

Abacus Auctions - Guide to Descriptions, Symbols & Grading

At **Abacus Auctions** we utilise much the same symbols as other firms, but with some additional enhancements. **It is important that you understand our Symbols and Grading System because these - along with the illustration - form part of the description.** We provide this additional information so that you will always be satisfied with the quality of the material you purchase from us. In the event that we have missed a tear or a thin and consequently over-graded an item, we **WANT** you to return it for a full refund. We stand behind the Abacus Grading System.

1. Firstly, we have the lot number. If it is in bold and printed in **red**, the item is illustrated: e.g. **1234**.

2. The second column contains a Symbol which describes the item(s) contained in the lot:

**	Mint (unmounted with original gum)	A	Albums and Accessories
*	Mint (mounted with original gum)	B	Booklets
Ω	Unused (without gum; or regummed)	C	Cover or Card (regular size)
Δ	Piece	CL	Cover (long)
O	Used (quality unspecified)	CX	Cover (oversize)
V	Neat Postmark (most of stamp design clear)	E	Essay
F	Neat Postmark (across at least half of design)	L	Literature
G	Untidy or Indistinct Postmark	P	Proof
H	Heavy or Poorly-Struck Postmark	PS	Postal Stationery
S	Stamp (used in 'Postmarks' lots)	R	Reprint

3. The third column gives an overall quality assessment for the lot, from 'A' to 'D'. The same standard applies to mint and used stamps, to covers, postal stationery, literature etc. An item graded 'A' is very fine; it has no faults. 'B' items are fine with minor imperfections. A 'C' item will exhibit obvious faults. Items in poor condition are rated 'D'. Occasionally, an item in truly superb condition will be rated 'A+'. This grading is used sparingly and is not applied to modern material, which one would normally expect to be in very fine to superb condition.

An otherwise very fine item which has a subsidiary problem may be allocated an 'A-'. This may be a stamp with writing or a hinge remainder on the reverse. A cover may have a receiver's endorsement on the face. The halves of a letter card may be stuck together. A book may have a previous owner's notations. Whether this factor makes the item an 'A-' or 'B' is a matter of degree. NB: An expertiser's signature or handstamp on a cover or the reverse of a stamp will not normally be cause for downgrading the quality of an item: such marks will be mentioned and you should make your decision as to whether or not such an item is of the standard that you personally require.

Occasionally, the symbol 'A' to 'C' will appear in brackets: eg (B). This signifies that the item has been renovated or repaired and improved to the grade indicated by the letter. The brackets indicate a qualified grading, the cause for which will be mentioned in the description.

4. The fourth column is used for perforated stamps, and also for lots listed under the sub-heading 'Postmarks'. For **perforated stamps** this column gives a grading for both centring and perforations. The letter 'A' to 'D' relates to centring. 'A' stamps are very well centred; 'B' stamps are slightly off-centre; 'C' stamps are significantly off-centre, and may have the perforations slightly into the design; 'D' stamps are badly off-centre, with the perforations well into the design. [NB: These gradings are the same for all perforated issues, whether Australian Decimals, De La Rue Colonial keyplates or 19th Century American issues. However, it should be understood that for many issues poor centring is the norm. Thus 'C', and even 'D', gradings should be expected and accepted. For such issues a 'B' stamp will be above-average and an 'A' stamp will be considered an exceptional copy.]

Following the letter 'A' to 'D' is a number '1' to '4'. A stamp with all perforations intact is '1'. One or two short perfs, or normal rough perforations, will drop the grading to '2'. More notable perforation problems such as the perfs down one side being trimmed will result in a '3' grading. A stamp with major perforation faults will be a '4'. [NB: A stamp graded 'A1' is well-centred with all perforations intact. In many cases, particularly with modern issues, this is the norm. However, for many issues, 'B2' or even 'C3' may be normal and quite acceptable.]

For lots listed under the sub-headings "**Postmarks**" and "**Ship/Paquebot Markings**" or similar, this column gives a grading for quality of the strike of the marking itself, and completeness. Quality is graded from 'A' (very fine) to 'D' (poor). Completeness is graded from '1' (complete) to '5' (identifiable only). '+' is used for superb strikes; '-' is used for postmarks that are lightly struck, a little doubled, or otherwise a bit short of the mark.

5. The Estimate in the right-hand column is our estimate of value in Australian Dollars for each lot. You may bid at, above or below the Estimate. The reserve price is set at 75% of estimate (rounded to the nearest bidding step) for almost every lot, and bids below this will not be accepted. **If a lot attracts GST for Australian buyers, the estimate is printed in blue followed by a small "T".**

6. We use the following standard abbreviations throughout the descriptions:

o.g.	original gum	cds	circular datestamp	PPC	picture postcard
opt(d)	overprint(ed)	d/s	datestamp	M/S(s)	miniature sheet(s)
mss	manuscript; handwritten	h/s	handstamp	ERD	earliest recorded date
o/o	opened-out	b/s	backstamp	LRD	latest recorded date