



# The World of Gems

## In This Lesson:

- A Professional Adventure
- How This Course Works
- Diamonds and Colored Gems
- The Spectrum of Gem Products
- Three Essentials for All Gems
- Focal Points for Presentations

## A PROFESSIONAL ADVENTURE

Welcome to the Diamond Council of America's Colored Gemstone Course! You're beginning a professional adventure – an explorative journey into the world of gems.

The gem world is filled with great beauty, diversity and wonder that most consumers don't know a lot about. Although many are fascinated by gems, few realize the variety they offer, and even fewer are truly informed about purchasing and owning them. In this course you'll travel deep into the heart of the gem world. You'll learn how to reveal its marvels and help your customers make wise selections from among the choices it holds.

As in any unfamiliar world, there are differing points of interest and concern for different people. This course will provide a wide range of information that you can use to explain value, build desire, and highlight significance. You'll also examine some of the sensitive issues associated with gems. Being aware of these – and knowing how to deal with them – will make you a better guide for your customers.

This lesson and those that follow will take you on an organized and exciting gem safari. It begins with the “lay of the land” – an overview of gem products, the attributes all gems share, and focal points for presenting gems to customers. Next you'll dive into color, the top factor in beauty and value for most gems. After that you'll explore other areas that can contribute to your successful involvement with gems and gemstone jewelry.



*The world of colored gems is a cornucopia of beauty and diversity.*

*Photo courtesy Akiva-Gil.*

# Colored Gemstones 1

When you finish, you'll be a more knowledgeable and skilled gem professional. Along the way, remember: Knowledge leads to appreciation, appreciation fuels enthusiasm, and enthusiasm opens the door to success.

## Lesson Objectives

**When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:**

- Define the main categories of gem products.
- Explain the qualities that define a "gem."
- Identify the main concerns in presenting gems.



## DCA'S MISSION STATEMENT

**T**he mission of the Diamond Council of America is to provide quality, affordable distance education to enhance the ability of our members' associates to sell fine jewelry with expertise, integrity, and professionalism and to fuel the passion of those looking to learn about our industry.

## HOW THIS COURSE WORKS

This course was developed especially for jewelry sales professionals and those who support their efforts at a management level. It's also designed to suit different adult learning styles. The lessons and exercises combine reading and thinking with listening and talking, observing and examining, acting and doing. This approach will enable you to apply what you learn to the specifics of your store's operations, the merchandise you carry, and the customers you serve. Understanding how the course works will help you get the most from the time and energy you put into the education process.

## Choice of Formats

The Colored Gemstone Course is available in two different formats: in print and online. The print version came in the package of course materials you received after enrolling. DCA's website – [www.diamondcouncil.org](http://www.diamondcouncil.org) – has the online version.

You can take the course either way you choose. The two versions are exactly the same.

## Course Objectives

After you successfully complete this course, you will be able to:

- Explain the different kinds of products that are classified as colored gemstones.
- Identify factors that affect the value and appeal of colored gemstones.
- Describe gemstone jewelry in terms of form, function, and style; quality, workmanship, and value.
- Discuss karat gold, platinum, and silver, the metals that are used to make most gemstone jewelry.
- Explain the treatments that are used on colored gemstones.
- Follow FTC guidelines on representation and disclosure for colored gems and gemstone jewelry.
- Cite geographic sources for gems; describe how gems are found and mined and how they make their way into the market.
- Discuss how to develop awareness, understanding, and appreciation of color, and apply these in working with colored gemstones and gemstone jewelry.
- Recognize ways to create satisfying buying experiences for gemstone jewelry customers, and build long-term relationships with them.
- Explain how sales associates can help to provide store services such as gemstone jewelry repair.
- Discuss ways to display colored gemstone jewelry in a manner that maximizes its appeal and reinforces a store's marketing approach.
- Describe how to clean and care for colored gems and gemstone jewelry in the store, and how to teach customers to do the same for jewelry they own or purchase.

That may sound like a lot, and it is! You'll be surprised, however, at how much you can accomplish through this course, your own efforts, and the support of your team. When you start seeing results – and that will be right away – you'll feel truly motivated to keep moving forward. Learning even more will become easy and enjoyable.

