

How Slot Machines are Graded

Grading Specification

The following is an abridged description of the various grades, the first paragraph is an abstract; a more thorough definition follows - (Reprinted with permission from the wife of the author, Nora Mead, the late Daniel Mead of Loose Change Blue Book for Slot Machines, Fourth Edition, 1997 - 1998.)

Mechanism

Mechanism shall consist of any working parts, including basic mechanism, reel assembly, payout system, jackpot mechanism/payout system, vender mechanism, escalator/coin-handling assembly and handle assembly/linkage.

Case

Case shall consist of the enclosure, including all hardware.

Insignificant Parts

Parts such as, but not limited to, handle pump components, miscellaneous springs and anti-cheating parts, double coin or slug rejection parts or coin return mechanism parts. Generally, components such as these are easily replaced parts not absolutely essential for the normal home operation of the machine.

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Grade 1

This grade represents the absolute top of the line in terms of physical condition. Grade 1 machines are either brand new out of the crate, or in excellent, virtually unused condition, both inside and out. Whole reproductions, and machines which have been either partially or wholly restored, are **never** assigned a Grade 1 value.

By definition, the parameters of Grade 1 are narrow. This top level of physical condition is already fairly exclusive and becoming more restricted as time passes. Only a few select examples will qualify for inclusion at this level. A Grade 1 machine will look as if it had just been uncrated - brand new, original or in excellent and practically unused condition.

Even casual visual observation will be enough to make the determination of inclusion or exclusion from the Grade 1 rating. There will be no signs of wear. The exterior will be free of blemishes, defects or flaws (chipping, cracking, pitting, weathering, warping, etc.). It will be mint condition as [though it was] shipped from the factory. All exterior castings must be the original size and shape provided by the manufacturer, with no replacements, additions or deletions; and all exterior components must be secure, with nothing loose, missing or replaced.

The same holds true for the mechanism of the Grade 1 slot machine. Everything works, everything is in place, there are no signs of wear, and nothing has been replaced with a reproduced counterpart. The mechanism must be in working order, fully adjusted and timed for perfect operation. It goes without saying, the mechanism and case for Grade 1 machines must be the ones the original manufacturer combined in the factory prior to shipment. No missing combinations of case and mechanism qualify for inclusion in the Grade 1 classification.

Oil and grease will be newly applied; and fresh. It will not be old, dried, cracked, gummy or blocking any rotation of bearings (stud rollers). Levers will function flawlessly. Reels 1, 2 and 3 will rotate, index and stop with audible clicking. Payout slides will have a crisp "snap" and deliver any payouts/jackpots with a sharp sound of metal and clinking of coins into the tray. (These highlighted thoughts are additional written observations made by CA ANT SLOTS, Inc.)

Grade 2

This grade represents the second level of quality and includes two different classes of machines. Grade 2 machines are those in excellent to very good condition, inside and out, with no parts missing and only minor wear on the mechanism. This grade also includes machines that have undergone quality restoration to reinstate them to an excellent facsimile of their original condition, inside and out.

To qualify for a Grade 2 rating, the machine in question must be in very good to excellent condition throughout. There must be no missing parts. The case must be in very good to excellent condition, or restored to excellent condition. Restoration of metal parts may be with paint, electroplating or a combination of both - per the original.

Grade 3

This grade represents machines in average physical condition, inside and out. It allows for a maximum of two (2) missing, insignificant mechanism parts not essential for normal home operation of the machine.

To qualify for a Grade 3 rating, the machine must be fairly clean throughout and the mechanism must be in good, average operating condition, or repaired to good operating condition. A maximum of two missing, insignificant parts is permitted, provided this does not prevent normal home operation of the machine. The machine case must be complete and in average condition. Recast replacement parts (not the entire case!) are allowed, but they must fit and look as though original.

Grade 4

This grade represents machines in fair operating condition and allows for a maximum of four (4) missing, insignificant parts not essential for normal home operation of the machine.

A Grade 4 classification allows for the mechanism to be very dirty, but in fair, operating condition. The reels must stop in sequence, and the payout must be correct. Frequent malfunctions are to be expected due mostly to dirt, gummy parts and lack of lubrication. Up to four missing, insignificant parts is permitted, provided that they do not prevent normal home operation of the mechanism. Jackpot must be complete but need not working perfectly.

California Antique Slots, Inc. - (805) 583-0785 (FAX)

www.california-antique-slots.com

tbaker@california-antique-slots.com

Grade 5

This grade represents machines in very poor condition and barely operable, with up to six (6) missing insignificant mechanism parts not essential for normal home operation of the machine; or in the case of modern machines with video monitors and/or hoppers, the monitor and/or hopper must both be intact and operable.

At this level grading, the mechanism is extremely dirty, barely in operating condition and missing up to six parts not required for home operation. The case of the mechanism must either be complete or made complete with replacement parts. Up to 60% recast parts are allowed, but they must fit and look as though original. Numerous medium-sized dents, nicks and scratches are permissible in original castings. The back door need not be original, but it must fit properly and not be of inferior reproduction.