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Grade Comparison Chart

| YDS | UIAA | FR | AUS | SAX | CIS | SCA | BRA | UK |
|-------|-------|-----|-----|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 5.2 | II | 1 | 10 | II | III | 3 | | D |
| 5.3 | III | 2 | 11 | III | III+ | 3+ | | |
| 5.4 | IV- | 3 | 12 | | IV- | 4 | | VD |
| 5.5 | IV | | 13 | | IV | 4+ | | |
| 5.6 | IV+ | | | | IV+ | | | S |
| 5.7 | V- | 4 | 14 | | | 5- | 4a | HS |
| 5.8 | V | | 15 | VIIa | | 5 | | |
| 5.8 | V+ | 5a | 16 | VIIb | V- | 5+ | 4b | VS |
| 5.9 | VI- | 5b | 17 | VIIc | | | 4c | HVS |
| 5.10a | VI | 5c | 18 | VIIIa | V | 6- | 5a | E1 |
| 5.10b | VI+ | 6a | | | | 6 | 6a | |
| 5.10c | VII- | 6a+ | 19 | VIIIb | | 6+ | 6b | E2 |
| 5.10d | VII | 6b | | VIIIc | V+ | | 6c | E3 |
| 5.11a | VII+ | 6b+ | 20 | IXa | | 7- | 7a | 5c |
| 5.11b | | 6c | 21 | IXb | | 7 | 7b | |
| 5.11c | VIII- | 6c+ | 22 | IXc | VI- | 7+ | 7c | E4 |
| 5.11d | VIII | 7a | 23 | | | | | 6a |
| 5.12a | | 7a+ | 24 | | | | | |
| 5.12b | VIII+ | 7b | 25 | Xa | VI | 8- | 8a | E5 |
| 5.12c | IX- | 7b+ | 26 | | | 8 | 8b | |
| 5.12d | IX | 7c | 27 | Xb | | 8+ | 8c | |
| 5.13a | | 7c+ | 28 | Xc | | | 9a | 6b |
| 5.13b | IX+ | 8a | 29 | | | 9- | 9b | E6 |
| 5.13c | X- | 8a+ | 30 | | | | 9c | |
| 5.13d | X | 8b | 31 | XIa | VI+ | 9 | 10a | 6c |
| 5.14a | | 8b+ | 32 | | | | 10b | |
| 5.14b | X+ | 8c | 33 | XIb | | | 10c | 7a |
| 5.14c | XI- | 8c+ | | XIc | | 9+ | | E8 |
| 5.14d | XI | 9a | | | | | | 7b |
| | | | | | | | | E9 |

The above appears courtesy of the American Alpine Journal. Please visit them on the web at www.americanalpineclub.org.

National Climbing Classification System (USA):

NCCS grades, often called "commitment grades," indicate the time investment in a route for an "average" climbing team.

- I** and **II**: Half a day or less for the technical (5th class) portion of the route.
- III**: Most of a day of roped climbing.
- IV**: A full day of technical climbing.
- V**: Typically requires an overnight on the route, or done fast and free in a day.
- VI**: Two or more days of hard climbing.
- VII**: Remote walls climbed in alpine style.

Alpine System:

The overall seriousness of the complete route based on all factors of the final approach, ascent and descent including length, altitude, danger, commitment, and technical difficulty. This system originated with UIAA Roman numerals; it is now generally seen with French letters and is increasingly being used worldwide.

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F: Facile/easy. Rock scrambling or easy snow slopes; some glacier travel; often climbed ropeless except on glaciers.

PD: Peu Difficile/a little difficult. Some technical climbing and complicated glaciers.

AD: Assez Difficile/fairly hard. Steep climbing or long snow/ice slopes above 50 degrees; for experienced alpine climbers only.

D: Difficile/difficult. Sustained hard rock and/or ice or snow; fairly serious stuff.

TD: Tres Difficile/very difficult. Long, serious, remote, and highly technical.

ED: Extremement Difficile/extremely difficult. The most serious climbs with the most continuous difficulties. Increasing levels of difficulty indicated by ED1, ED2, etc.

Alaska Grade:

An overall grade reflecting the remote, cold, stormy nature of Alaskan climbing. Rarely applied outside Alaska.

1: Easy glacier route.

2: Not technical, but exposed to knife-edged ridges, weather, and altitude.

3: Moderate to hard, including some technical climbing.

4: Hard to difficult.

5: Difficult, with sustained climbing, high commitment, and few bivouac sites.

6: Sustained hard climbing over thousands of vertical feet; high commitment.

Russian Grade:

The overall grade factors in UIAA technical ratings (the Roman numerals).

1B: Some easy roped climbing.

2A: Several pitches of easy roped climbing.

2B: Some II+ and III climbing on a multipitch route.

3A: Contains 1-1.5 pitches of III climbing on a multi-pitch route.

3B: One or two pitches of III+/IV climbing on a full-day route.

4A: A full day route with IV+ climbing.

4B: Several pitches of IV+ or some V+ climbing.

5A: Contains several pitches of V climbing on a 1- to 3-day route.

5B: Two-plus days with some VI+ climbing.

6A and 6B: Multi-day routes with considerable VI or harder climbing.

Aid Grades:

New routes put-up by big-wall aficionados often are given a "New Wave" rating using the original symbols with new definitions. When the letter "C" replaces "A," the rating refers to "clean" climbing i.e., without a hammer.

