

Introduction to Grading

This guide is designed to encourage the reader to become familiar with grading rules for hardwood lumber established by the National Hardwood Lumber Association. The following photographs are examples of the range in appearance that the buyer may expect to receive when purchasing each grade. An effort was made to show the maximum and minimum clear yield for each grade. Each picture shows the "worst" side of the board since hardwood lumber is graded from the poor face.

With some exceptions, hardwood lumber is graded on the basis of the size and number of cuttings (pieces) which can be obtained from a board when it is cut up and used in the manufacture of a hardwood product such as furniture, flooring, or architectural millwork. Usually the buyer intends to use only the clear (defect free) material in a board, so a higher grade would have a larger area of clear wood.

Because the grading rules are based on the yield of clear wood, many of the beautiful, natural characteristics which appear in a board are not include in the calculation of the yield. Often, the natural beauty and real bargains are not found in the most expensive grade of lumber. The keen buyer who will examine the #1 and #2A grades can discover that they may; "yield" the prize pieces. Pages 5 to 18 display photographs of typical boards representing three of the commonly used NHLA standard grades in several species of lumber.

Basic Yield for FAS

FAS (Firsts and Seconds) - The FAS grade will provide the user with long, wide, clear cuttings. Best suited for high quality furniture, interior trim, millwork, and solid wood mouldings. The FAS grade includes a range of boards which yield from 83.1/3% (10/12ths) to 100% clear wood in cuttings at least 3" wide by 7' long or 4" wide by 5' long.

Note: Diagrams show two examples of the minimum clear yield (unshaded area) needed to make each grade. The shaded area contains defects and is not used in calculating the yield, although users may very well crosscut and rip the lumber in a different pattern and use portions of the board in the shaded area.

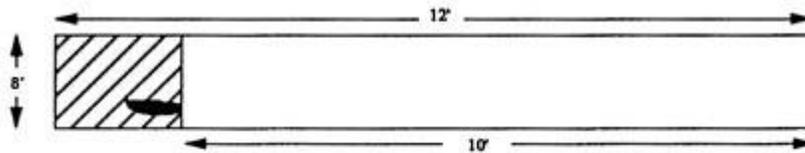


Diagram 1. FAS

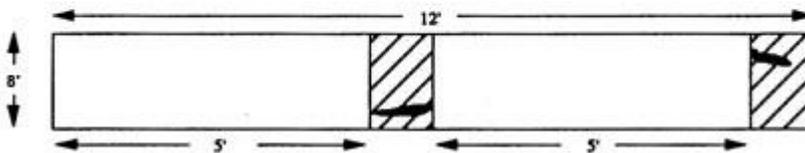


Diagram 2. FAS

FAS1F or Selects- In FAS1F ("FASoneFace") and Selects, the grade is established using both faces of the board. The best face must meet the requirements for FAS, and the reverse side must essentially grade No. 1. FAS1F and Selects are virtually the same grade, except for minimum width and length. The minimum board size for Selects is 4" x 6'; and for FAS1F it is 6" x 8'

Basic Yield for No. 1 Grade

No. 1 - Will provide the user with clear cuttings of medium length and width. Best suited for furniture, cabinets, and a multitude of solid wood manufactured products. The No. 1 grade includes a range of boards which will yield from 66 2/3% (8/12ths) to 83 1/3% (10/12ths) clear wood in cuttings at least 3" wide by 3' long or 4" by 2'.

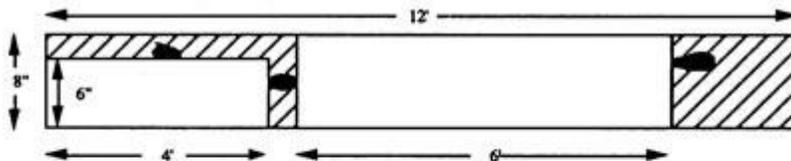


Diagram 3. No.1 Grade

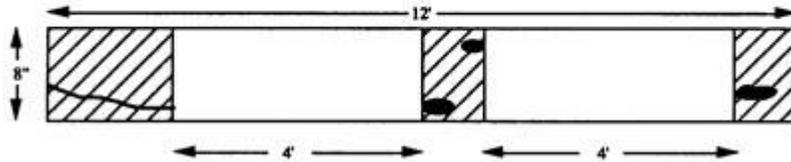


Diagram 4. No.1 Grade

Basic Yield for No. 2A Grade

No. 2A- Will provide the user with short, narrow clear cuttings economically priced, for use in unexposed furniture frames, picture frames, cabinet rails and frames, parquet or strip flooring, and many other smaller solid wood components. The No. 2A grade includes a range of boards which will yield from 50% (6/12ths) to 66 2/3% (8/12ths) clear wood in cuttings at least 3" wide by 2' long.



Diagram 5. No. 2A Grade

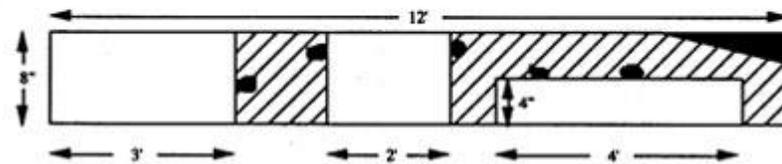


Diagram 6. No. 2A Grade