## Course Organization

This course is divided into three main sections that reflect the priorities and job responsibilities of jewelry sales professionals:

- **Section I "Need to Know"** – Lessons 2 through 7  
– Fundamental product knowledge that you'll use in many sales presentations and that customers will need to make purchase decisions. This section starts with a detailed look at color. Then it covers gemstone products, value factors, and jewelry.
- **Section II "Nice to Know"** – Lessons 8 through 12  
– Background information that will boost your confidence, help you build appreciation for your products, and supply answers to questions knowledgeable customers may ask. This section follows the story of gems from formation through wholesale distribution. It includes a lesson on how gems are identified, and ends with a look at gem magic and romance.
- **Section III "Professional Skills"** – Lessons 13 through 16 – Guidelines for successful selling and for functioning as a valued member of your store's team. This section includes caring for gemstone jewelry, the selling process, representation and disclosure, and jewelry display.

At the end of the course there's a review (Lesson 17), which will help you prepare for the Final Examination.



Photo courtesy Judith Ripka.



Photo courtesy Bielka.



Photo courtesy Zaffiro.

## Lesson Components

Most lessons have eight components that are designed to create a complete and personalized learning experience.

- **In This Lesson** – Provides an initial snapshot of what’s in the lesson. It will give you an overview of the information that’s coming.
- **Introduction** – Sets the stage by identifying the main lesson topic, highlighting its importance, and providing context.
- **Lesson Objectives** – Lists the knowledge and skills you’ll gain by completing the lesson and follow-up exercises.
- **Main Text** – Presents the lesson’s core content.
- **Sidebar** – Contain information that expands or supports the lesson discussion. Sidebars are printed on a colored background to set them off from the Main Text.
- **Recap of Key Points** – Summarizes important ideas and facts from the lesson.
- **Lesson Follow-Up Checklist** – Directs additional steps to help you apply what you learn to your own “real life” work situation.
- **Self-Test** – Multiple choice questions that allow you to gauge your comprehension of the lesson material. Correct answers and page references are listed at the end of each Self-Test.



Photo courtesy TJ Treasure.

### STUDY TIPS

**H**ere are some proven study tips that will help you succeed in this course:

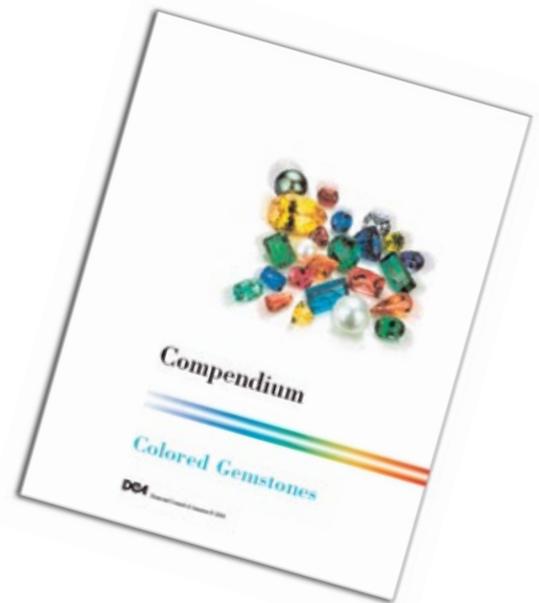
- Set a schedule and stick to it. Designate at least a couple of hours each week as your Diamond Council Study Time. Mark the dates and times on your calendar, and be sure to keep these important appointments with yourself.
- Arrange a comfortable, distraction-free place to do your studying.
- Begin each lesson by scanning it and checking the Self-Test to get an idea of what you're expected to learn. Then read the lesson thoroughly.
- If you're working with the print version of the course, keep a pencil or highlighter handy and mark information that seems interesting or important. You can also make notes in the lessons.
- Whenever your attention begins to lag during a study session, take a short break.
- Apply what you learn as soon as possible. Each lesson contains a Follow-Up Checklist with practice exercises for turning knowledge into skill. Be sure to complete the checklists. They're critical components of the learning process.



## The Gem Compendium

The *Colored Gemstone Compendium* is a very important part of this course. Its main section contains profiles of more than 45 gems that you're likely to see in today's retail jewelry industry. Each profile outlines:

- Interesting history and lore
- Primary value factors
- Common treatments
- Background science (gemology and geology)
- Geographic sources
- Points to consider in selection and care



Another section of the compendium includes reference charts that list birthstones, anniversary gems, worldwide gem sources, and gems for every color of the rainbow. There's also a comprehensive table of gemstone treatments.

