the stamp remain visible, however traces of wear are discernible. The coin may also have minor damage to the relief areas.</p>	
	<p>Extremely fine (EF) Coins in this condition have only been in circulation briefly. The relief areas should not show any evidence of wear. A few small scratches are permitted in the field, but no other damage.</p>	
	<p>Uncirculated (UNC) This condition applies to coins that have never been in circulation. Only the minutest marks caused by bulk handling in the mint are visible.</p>	



Brilliant Uncirculated (BU)

This condition also applies to freshly minted coins that have never been in circulation. However they may not show marks caused by bulk handling and must have a bright and lustrous surface with the original mint bloom.



First strike or Proof-like

At one time, the first strikings from a new die were frequently used for coin cabinets and collections. The mirror-like surface closely resembles a Press Proof version. With the quality of modern dies, there is virtually no difference to Brilliant Uncirculated.



Proof

High quality collectors' items made using specially prepared dies and polished blanks. Optimum contrast between the mirror-like field and the matt relief. Individually struck and generally packaged in tins or pouches. Produced in more recent times.

Modern coins in poorer condition than "fine" are no longer worth collecting as a general rule. These are coins in qualities such as "very good", "good" and "poor".

By courtesy of Marcel Häberling Numismatik, Freudenbergstr. 101, 8044 Zurich