

Sewing Terminology Cheat Sheet

Your Ultimate Beginners Guide to Sewing Language

By Oke Lawrence | SewingCrafty.com

Applique - A decorative technique where fabric pieces are sewn onto a base fabric.

Armhole - The opening in a garment for the sleeve.

Backstitch - Used to reinforce seams by stitching backward.

Baste - Long, temporary stitches used to hold fabric together.

Bias - A diagonal direction across the fabric, providing stretch.

Bobbin - A small spool holding the lower thread in a sewing machine.

Casing - A tunnel of fabric for inserting elastic or drawstring.

Clipping - Small cuts into seam allowance to ease curved seams.

Cutting Line - Line on a pattern used to cut the fabric.

Dart - A folded and sewn wedge for shaping garments.

Double Needle - Needle with two tips for parallel rows of stitching.

Ease - Extra room in a garment for comfort.

Edge Stitching - Stitching close to the edge for reinforcement.

Fat Quarter - A pre-cut fabric, typically 18"x22", used in quilting.

Facing - A piece inside a garment to finish edges neatly.

Feed Dogs - The teeth under the presser foot that move fabric.

Gathering - A method to create ruffles or fullness.

Grain/Grainline - The direction of threads in fabric.

Hem - The folded and sewn bottom edge of a garment.

Hand Wheel - Manually moves the sewing needle.

Interfacing - A layer to add stiffness to fabric.

Inseam - The length from the crotch to the hem.

Jersey - A stretchy knit fabric used in t-shirts.

Knit Fabric - Stretchy material made by looping yarns.

Lining - An inside layer that adds comfort and structure.

Layout - The arrangement of pattern pieces on fabric.

Muslin - A cotton fabric used to make test garments.

Marking Tools - Tools for transferring pattern details.

Notches - Small marks to align pattern pieces.

Nap - The texture or pile direction on fabric.

Overlock/Serger - Machine that trims and finishes edges.

Pattern - A guide for cutting and sewing a garment.

Presser Foot - Holds fabric in place while sewing.

Pleat - A fabric fold used to create shape.

Quilting - Stitching fabric layers together for design.

Right Side - The visible, finished side of the fabric.

Raw Edge - The unsewn edge of fabric.

Seam - The line where two fabrics are stitched.

Seam Allowance - The distance between seam and edge.

Stay Stitching - Reinforcing stitch to prevent stretching.

Topstitching - Decorative, visible stitching on garments.

Thread Tension - Balance between upper and lower threads.

Twill - A woven fabric with diagonal lines.

Understitching - Stitching to keep facings from showing.

View - Different style options in one pattern.

Woven Fabric - Fabric made by weaving yarns together.

Wrong Side - The reverse side of fabric.

Yard/Yardage - A measure of fabric (36 inches).

Yoke - A panel used for structure, like in jeans or shirts.