The compendium can help you tailor information to your individual needs. The course lessons provide “Big Pictures” of the various topics. They also use the most popular and commercially important gems as examples. Once you understand the basic principles and how they apply to the top sellers, you can adapt them to other gems you present. The compendium supplies all the details you need to do this. For practice, a number of the Lesson Follow-Up Checklists have exercises that involve the compendium.

The *Colored Gemstone Compendium's* value doesn't stop when you complete the course, however. In fact, it can become an ongoing resource in selling. For example, you can use the compendium to do your “homework” on new gems that arrive in your inventory. The compendium comes in handy during sales presentations as well. If you don't know the answer to a question, you can often find it in one of the profiles or reference charts. You can also use the profile outlines as talking points, or even show them to customers.

You'll get more tips on using the compendium as a presentation aid in Lesson 14. Go ahead and start familiarizing yourself with this important course component soon. It's a great way to start learning about the gem world.

## Progress Evaluations

This course includes four Progress Evaluations. Each one allows the Diamond Council to measure what you've learned at logical points in your coursework. They also let you offer input on the course and how it's administered. The first Progress Evaluation comes after Lesson 2 and it's intended to make sure you get off to a good start. The others come at the end of course sections – after Lessons 7, 12, and 16.

Each Progress Evaluation has three parts:

- **Learning Evaluation** – This is the section test. It has 20 to 30 multiple-choice questions covering all the lessons in the section.
- **Training Evaluation** – This ensures that you can apply new knowledge and skills. It contains items based on the follow-up checklists in the section, and also some short-answer questions.
- **Satisfaction Evaluation** – This gives you a chance to rate and comment on the objectives, content, presentation, and service for that section of the course.

You can complete all three evaluations online or by mail. Detailed instructions for Learning Evaluations are in the Testing Center section of the Student Learning Center on DCA's website, and also in the Progress Evaluation booklets that are included with printed courses. Instructions for Training and Satisfaction Evaluations are in the Evaluations section of the Learning Center.

Learning Evaluations and Training Evaluations are **required** coursework. Satisfaction Evaluations are **optional**, but DCA would like very much to know what you think and how you feel about your education experience.



## Evaluation Servicing

DCA grades Learning Evaluations and provides appropriate feedback on the DCA grades Learning Evaluations and provides appropriate feedback on them. If you take a test by mail, your work will be processed the same day it is received. With online tests, you get results immediately.

- **Grading** – Grades for Learning Evaluations are percentages based on the number of correct answers compared to the total number of questions. For example, if you correctly answer 20 out of 25 questions, your grade is 80%.
- **Grade Target** – The minimum grade target for Learning Evaluations is 75%.
- **Retakes** – If your grade for a Learning Evaluation is less than 75%, you must retake the test. You can simply repeat an online test. Or if you took the test by mail, DCA will send you a new answer form to use for the retake. You may retake a Learning Evaluation as many times as you need to. When you score 75% or higher, that grade will be averaged with the other(s) to determine an overall grade for the test.
- **Feedback** – On every Learning Evaluation you'll receive feedback. If you score less than 75%, the Learning Feedback will list the questions you missed and give section references, helpful hints, and additional explanations. If you score over 75%, you'll be notified of any questions you answered incorrectly. The Learning Feedback will list correct responses and page references, and supply further information.

## Completing the Course

When you've completed all four Progress Evaluations, you'll be eligible to take the Final Examination. You can find details about the exam in Lesson 16 (Final Review).

There are two limits on course completion that you need to keep in mind:

- **Academic Limit** – The minimum grade target for the Final Examination is 75%. As with Learning Evaluations, the grade is a percentage based on correct versus total answers. But if your grade is less than 75%, you may retake the exam only **once**. If you do not reach or exceed the target on the second attempt, you must re-enroll in order to complete the course.

- **Time Limit** – All of the coursework, including Progress Evaluations and the Final Examination, must be completed within 12 consecutive months from the date of enrollment. If you do not meet the time limit, you must re-enroll in order to complete the course. Your completion deadline is noted on The Colored Gemstone Course Instruction Sheet that came with your printed course materials, and on the “Welcome” page of the online Student Testing Center. You can also obtain the date from DCA.

After you’ve completed all course requirements – the four Progress Evaluations and the Final Examination – you will receive formal recognition from the Diamond Council of America, marking your achievement.

