

GLOSSARY OF SPINNING TERMS

- batts** - carded hunks of fiber as it comes off of a drumcarder
- bench** – also called the table. The table of the spinning wheel on which the wheel and spinning mechanism are mounted
- bobbin** – the shaft of the spool onto which the spun yarn is wound on a spinning wheel
- carders** – (or cards) a pair of brushes used to smooth and straighten fibers for spinning
- comb** - used to process long stapled wool for worsted spinning
- crimp** - amount of curl in a lock of fleece; fine wool is very crimpy
- distaff** – a staff that holds the flax or wool fibers which are drawn from as the spinner needs them when spinning. A distaff can be attached to a belt, mounted on the bench of a spinning wheel, or free-standing.
- draft** - the pulling out of fibers to allow only a certain amount of the fiber to twist into thread
- drafting triangle** – the space between the spun yarn and the fibers being drawn out
- drive band** – the cord carrying the power from the large wheel to the spindle or bobbin/pulley
- drop spindle** – (handspindle) a stick with a weighted whorl that is used to twist fibers into thread
- ewe** – a mature female sheep
- fiber** – the unspun hair/wool/plant material (as opposed to the thread, which is already spun)
- fleece** – the entire coat of wool off of a sheep
- flyer** – the u-shaped device on a treadle spinning wheel that twists the yarn
- footman** – the straight piece of wood or wire that connects the treadle to the axle/crank of a spinning wheel
- grease wool** – (or “wool in the grease”) the unwashed wool as it comes off of a sheep
- hank** – a 560-yard long skein of wool, usually wound on a niddy-noddy or reel
- knot** – a 40-yard strand skein of yarn wound on a reel or a niddy-noddy that measures 2 yards in circumference= 80 yards
- maidens** – (or sisters) two upright pieces of wood that hold the spinning apparatus in a horizontal position.
- Mother-of-all** – usually, the entire spinning mechanism on a spinning wheel: maidens, flyer and bobbin
- niddy-noddy** - double-headed tool used in skeining spun yarn
- noils** - short fibers removed when combing the fleece; can be mixed with other wool and carded and spun
- orifice** – the opening or eye of the spindle on a treadle spinning wheel
- pencil roving** – thinner strips of roving roughly the diameter of a pencil
- plying** - winding two or more yarns together; must be done in the opposite direction to that in which they were spun
- rolag** - finger sized roll of carded wool, ready for spinning to make woolen yarn
- roving** - long tubes of carded wool, produced by carding machines
- S-twist** – yarn spun with a counterclockwise twist
- scour** – to wash or clean fibers or spun yarns
- skeining** - winding yarn off the spindle
- skirted fleece** – grease wool that has had the dirty edges removed all the way around
- sliver** – strips of batts in one continuous strip
- slub** – the flaw or fat place in the yarn (sometimes intentionally spun in for novelty yarns.)
Note: the length of a slub cannot be longer than the staple of a fiber

spindle pulley – the small grooved whorl that carries the drive band connecting the spindle to the drive wheel

staple - length of a lock of fleece or a single fiber

strick – a bundle of flax prepared for spinning after the tow has been removed (long fibers only)

tops - long fibers straightened by combing

tow – the short fibers left after flax is combed out

treadle – the foot pedal that turns the main wheel, or the process of pushing the pedal of the main wheel

whorl – the weighted part of a dropspindle that helps it to spin. Also the spindle pulley that regulates the speed of a spinning wheel spindle

woolen - yarns made from short-stapled wool; has a soft finish and felts well

worsted - made from long-stapled wool where the fibers are combed lengthwise and spun from cut end to tip in apparel-type fashion; has a firm finish and does not usually felt (i.e. most tweeds, suit or jacket material)

Z or S twist - yarn spun with a clockwise spin with Z twist