



## Basic Glossary of Jewelry Terms

Everyone loves jewelry but jewelry terminology can sometimes sound like a foreign language altogether.

Following is a list of basic jewelry terms that will allow you to better understand the lingo that so many sales associates speak, and next time you're at the store, you will sound like the expert.

**Baguette setting** -- A rectangular-shaped stone with rows of step-like facets. If the baguette's two long sides taper inward, it is called a Tapered baguette. Baguettes in long, thin cut rectangles are often used as enhancements to a larger center stone, or on a watch bezel.

**Bar setting** -- Similar to the channel setting, it is a circular band of diamonds or gemstones that holds each stone in by a long thin bar, shared between two stones.

**Barion cut** -- This has a traditional step-cut crown and a modified brilliant-cut pavilion. A square barion cut diamond has 61 facets, excluding the culet.

**Bearding or girdle fringes** -- The outermost portion of the stone, called the girdle, can develop small cracks that resemble whiskers during the polishing process. The bearding can sometimes be removed, if not too dramatic, with slight re-polishing, and if the weight allows.

**Bezel** -- With a bezel setting, a rim holds the stone and completely surrounds the gem. It is the upper portion above the girdle of a cut stone. Bezels can have straight edges, scalloped edges, or can be molded into any shape to accommodate the stone. A watch bezel is the upper part of the case surrounding the dial. They can be set with diamonds or other gemstones.

**Blemishes** -- The term blemish is used when the diamond has scratches or marks on the external area of the stone.

**Brilliance** -- Liveliness, or sparkle in a stone when light is reflected from the surface and from the total internal reflection of light.

**Brilliant-cut** -- Brilliant cuts are scientifically found to reflect the most light from within the stone, and often are considered to have the most brilliance of all cuts. A round brilliant-cut diamond has 58 facets. Other brilliant cuts include the heart, oval, marquise and pear shaped.

**Cabochon** -- A facet-less style of cutting that produces a smooth surface. They can be in many shapes, including round with high domes to squares.

**Carat** -- Unit of measure of weight of diamonds and gemstones. One carat is equivalent to 200 milligrams. One carat can also be divided into 100 "points." A .75-carat stone is the same as a 75-point or 3/4-carat stone.  
**Certification (or Diamond Grading Reports)** -- There are many recognized gemological

laboratories that can grade your stones for a fee. The most well known is the GIA, Gemological Institute of America.

Channel setting -- Used most frequently for wedding and anniversary bands, a channel setting will set the stones right next to each other with no metal separating them.

Clarity -- A diamond often has natural imperfections, commonly referred to as inclusions, which contribute to its identifying characteristics. Inclusions are found within the diamond, and can be white, black, colorless, or even red or green. Most are undetectable by the human eye, and can only be seen with 10X magnification. Inclusions are ranked on a scale of perfection called clarity.

Cleavage -- A natural area of the diamond where a weak bond holds the atoms together. The gem will be split along these planes by the cutter.

Cluster setting -- This setting surrounds a larger center stone with several smaller stones. It is designed to create a beautiful larger ring from many smaller stones.

Color -- Diamonds are graded on a color scale established by the Gemological Institute of America (GIA). Fancy colors refer to diamonds with hues like pink, blue, green, yellow, and very rarely red. Fancy colors are not included in this color scale and are considered extremely rare.

Crown -- This is the upper portion or the top of a diamond.

Culet -- The bottom point of the diamond. It may be polished in some stones. Sometimes, a cutter may choose to make the culet a surface instead of a point.

Cushion cut -- A mixed-cut diamond shaped like a square pillow.

Cut -- Cut refers to the angles and proportions a skilled craftsman creates in transforming a rough diamond into a polished diamond. Based on scientific formulas, a well-cut diamond will internally reflect light from one mirror-like facet to another and, disperse and reflect it through the top of the stone. This results in a display of brilliance and fire. Diamonds that are cut too deep or too shallow lose or leak light through the side or bottom, resulting in less brilliance, and ultimately value.