Original Aid Rating System:

A0: Occasional aid moves often done without aiders (etriers) or climbed on fixed gear; sometimes called "French free."

A1: All placements are solid and easy.

A2: Good placements, but sometimes tricky.

A3: Many difficult, insecure placements, but with little risk.

A4: Many placements in a row that hold nothing more than body weight.

A5: Enough body-weight placements in a row that one failure results in a fall of at least 20 meters.

New Wave Aid Ratings:

A1: Easy aid. No risk of a piece pulling out.

A2: Moderate aid. Solid gear that's more difficult to place.

A2+: 10-meter fall potential from tenuous placements, but without danger.

A3: Hard aid. Many tenuous placements in a row; 15-meter fall potential; could require several hours for a single pitch.

A3+: A3 with dangerous fall potential.

A4: Serious aid. 30-meter ledge-fall potential from continuously tenuous gear.

A4+: Even more serious, with even greater fall potential, where each pitch could take many hours to lead.

A5: Extreme aid. Nothing on the entire pitch can be trusted to hold a fall.

A6: A5 climbing with belay anchors that won't hold a fall either.

Scottish Winter Grades:

These apply to ice and mixed conditions and are used primarily by climbers familiar with Scottish conditions. Roman numerals are the overall grades, while Arabic numbers

are the technical grade of the hardest section. Scottish technical ratings are approximately 1 generous numeral higher than equivalent Water Ice or M-grades. Technical grade 5 is relatively straightforward, 6 is somewhat technical mixed climbing, and 7 and 8 are much more intricate, including harder snowed-up rock. The current range is 4-9. A complete grade is expressed as VI,8.

I: Snow gullies and easy ridges.

II: Steep snow where two ice tools may be required but technical difficulties are short. Possible difficult cornice exit.

III: Mixed ascents of moderate rock routes; icy gullies; sustained buttresses.

IV: Steep ice with short vertical steps or long pitches up to 70 degrees, or mixed routes requiring advanced techniques.

V: Sustained ice to 80 degrees or mixed climbs with linked hard moves. Climbs are difficult, sustained, and/or serious.

VI: Vertical ice and highly technical mixed routes. Grade VI and above routes have exceptional overall difficulties.

VII: Multi-pitch routes with long sections of vertical or thin ice, or mixed routes with lots of highly technical climbing.

VIII-IX: The hardest routes in Scotland. Canadian Winter

Commitment Grade:

This combines length, hazard, and overall challenges.

I-II: 1 or 2 pitches near the car, but may need to be avoided during avalanche season.

III: Requires most of a day including the approach, which may require winter travel skills (possible avalanche terrain, placing descent anchors).

IV: A multipitch route at higher altitude or remote location. Multi-hour approaches in serious alpine terrain.

V: A full-day climb in alpine terrain with a long approach, long technical descent, and objective dangers.

VI: A long waterfall with the character of an alpine route; formerly required at least a day to complete, now often done faster. Significant alpine objective hazards.

VII: Under discussion.

Mixed Grade:

These routes require considerable dry tooling (modern ice tools used on bare rock) and are climbed in crampons; actual ice is optional but some ice is usually involved.

M1-3: Easy. Low angle; usually no tools.

M4: Slabby to vertical with some technical dry tooling.

M5: Some sustained vertical dry tooling.

M6: Vertical to overhanging with difficult dry tooling.

M7: Overhanging; powerful and technical dry tooling; less than 10m of hard climbing.

M8: Some nearly horizontal overhangs requiring very powerful and technical dry tooling; bouldery or longer cruxes than M7.

M9: Either continuously vertical or slightly overhanging with marginal or technical holds, or a juggy roof of 2 to 3 body lengths.

M10: At least 10 meters of horizontal rock or 30 meters of overhanging dry tooling with powerful moves and no rests.

M11: A ropelength of overhanging gymnastic climbing, or up to 15 meters of roof.

M12: M11 with bouldery, dynamic moves and tenuous technical holds.

Water Ice and Alpine Ice Grades:

Ice climbing ratings are highly variable by region and are still evolving. The following descriptions approximate the average systems. The WI acronym implies seasonal ice; AI is often substituted for year-around Alpine Ice and may be easier than a WI grade with the same number. Canadians often drop the WI symbol and hyphenate the technical grade after the Canadian commitment grade's Roman numeral (example: II-5).

WI1: Low angle ice; no tools required.

WI2: Consistent 60 degree ice with possible bulges; good protection.

WI3: Sustained 70 degree with possible long bulges of 80-90 degrees; reasonable rests and good stances for placing screws.

WI4: Continuous 80 degree ice fairly long sections of 90 degree ice broken up by occasional rests.

WI5: Long and strenuous, with a ropelength of 85-90 degrees ice offering few good rests; or a shorter pitch of thin or bad ice with protection that's difficult to place.

WI6: A full ropelength of near-90 degree ice with no rests, or a shorter pitch even more tenuous than WI 5. Highly technical.

WI7: As above, but on thin poorly bonded ice or long, overhanging poorly adhered columns. Protection is impossible or very difficult to place and of dubious quality.

WI8: Under discussion.

Snow:

Snow is often described by its steepest angle (ex.: 70 degrees) or by a range approximating its steepest angle (ex.: 70-80 degrees).

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