

AFS-Nikkor 17-35 mm f/2.8 ED-IF	5 (F5) 5 (D1) 5 (D1X) 5 (D2X, D200) 4.5-5 (FX: D3) IR: 5 (D1, D2H, D70, S3Pro UVIR)	<p>This is an awesome lens developed with an eye to the digital D1 camera. Click here to see a test shot made with it. Compared to the 20-35 AF, this lens is slightly heavier and balances nicely on all modern Nikon bodies. Its IF construction makes for very fast AF action on the F5 and D1/D1X/D1H cameras. It is a two-ring design with a truly far-out optical formula, including aspherical and ED elements and a front that actually bulges inwards (!) in the centre. The sunshade is fairly anonymous as wide-angle zooms go, too. Filter size at 77 mm follows the new Nikon standard, and there isn't a rotating front. The exterior barrel has a smoother finish than the 20-35, although a hammered surface still is used.</p> <p>Quick shooting with it on an F5 left me with an impression of extreme optical quality. I also checked the lens on a D1 and drew similar conclusions there. Sharpness, contrast, and colour saturation all are superb across the entire focal range. Vignetting in the frame corners is moderate at f/2.8@17 mm and largely disappears at f/4. On the D1/D1X, there is no perceivable fall-off at all at the wide end. At the opposite focal end, negligible fall-off is seen even at f/2.8@35 mm on the F5, and none on D1/D1X. There is some barrel distortion in the wide-angle settings, which however is kept under good control even at 17 mm. By contrast, set at 35 mm the lens exhibits a slight degree of pincushion distortion.</p> <p>Virtually gone is the colour fringing that haunts the AF 20-35 lens. This gives the 17-35 Nikkor a significant advantage over all other similar lenses on the market (all exhibit plentiful of lateral colour aberration towards their shorter end, even the expensive Canon 17-35/2.8 L). This by the way was an improvement necessitated by the D1, which would not have taken the colour fringing of the 20-35 in its stride. The vestiges of colour fringing that may occur is outside the coverage of the lens when mounted on the D1. To put this into perspective for use of the lens on a full-frame 35 mm camera, I had to scrutinise my test shots at 40X magnification to detect the minute traces of residual lateral colour. For all practical and ordinary purposes, this lens is devoid of colour flaws. However, if you shoot close-ups, there will be observable (but slight) blue fringing towards the corners of the image.</p> <p>The 17-35 performs extremely well when shooting into bright light, in fact its performance in this respects surpasses most prime lenses. Flare and ghosting evidently are strictly controlled. I've never used a zoom with this degree of superior flare and ghosting control before. Likely the fancy optical formula and the bizarre front element pay dividends in this respect, too. However, an early report by "Moose" Peterson claims this lens flares easily. His sample may differ from mine, or test conditions may be quite different. Leaving a UV filter on will make the ghosting much more visible so any filter should be removed before shooting into the sun.</p> <p>Curvature of field for the 17-35 was very low, so it is eminently suitable for shooting flat as well as 3D subjects. It is quite uncommon for a wide zoom to perform in this way.</p> <p>A full test of the 17-35 is given here. This review now includes news about production variability of the 17-35.</p> <p>Added after having used this lens professionally for nearly 3 years: A heavily used lens will get more dusty in its innards and accordingly, be more prone to flare and ghosting. I've seen this occurring with my own sample, so be warned. On a more positive note, my 17-35 has taken a lot of beating without any other ill effects. The surface finish seems to stand well up to wear, too.</p>
---	---	---

On the D3, the 17-35 behaves in an exemplary fashion. Only a small amount of vignetting into the extreme corners occurs at the widest end, and stopping down helps mitigate the issue. However, the age of the design is shown by corner sharpness @17mm being less crisp unless you stop down well beyond f/5.6. So I have reduced the rating ever so slightly to cater for this observation.

IR performance: No hot-spots seen with any camera tested so far.

The AFS 17-35 Nikkor is rapidly becoming one of the Nikon legends. You cannot go wrong with this lens.