ACMG
Training and Assessment Program

ACMG Training and Assessment Program
Box 8245
Canmore, AB Canada T1W 2T9
403.679.9181
tap@acmg.ca

The below description of alpine grades was developed by David P. Jones and Kevin McLane for their respective guidebooks *Selkirks South* and *Alpine Select*. These definitions were modified slightly for application in subsequent guidebooks such as the *Rogers Pass Alpine Guide*, *Rockies South*, *Rockies Central*, *Rockies West,* and *The Bugaboos*.

These descriptions can be used as a guideline while building your Alpine Guide program personal experience vitae. Note, that although the D+ grade isn't specifically described, there are many routes in Canadian guidebooks that are given that grade. There list of comparison routes at various grades is included for reference and is not intended to used as a tick list.

ALPINE GRADE DEFINITIONS (Jones and McLane)

F easy (*facile*)
This is an easy climb that has very little technical difficulty on rock (mostly 3rd-class) or snow (slopes to ~ 40°) and steep glaciers requiring minimal route finding. The overall challenge will be low, although total vertical height gain can exceed 1000m.

PD little difficulty (*peu difficile*)
A not very difficult climb. Rock will be mostly 4th-class through low-5th-class (5.3–5.4), while snow slopes may be up to 45°. May require climbing on exposed ridges of rock and snow. Approach, route-finding, and descent are not particularly challenging, and hazards are usually limited.

AD fairly difficult (*assez difficile*)
A fairly difficult climb. Rock climbing is mostly low-5th-class (to 5.4), though the route may include short sections up to 5.6 and 5.7. Steep snow and ice (45° to 50°) may be present. Broken glaciers, knife-edged ridges and easy mixed terrain may be encountered. Route-finding, escape, and descent can provide increased challenge and may be problematic in poor weather. These routes are usually reasonable to descend or downclimb.

D difficult (*difficile*)
A difficult climb will involve rock to mid-5th-class (5.6 to 5.7) and/or very steep snow and ice (to about 55°). Height gain is usually over 500m; however, the route may be short and technically hard for the grade (low 5.9 to 5.10). Climbing is usually sustained and rock may be loose. Route-finding may be challenging; given a choice, most climbers will prefer to descend via easier routes. Climbs at this level of difficulty are demanding and present considerable challenge.

TD very difficult (*très difficile*)
Very difficult routes are generally over 500m in height, with difficulty up to 5.8–5.9, or maybe short and technically hard routes with difficulties to 5.11. There may be sections of easy aid. The route may involve steep, poorly formed or exposed snow (to 65°) and sections of alpine ice at WI3 or WI4 (75° to 90°). Objective hazards may be high, route-finding can be very difficult and escape may not be possible. Descent will require rappelling the route or exiting "over the top". These climbs are very challenging and demanding.

ED 1/2/3 extremely difficult (*extrêmement difficile*)
Extremely difficult climbs may be long (1000m and more) and technically very difficult, or they may be shorter and technically extremely difficult and/or dangerous. Rock climbing will be sustained at 5.8 or harder and may require difficult aid climbing. Snow and ice will be very steep and probably thin, which may require difficult mixed climbing. Some routes may receive an ED grade because of loose rock, but often they are very solid and very hard (5.10–5.11). Route-finding can be difficult, while descents are often long, complicated and technical. Hazards may be very high. Total commitment is required.

ALPINE GRADE COMPARISIONS

Canadian Rockies

North Twin, North Pillar	ED3
Mt. Alberta, North Face	ED3
Howse Peak, Howse of Cards	ED2
Mt. Kitchener, Grand Central Couloir	ED2
Mt. Robson, Infinite Patience	ED1
Mt. Robson, Emperor Ridge	ED1
Mt. Andromeda, Andromeda Strain	ED1
Snow Dome, Slipstream	ED1
Mt. Wilson, Dirty Love	ED1
Mt. Temple, Greenwood–Locke	TD+
Mt. Bryce, North Face	TD+
Mt. Deltaform, Supercouloir	TD
Mt. Edith Cavell, N. Face /Chouinard	TD–
Mt. Patterson, East Ridge	TD–
Mt. Robson, North Face	TD–
Mt. Columbia, North Ridge	TD–
Mt. Andromeda, Shooting Gallery	D+
Deltaform Mtn., Northwest Ridge	D+
Mt. Athabasca, North Face	D+
Mt. Alberta, Japanese Route	D+
Mt. Temple, East Ridge	D
Mt. Robson, Kain Route	D
Mt. Louis, Kain Route	D–
Mt. Fryatt, West Ridge	D–
Mt. Edith Cavell, East Ridge	AD+
Mt. Assiniboine	AD+
Mt. Andromeda, Skyladder	AD+
Mt. Athabasca, North Ridge	AD
Mt. Lefroy, West Face	AD
Mt. Victoria, Southeast Ridge	PD+

British Columbia

Mt. Tiedemann, South Buttress	ED2
Howser Towers, Watchtower	ED2
Combatant Mtn, Skywalk	ED1
Steinbok Peak, Edwards–Spagnut	ED1
Howser Towers, Beckey–Chouinard	TD+
Les Cornes, Springbok Arête	TD+
Slesse Mtn., Northeast Buttress	TD
Mt. Clarke, North Ridge	TD–
Mt. Waddington, Bravo Glacier Rt.	TD–
Adamant Mtn., South Buttress	D+
Snowpatch Spire, Sunshine Crack	D+
Crescent Spire, McTech Arête	D
Mt. Sir Donald, Northwest Ridge	D–
Bugaboo Spire, Northeast Ridge	D–
Nesakwatch Enchainment	D–
Mt. Tantalus, Southeast Spur	AD+
Snowpatch Spire, Southeast Route	AD+
Bugaboo Spire, Kain Ridge	AD–
Mt. Sir Sandford, Northwest Ridge	AD–
Brenta Spire, South Ridge	PD+
Pigeon Spire, West Ridge	PD
Joffre Peak, Southeast Face	PD
Wedge Mtn.; Northeast Ridge	PD

United States

Keeler Needle, Harding Route	TD+
Grand Teton, North Face	D+
Pingora, Northeast Face	D+
Mt. Stuart, North Ridge Complete	D+
Grand Teton, Complete Exum Ridge	D
Mt. Rainier, Liberty Ridge	D
Grand Teton, East Ridge	D–
Mt. Baker, North Ridge	AD
Mt. Whitney, East Face	AD
Forbidden Peak, West Ridge	AD
Pingora, South Buttress	AD
Mt. Rainier, Disappointment Cleaver	PD+
Mt. Shuksan, Fisher Chimneys	PD+