### Accessing DCA Online

The online version of The Colored Gemstone Course – including all lessons and tests – is available on DCA’s website at [www.diamondcouncil.org](http://www.diamondcouncil.org). To access this material, you’ll need to know your username and password.

These were listed on the instruction sheet that came with the print version of your course. If you included your email address on your enrollment application, DCA also sent you a message containing the information.

If you want to access the online course and you can’t find your username and password, contact DCA.

### CONTACT THE DIAMOND COUNCIL

If you have questions or concerns about this course – its objectives, design, content, presentation, administration, service, or anything else – please contact the Diamond Council. You’ll receive a prompt and full response. DCA is 100% committed to your satisfaction and success.

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## DIAMONDS AND COLORED GEMS

In the broadest sense, the gem world includes an amazing variety of materials used for jewelry and other ornamental purposes. There's everything from diamonds and pearls to iridescent insect shells and the latest lab creations. Generally speaking, most of these can be divided into two broad categories – diamonds and colored gemstones.

According to this simple classification, any kind of gem except diamond is considered a colored gemstone. That's true even if it happens to be colorless, like rock crystal quartz. On the other hand, even though the Hope Diamond is a deep “sapphire” blue, it's not considered a colored gem, and neither are other fancy color diamonds. These contradictions don't bother professionals, but they can confuse customers. Therefore, if you're presenting rock crystal or another colorless gem, don't refer to it as “colored.” Just say “gem” or “gemstone.”

Colored  
gemstones  
are the spices  
that create  
much of the  
industry's flavor.

Drawing a line between diamond and other gems is valid because diamond has a unique beauty, commercial status, and popularity. To understand this, consider the following points:

- Most gems' main attraction is color, but diamond's appeal normally depends on how well it reflects and disperses white light.
- Diamond sales generate half or more of all revenue for many jewelry stores.
- Diamonds are closely linked to the most frequent jewelry-giving occasions – engagements, weddings, and anniversaries.
- Two out of three US consumers say diamond is their favorite gem.

While diamonds may be the jewelry industry's “bread and butter,” colored gems are the spices, and they create a lot of flavor. Most have long histories and they're associated with interesting folklore. Many capture the romance of faraway places, while others evoke the traditions of native cultures. Some have been prized for thousands of years, but there are new discoveries, too. Above all, each gem celebrates the human love of beauty in a unique way.



*Colored gemstones capture the romance of far away places and evoke the traditions of native cultures.*

There are also practical reasons why colored gems are vital to the jewelry industry:

- **Sales Contribution** – Surveys in recent years have consistently shown that colored gemstone jewelry represents about 10% of sales for many jewelry retailers. Put another way: one dollar out of 10 comes from colored gems. With thoughtful planning, creative merchandising, and a sustained sales focus, it's often possible to increase that contribution.
- **Consumer Preference** – About 1/3 of all US consumers prefer colored gemstones to diamonds, and that rate is higher among some key groups. Women buying for themselves often choose colored gemstone jewelry for its fashion, affordability, and individuality. Colored gems are favorite gifts for young people, too. In this group, colored gems can spark lifelong passions for jewelry.



*Women self-purchasers often choose colored gems for the combination of variety, fashion and affordability.*

One dollar out of every ten comes from colored gems.

- **Competitive Advantage** – Internet retailers and other alternative outlets are now competing fiercely for diamond sales. Colored gemstones usually require highly personalized sales presentations, which aren't as easy through mass-marketing technology. As a result, colored gems offer traditional retailers opportunities to create secure niches in their markets.

In this course you'll focus on colored gemstones, though some information on diamonds is included for perspective. The more complete knowledge and skills needed by diamond professionals are presented in The Diamond Course.

### PRECIOUS vs SEMIPRECIOUS

**Y**ou may have heard gems described as “precious” or “semiprecious”. Both terms have been used for centuries, but they don’t really belong in today’s gem world. Traditionally, the “precious” category included diamond, emerald, ruby, sapphire, and natural pearl, plus outstanding examples of gems such as opal and topaz. Everything else was lumped together in the “semiprecious” category.

Most gem professionals would now say the categories themselves are misleading. That’s because low-quality “precious stones” are less beautiful and less valuable than many other kinds of gems. The “semiprecious” label is also unfairly negative. Garnets, for example, were once considered semiprecious, yet the garnet variety known as tsavorite (SAV-oh-rite) can have an intense green color that rivals fine emerald. It can also cost thousands of dollars per carat.