Cutting style -- Cutting styles are different than diamond shapes. The simplest and most common way to explain cutting style is to categorize it into the following three basic types: Step-cut, Brilliant-cut and Mixed-cut.

Deep cut -- When a diamond is cut too deep, it will lose or leak light through the side or bottom. This results in less brilliance and value.

Diamond -- A diamond is the hardest known natural substance. It is crystallized carbon. Diamonds are mined in their rough form and then, cut and polished to reveal their brilliance.

Diamond Grading Reports -- There are many recognized gemological laboratories that can grade your diamond for a fee. The most well known is the GIA, Gemological Institute of America.

Dispersion -- When light enters a diamond it reflects off the facets and the angles cut into the stone. This distribution of light is known as dispersion, or the display of the spectral colors.

Emerald shape -- A rectangular or square-shaped cut-cornered diamond. A form of step cutting, this cut is favored for diamonds and emeralds, as well as many other stones, when the principle purpose is to enhance color rather than brilliancy. It is also sometimes used to emphasize the absence of color in diamonds.

Facet -- Any flat polished surface of a diamond or gemstone. This style of cutting gives the stone many small faces at varying angles to one another. The placement, angle and shape of each facet are carefully planned and executed to show the stone's inherent beauty, fire, color, and brilliance to the fullest advantage.

Fancy Cut -- A diamond cut other than round -- such as baguette, emerald, pear, marquise, square, oval, heart, etc.

Fracture Filling -- A process that injects a substance into a diamond to hide inclusions.

Feather -- A type of inclusion or flaw within a diamond. It is described often as a small crack or fissure.

Finish -- Describes the exterior of the diamond. If a diamond is well polished, it has a very good finish.

Fire -- Often a term used instead of "dispersion," it is the variety and intensity of rainbow colors seen when light is reflected from a diamond.

Flat-top setting -- Like the Gypsy setting, this setting has a band that is one continuous piece that gets thicker at the top. A flat-top setting grows broader at the top so that a faceted stone can be inserted into the ring at the broadest part. The stone is held in place by metal chips attached at the stone's girdle.

Fluorescence -- When exposed to ultraviolet light, a diamond may exhibit a more whitish, yellowish or bluish tint, which may imply that the diamond has a property called fluorescence. The untrained eye can rarely see the effects of fluorescence. Diamond grading reports often state whether a diamond has fluorescent properties. Fluorescence is not considered a grading factor, only a characteristic of that particular diamond. Gemological Institute of America (GIA) -- A nonprofit teaching institute considered the standard-bearer in the grading of diamonds and colored gemstones.

Girdle -- The outer edge of a cut stone, the dividing line between the crown and the pavilion. Sometimes the girdle is polished and sometimes it is unpolished. Ideally the width of the girdle should be even and proportional to the cut of the stone.

Growth or grain lines -- These can be considered internal flaws, and can often be seen only by rotating the diamond very slowly. They can appear and disappear almost instantaneously. They appear as small lines or planes within the diamond.

Gypsy setting -- The Gypsy setting is predominantly used for men's jewelry. The band is one continuous piece that gets thicker at the top. The top is dome shaped and the stone is inserted in the middle.

Hardness -- Resistance a material offers to scratching or abrasion. Generally measured using the MOHS scale.

Inclusion -- "Internal characteristics" apparent to a trained or professional eye at 10x magnification. Inclusions can be bubbles, crystals, carbon spots, feathers, clouds, pinpoints, or other impurities, or even cracks and abrasions. They are what make a diamond so unique, as a fingerprint does for a person.

Illusion setting -- This setting is more intricate than others in that it surrounds the stone to make it appear larger.

Loupe -- Any small magnifying glass mounted for hand use, to hold up to the eye socket or attach to a pair of glasses.

Luster -- The hue and depth of reflection from pearls, opals or other opaque stones.

Marquise shape -- A double-pointed, boat-shaped stone that is long and thin with gently curved sides coming to a point on either end. Marquise is part of the brilliant-cut family; ideally cut it has 58 facets.

