

Glossary of Textile Terms

- Bias** – Diagonal direction on a woven fabric (45° to warp and weft). Fabrics will elongate/stretch the most when pulled in this direction and will also exhibit their best draping qualities when cut on the bias. However, a garment cut on the bias can stretch and change length/shape very easily.
- Count** – An expression of size of thread based on the relation between length and weight.
- Denier** – unit of measurement expressing the density of a continuous filament thread based on weight in relation to a fixed length
- Draft** – diagram for setting up the weave pattern on a loom
- EPI (ends per inch)** – Number of warp threads per inch of woven fabric
- Fabric** – General term for any manufactured cloth-like material made for use in clothing, hangings, and coverings. It applies equally to woven and non-woven materials.
- Face** – Right side of a textile or weave.
- Fiber** – Any substance composed of thread-like tissue whether animal, vegetable, or mineral, especially when it is capable of being spun or woven.
- Fragment** – A textile that may have one selvage and many have one or more pattern repeats, but is not the complete width with both selvages present.
- Ground** – The field or background of the pattern.
- Length** – A textile of indeterminate length that has both selvages and includes at least one complete pattern repeat.
- Pile** – Supplementary threads projecting from a ground fabric.
- Pilling** – The formation of small balls of fibers called pills on the surface of a fabric.
- Ply** – The twist that makes a plied yarn / to make a thicker yarn by twisting together two or more ends.
- PPI (picks per inch)** – Number of weft threads per inch of woven fabric.
- Repeat** – The pattern unit, or weave unit, or both, used to produce a repeating pattern. The term applies to all patterning procedures: weaving, knitting, printing, etc.
- Reverse** – The back or wrong side of a textile.
- Selvedge/selvage** – The longitudinal edge of a textile closed by weft loops, often distinguished from the rest of the fabric by warp ends differing from those in the body of the textile and sometimes by a change in the binding.
- Textile** – Specifically, a textile is a *woven* fabric. In modern usage, the term has a wider application.

Thread – A continuous strand, single or compound, made from any fiber or filament by reeling, spinning, twisting, or throwing. In a general sense, any thread-like filament or fiber. A thread formed of a single strand is called a **single** or an **end**. A thread formed of two or more singles twisted together is a **plied thread**.

Thread count – The number of warp ends or picks per unit of measure.

Twist – The twist of a thread around its axis resulting from spinning, twisting, throwing, or plying. The direction of the twist is indicated by the letter “S” or “Z”.

Warp – The longitudinal threads of a textile; those that are arranged on the loom. A single thread of warp is called an end.

Weft – The transverse threads of a textile; those that are passed through the openings in the warp.

Weighting – The addition of metallic salts to silk to increase its weight and make it stiffer.

Width – A textile with both selvages, which may or may not have one complete pattern repeat.

Yarn – A term used to designate thread prepared for weaving or knitting.

Some more comprehensive cataloging and terminology resources:

Art & Architecture Thesaurus Online (Costume and Textile Hierarchies) by The Getty Research Institute

<http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATHierarchy?find=Costume&logic=AND¬e=&page=1&subjectid=300209261>

<http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATServlet?english=N&find=Textile&logic=AND&page=1¬e=>

Encyclopedia of Textiles by Judith Jerde

Fabric Science (Fifth Edition) by Joseph J. Pizzuto and revised by Arthur Price and Allen C. Cohen

Fairchild's Dictionary of Fashion (Second Edition, Revised) by Charlotte Mankey Calasibetta, Ph.D

Fairchild's Dictionary of Textiles (7th Edition) by Phyllis G. Tortora and Robert S. Merkel

Fashion Terms and Styles for Women's Garments by Ardis W. Koester and Nancy O. Bryant of Oregon State University

<https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/24654/ECNO1382.pdf?sequence=1>

Vocabulary of Basic Terms for Cataloguing Costume by the ICOM International Committee for the Museums and Collections of Costume

http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/assets/thesaurus_icombts/vbt00e.htm?phpMyAdmin=OYNyINPdn3sQmoXugKH1gcCLSW0

Warp and Weft: A Dictionary of Textile Terms by Dorothy K. Burnham