*A beautiful gem “lights up the room”. The term “semi precious” is unfairly negative.*

*Photos by Tino Hammid courtesy Intercolor.*

Considering these facts, it’s obviously best to drop the terms from your vocabulary, though you’re still likely to run across them from time to time. They often appear in documents like appraisals, old books, and even some current publications. They’re also used in the fashion industry, and you’re almost certain to hear them from customers.

Occasionally you’ll get a question like, “Is this a precious gem?” When that happens, be tactful and don’t lecture about proper terminology. Instead, highlight the appeal of the gem you’re showing. Try something like, “As you can see, it’s a beautiful gem with a color that lights up the room.” If the customer presses the point you can provide more explanation. In most cases, a little positive focus is all that’s needed.

## THE SPECTRUM OF GEM PRODUCTS

The spectrum of gem products runs all the way from materials created solely by nature to those produced entirely by human technology. In Lesson 3 you'll take a closer look at this spectrum and throughout the course you'll continue to learn more about it. For now, here are some definitions you can begin thinking about and using:

- **Mineral Gems** – These are made by Earth's rock-forming (geologic) processes. They're also the products most consumers think of as "natural gems." Diamond, emerald, ruby, and sapphire are the most familiar. Others include amethyst, aquamarine, citrine, garnet, opal, peridot, tanzanite, topaz, and tourmaline.



*Mineral gems, such as ruby in marble, are born from earth's rock forming processes.*

*Photo courtesy Gary Bowersox.*



*Organic gems such as coral, shell and pearl come from living organisms.*

Both mineral and organic gems can be treated.

- **Organic Gems** – These come from living organisms (plants or animals). Cultured pearls are the most important organic gems. Amber, coral, ivory, and shell are also in this group. Organics have been part of the gem world for thousands of years. In modern times, however, some have been affected by environmental issues. Lesson 5 is devoted to cultured pearls, and Lesson 6 surveys the other organic gems.
- **Treated Gems** – This product segment mainly consists of gems that formed naturally, but underwent some sort of artificial treatment. Treatments include dyeing, heating, and irradiation. They improve a gem's appearance or wearability. Both mineral and organic gems can be treated, and some experts estimate that 3/4 of all colored gems are now being treated in one way or another. You'll learn more about treatment processes in Lessons 3, and Lesson 15 discusses treatment disclosure.
  - **Synthetics** – These are lab-created versions of natural gems, and they copy their natural counterparts right down to the atomic level. For example, natural ruby and synthetic ruby are made of the same kinds of atoms arranged in the same crystal pattern. As a result, they have almost identical characteristics. Only slight differences make it possible to tell them apart.

Only slight differences make it possible to tell them apart. You'll learn how gemologists do this in Lesson 11.

- **Imitations** – You can think of these as look-alikes. They resemble the gems they imitate in either color or appearance, but the similarity ends with that. Natural gems were once common imitations. (For instance, red garnets served as ruby imitations.) Because of consumer interest in gems of all kinds today, however, it's best to present these as “color alternatives” rather than imitations. Most modern man-made imitations are glass, ceramic, or plastic, but there are also synthetics that resemble other gems. A good example is light blue synthetic spinel, which imitates aquamarine.
- **Assembled Products** – These are made by fusing or bonding separate pieces of natural or manufactured gems. Assembled products have a variety of functions. Many are used as imitations, but some create unique color alternatives. Others utilize attractive gem material that would otherwise be wasted. Opal triplets fit in the last category. They're assembled by bonding a thin slice of opal between a supportive base and a protective top.



*Imitations resemble the gems they imitate in color and appearance only. Usually, they are completely different gem materials.*

## THREE ESSENTIALS FOR ALL GEMS

Amid their diversity, all true gems share three essential attributes – beauty, rarity, and durability. They possess these attributes in varying combinations, though, and you must understand what these terms mean, both in the context of the general gem world and for each gem specifically:

- **Beauty** – This is the visual allure that catches, holds, and pleases the eye. For most gemstones, the main component of beauty is color. For others, like cat's-eye chrysoberyl, opal, and star sapphire, beauty comes from special optical effects known as **phenomena**. Others, such as agate and malachite, feature attractive color patterns. For almost all gems, the striking symmetry of cut or the artistic design of carving is also a critical factor in beauty.
- **Rarity** – All natural gemstones are “rare” in the sense that they're uncommon in occurrence and choice in quality. There are big differences in degrees of rarity, however. Some gems have only a single source, or there might be just a few known specimens of the rarest collector gems. On the other