Mixed-cut -- This cut has both step-cut and brilliant-cut facets. Mixed cuts combine the beauty of the emerald cut with the sparkle of the brilliant cut.

MOHS Scale -- A scale of hardness with numbers from one to ten assigned to ten minerals of increasing hardness from talc to diamonds.

Mele -- Small, usually round diamonds less than .10 carats in size.

Natural -- A diamond characteristic that is part of the surface of a polished diamond that was not cut or polished during the cutting process.

Oiling -- This technique is commonly used on emeralds. The purpose of this technique is for the oil to fill the fine cracks that weaken the green color. The oil fills the cracks making them "disappear" and thereby improving the color.

Pave -- A type of setting where a number of small stones are set together. It literally means paved with diamonds.

Pavilion -- Bottom portion of the stone, under the girdle, measuring to the culet. It is the area below the girdle consisting of 23 facets in the round-brilliant-cut diamond.

Pear shape -- Term used to describe any diamond whose girdle outline resembles a pear shape. Ideally cut pear shapes have 58 facets.

Pinpoint -- An inclusion within a diamond. A gathering of pinpoints is called a "cluster" or "cloud." A cloud or cluster can appear as a hazy area in the diamond, a pinpoint appears as a dot.

Point -- Term meaning one-hundredth of a carat -- approximately the size of one-half a grain of sand.

Polish -- Indicates the care taken by the cutter in shaping and faceting the rough stone into a finished and polished diamond.

Poor cut -- A poorly cut diamond can be either cut too deep or too shallow. A deep or shallow cut diamond will lose or leak light through the side or bottom. This results in less brilliance and value.

Princess cut -- A square or sometimes rectangular-shaped modified brilliant-cut diamond.

Prong or claw setting -- The metal tip or bead that actually touches the stone and holds it into place. This setting usually consists of four or six claws that cradle the stone. Because this setting allows the maximum amount of light to enter a stone from all angles, it sometimes can make a diamond appear larger and more brilliant than its actual weight. This setting can also hold larger diamonds more securely.

Proportion -- The proportions of a diamond are very important, so that the maximum amount of light be reflected off and out of a stone. Proportion is the relationship between the angles of the facets of the crown and pavilion.

Radiant cut -- A rectangular or square shaped diamond with step-cut and scissor-cut on the crown, and a brilliant-cut on the pavilion.

Refraction -- The bending of light rays as they pass through a diamond or gemstone.

Rough -- Uncut diamonds or gemstones.

Scintillation -- When light reflects from a diamond, the sparkling flashes that come from the facets of the gem are known as scintillation.

Shallow cut -- When a diamond is cut too shallow, it will lose or leak light through the side or bottom. This results in less brilliance and value.

Shape -- Form or appearance of a diamond; i.e.: whether the diamond is round, triangular, square, marquise, pear, oval or heart-shaped.

Solitaire -- A single diamond or stone set by itself in mounting.

Step cut -- With rows of facets that resemble the steps of a staircase. The emerald cut and the baguette are examples of the step cut.

Symmetry -- Symmetry is the arrangement of the facets and finished angles created by the diamond cutter. Excellent symmetry of a well-cut and well-proportioned diamond can have a great effect on the diamond's brilliance and fire. Grading reports will often state the diamond's symmetry in terms Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, or Poor.

Table -- The top surface of a cut diamond or gemstone.

Table facet -- This is the largest facet of a diamond. It is located on the top of the diamond. The table facet is sometimes referred to as the "face."

Table spread -- Term used to describe the width of the table facet, often expressed as a percentage of the total width of the stone.

Tension setting -- A diamond is held in place by the pressure of the band's metal, which is designed to "squeeze" the stone.

Trillion shape -- Is a triangular-shaped diamond with 50 facets. Trillions are commonly used as side-stones.

Well cut - Well-cut proportions ensure the maximum compromise between fire and brilliance. When light enters a properly cut diamond, it is reflected from facet to facet, and then back up through the top, exhibiting maximum brilliance, fire and sparkle.