

Karats, Carats & Ounces

"KARAT" (abbreviated "K") refers to the purity of gold.

Pure gold (100% fine) is 24 karats (24K), although it's generally referred to as ".999 fine". Therefore, each karat of gold purity is 1/24th, or .0417%.

24K	24/24	100.00% pure	certified bullion, some coins
22K	22/24	91.67% pure	some coins, Asian jewelry
18K	18/24	75.00% pure	jewelry
16K	16/24	66.67% pure	dental gold
14K	14/24	58.33% pure	jewelry ("plumb" gold)
14K	14/24	55.00% pure	jewelry ("commercial" 14K)
12K	12/24	50.00% pure	jewelry (decorative rose or green)
10K	10/24	41.67% pure	jewelry (lowest legal level in U.S.)
9K	9/24	37.75% pure	jewelry (British commonwealth)

"1/20th 10K Gold Filled" (or any similar figures), "Rolled Gold Plate", and "18K HGE" ("Hot Gold Electroplate") are various types of gold plating. The precious metal content of gold-plated articles is minimal. The same is true for silver-plated articles.

"CARAT" (abbreviated "ct") refers to the weight of a gemstone, usually a diamond.

A carat is 1/5 (20%) of a gram. A one-carat diamond weighs 0.2 grams. A five-carat diamond weighs 1.0 gram. A quarter-carat diamond weighs 0.05 grams. The cut, shape and dimensions of a gemstone are irrelevant to its carat weight.

One carat consists of 100 "points". The points are an expression of weight alone and have nothing to do with the points of the facets (faces) that result from cutting and polishing the gemstone. A quarter-carat diamond weighs 25 points, which is equal to 0.05 grams.

"TOTAL WEIGHT" (abbreviated "TW") refers to the total weight of all similar stones in a piece of jewelry. For example, a ring with 50 two-point diamonds and a ring with 2 fifty-point (half-carat) diamonds both are one-carat TW, but the second ring is most likely worth quite a bit more than the first ring!

A "TROY" ounce is different than an "AVOIR DU POIR" ("regular") ounce. While a regular ounce consists of 28.35 grams, a troy ounce consists of 31.103 grams, almost 10% heavier. In everyday usage, no one refers to pounds of gold: 1,000 troy ounces is referred to as "1,000 ounces". Fortunately, a "gram" is a gram is a gram.

By the way, a "PENNYWEIGHT" (abbreviated "DWT") is 1/20th of a troy ounce... but, who cares?