*Beauty is the visual allure that catches, holds and pleases the eye.*

*Photo courtesy Krashes and Dirnfeld.*

hand, there are gems like chalcedony (kal-SED-uh-nee), which is found in hundreds of places and mined by the ton. Nevertheless, it is comparatively rare when you consider that it's made of the same material as sand which is universally abundant. Most gems fall somewhere between these extremes. They're abundant enough to create and meet consumer demand, yet rare enough to maintain high monetary and symbolic value. For each kind of gem there's also a scale of rarity that's determined by factors like carat weight, clarity, and intensity of color.



*Although chalcedony is found in many locations, it's still comparatively rare.*

*Photo courtesy Kim International Manufacturing.*

**Durability**  
means that a  
gemstone's  
beauty can  
pass the test  
of time.

- **Durability** – From a function standpoint, you could say that durability is a gem's capacity to be worn and enjoyed in jewelry. At a deeper level, however, durability means that a gemstone's beauty can pass the test of time. This is illustrated by the radiant gems that are sometimes found at ancient ruins. It was put into words by the famous American gemologist George F. Kunz (1856-1932). He once wrote, "All the fair colors of flowers and foliage, and even the blue of the sky and the glory of the sunset clouds, only last for a short time, and are subject to continual change, but the sheen and coloration of precious stones are the same today as they were thousands of years ago and will be for thousands of years to come."

Together with the cultural influences of fashion and tradition, the attributes of beauty, rarity, and durability determine each gem's status and value in the marketplace. In Lesson 4 you'll see how these variables translate into value factors that you can explain to customers.

## FOCAL POINTS FOR PRESENTATIONS

When you present colored gems and gemstone jewelry to customers, it's important to consider these key points:

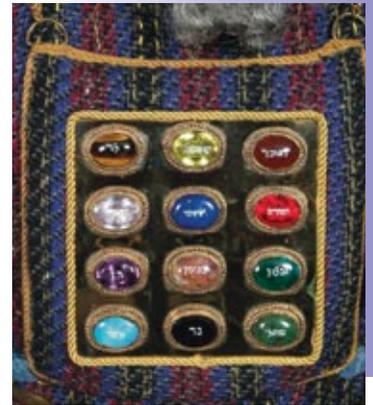
- **Representing Products** – With all the combinations of lifestyle, personal preference, and budget among today's consumers, there's a market for almost every gem product. To make informed purchases, however, customers need to know exactly what you're offering. Thus, your top priority is to identify your products clearly and accurately, and avoid communicating anything that might confuse or mislead.
- **Disclosing Treatments** – You must inform customers of any known or probable treatment a gem has undergone. Full disclosure means describing the treatment process, explaining whether or not the effect is permanent, detailing any special care that's required, and discussing how the treatment affects value.



*Without professional sales associates, there would be no gem and jewelry industry.*

- **Explaining Value** – To make informed decisions, customers also need to understand the factors that affect quality and cost. This involves highlighting beauty, rarity and durability and possibly explaining something about the 4Cs as they relate to the gem you're showing. To establish value on a personal basis, you must also link the gem's features with benefits that are meaningful to the individual customer.
- **Capturing Meaning and Magic** – While you're covering the bases on representation, disclosure, and value, you can't lose sight of the ideas and emotions that motivate customers to own or give gems in the first place. The secret of selling lies in identifying each customer's needs and desires, and then using the facts to capture the personal meaning that surrounds a beautiful gem. With thought, creativity, and practice it's even possible to turn the "nuts and bolts" issues into part of the magic.

In the upcoming lessons you'll learn to accomplish these objectives – and much, much more. It's all part of your professional adventure in the world of colored gemstones.



*Emotional links to gemstones have existed since ancient culture.*

*Photo: Purported breastplate of the High Priest Aaron, thought to be the original inspiration of birthstones.*



Photo courtesy Intercolor.

## FTC GUIDES ON COLORED GEMS

The US Federal Trade Commission's Guides for the Jewelry, Precious Metals, and Pewter Industries help to define ethical and legal standards for all gem professionals. Many of the guides address colored gemstone products and the jewelry in which those products appear. At appropriate places in this course, the guides are quoted and discussed so you can understand how they apply to your work.

