

Color/Overtone

A pearl's main color or body color can be white, cream, gray, black, yellow, etc. Often, a pearl will also display an overtone, a translucent secondary color on its surface. Beautiful pearls can be found in virtually any color/overtone.

Comments and Conclusion

The comments and conclusion sections of the report include the identification and, if applicable, treatment(s) and other notes relevant to the pearl.

Environment

Pearls can be grown in a variety of freshwater or saltwater environments.

Luster

Luster is the reflective quality or brilliance of the pearl's surface. It is measured on a scale ranging from poor to excellent.

Matching:

In pearl strands or jewelry, matching refers to the coordination of the pearls — in aspects such as color and shape — to create an aesthetically pleasing piece. It is described on a scale from poor to excellent.

Measurements

Round pearls are measured by their diameter, in millimeters. Other pearls are measured by length x width x depth. Measurements of pearl strands or jewelry are described as a range, average, or graduation from maximum to minimum.

Mollusk

Pearls are produced by oysters, mussels, and other mollusks.

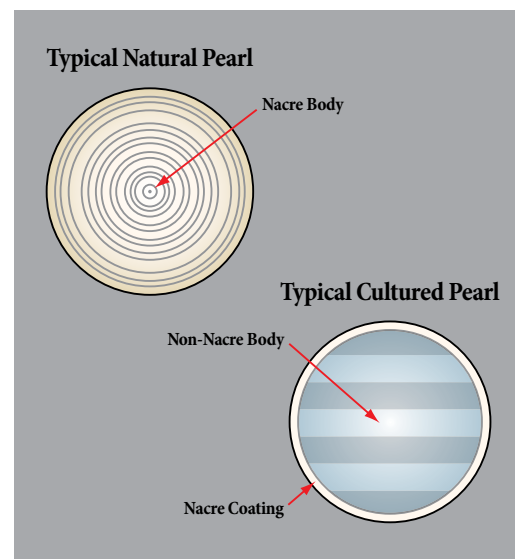
Nacre Thickness

The depth of a pearl's nacre — the iridescent coating over its nucleus — can impact its luster, durability, and quality. On bead-cultured pearls, thickness is rated as thin, medium, or thick (which is preferred).

Origin

Natural or Cultured

A natural pearl is created when nacre forms around a microscopic irritant, without human interaction. A cultured pearl is initiated by the implantation of a nucleus (a shell bead or piece of mantle tissue) by a pearl farmer. While natural pearls are coveted for their rarity, more common cultured pearls — the classic South Sea, lustrous Akoya, and colorful Tahitian, for example — can be quite stunning.



Nacreous or Non-nacreous

Nacreous pearls appear translucent, due to their fine, plate-like crystalline layers of calcium carbonate (mostly aragonite) and organic material (conchiolin). Non-nacreous pearls are made of coarser crystals (mostly calcite), so they have a more porcelain-like look.

Shape

Shape is the form of a pearl. Shapes include round, off-round, oval, drop (pear-shaped), button (with a flat side), circle (with rings/ridges), semi-baroque (irregular), and baroque (non-symmetrical and irregular).

Surface

The outermost layer of a pearl will inevitably contain bumps, wrinkles, minor cracks, and/or chips. Surface quality rates the significance of these irregularities — their size, visibility, etc. — on a scale from heavily blemished to clean (which is preferred).

Treatments

A pearl's appearance can be enhanced through a variety of treatments, such as dyeing, irradiation, or heating to change its color.

Weight

Depending on pearl type, weight can be measured in grams, carats (.2 gram), or grains (.065 gram).

X-Ray Fluorescence

Fluorescence refers to a pearl's capacity to emit a visible light when some of its elements react to x-rays. Fluorescence is noted for identification purposes, and its presence can help to confirm a pearl's cultured origin.