You can obtain a complete copy of the guides from the FTC's website at: [www.ftc.gov/bcp/guides/jewel-gd.shtm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/guides/jewel-gd.shtm).



*Distinguishing between different gems is an ongoing challenge.*

Photos courtesy Chatham Created Gems and from **Gemstones, Quality and Value, Volume 1** by Yasukazu Suwa.

## RECAP OF KEY POINTS

- The gem world is full of beauty, diversity, and wonder, but most consumers don't know much about it. As a jewelry sales professional, you must learn to reveal its marvels and help your customers make wise selections among the choices it holds.
- Gems are divided into two broad categories: diamonds and colored gemstones. Diamonds are the mainstay of the jewelry industry, but colored gems are vital because of their appealing variety, contribution to sales, popularity among consumers, and competitive advantages.
- The full spectrum of gemstone products runs from materials created solely by nature to those produced entirely by human technology. It includes mineral gems, organic gems, treated gems, synthetics, imitations, and assembled products.
- All true gems possess beauty, rarity, and durability in varying combinations. Together with the cultural influences of fashion and tradition, these attributes determine each gem's status and value in the marketplace.
- Selling colored gemstones to retail customers requires attention to four main issues:
  - Representing products accurately
  - Disclosing treatment fully
  - Explaining value clearly
  - Capturing meaning effectively



*The secret of selling is using what you know to capture the personal meaning that surrounds a beautiful gemstone.*

*Photo courtesy Jean François Albert.*

### LESSON 1 FOLLOW-UP CHECKLIST

- Start becoming familiar with the colored gems in your inventory. Begin by making a list of all the different kinds you carry. Then spend a little time just looking at them individually. Think about which ones appeal to you, and why.
- With a coworker, role-play responding to the customer question, “Is this a precious gem?” First practice with the “customer” easily accepting your positive focus on the gem. Then have the “customer” be more persistent with a question like, “But isn’t it a garnet? ... And aren’t garnets semiprecious?”
- Begin keeping a record of your colored gemstone sales. Useful information includes the date, the type of gem, its size and quality, the type and style of the jewelry, the amount of the sale, and notes about challenges.
- Discuss the focal points of presenting colored gemstones with your manager and coworkers. Share problems and successes you’ve had in dealing with these core issues. Write down any questions you have now, and watch for the answers as you work through the upcoming lessons.

### **JA® SALES PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION™**

Jewelers of America (JA) is one of the foremost US jewelry trade organizations. With a mission to increase consumer confidence in the jewelry industry, JA advocates professionalism and adherence to high ethical, social, and environmental standards. It works to enhance its members' profitability by offering education, certification, marketing, and cost-saving programs.

JA created the Sales Professional Certification (SPC) program to establish, maintain, and recognize superior standards of knowledge and skill among jewelry sales professionals. For more than a decade, JA's certification programs have validated the talent and proficiency of jewelry industry professionals to national standards. JA certification can advance your career, differentiate your store, and improve your reputation with fine jewelry customers.

The SPC program has two levels:

**JA Certified Sales Professional (CSP)** – This level reflects knowledge and skills generally expected of trained entry-level jewelry sales personnel with about one year's experience.

**JA Certified Senior Sales Professional (CSSP)** – This level reflects moderate to advanced sales knowledge and skills, and includes some areas not tested at the first level.

To qualify for either designation you must be employed by a JA member store, have at least one year of retail jewelry sales experience, and pass the SPC written exam(s). For complete program information contact:



Jewelers of America, Inc.  
Certification Manager  
120 Broadway, Suite 2820  
New York, NY 10271  
Phone: 800-223-0673 / 646-658-0246  
Email: [info@jewelers.org](mailto:info@jewelers.org)  
Website: [www.jewelers.org](http://www.jewelers.org)

DCA and JA share the goal of increasing professionalism throughout the jewelry industry, and both organizations believe education is essential. For these reasons, the DCA curriculum is designed to educate students and offer support to individuals who elect to pursue the goal of professional certification through Jewelers of America.

## **Congratulations!**

*You're on your way to becoming  
Colored Gemstone Certified by DCA!  
There's no Self-Test for this lesson,  
so you can go ahead to Lesson 2.  
Enjoy!*