

Beading Glossary A to J

This Beading Glossary provides a wealth of information about popular beading and jewellery making terms and terminology. This beading glossary combines imagery to great effect alongside succinct easily understood definitions, with links through to more in-depth content and bead resources where the topic merits this. It can be used as an bead A to Z reference guide to dip into as required, or as a beading and jewellery guide for beginners to help broaden their beading and jewellery making knowledge. It is particularly effective when used alongside our wider collection of instructional [Guides](#), [Histories](#), [Theories and Tutorials](#) as well as in conjunction with our more specialist beading glossaries covering [Gemstones](#) and [Venetian Glass Making Processes](#).

A

ABALONE

These edible sea creatures are members of a large class of molluscs that have one-piece shells with an iridescent interior. These shells have a low and open spiral structure, and are characterized by several open respiratory pores in a row near the shell's outer edge. The thick inner layer of the shell is composed of a dichroic substance called nacre or mother-of-pearl, which in many species is highly iridescent, giving rise to a range of strong and changeable colors, making it ideal for jewellery and other decorative objects. This [iridescent](#) nacre varies in colour from silvery white, to pink, red and green-red, through to deep blues, greens and purples. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of Paua and Red Abalone.

ACCENT BEAD

The bead that forms the focus for a piece of jewellery usually through contrast, for example it will be an unusual shape, of a different colour, or differing in pattern or texture.

ACID WASHED

Use of an acid to create a [Matte](#) finish on glass or other materials.

ACRYLIC

A man-made resin used to make moulded plastic beads or applied to beads to give them colour or lustre. Due to improvements in technology acrylic beads they are an economical option to glass and crystal being durable and extremely light. Click to view a selection of our [Acrylic Beads](#)



Above are some examples of typical acrylic beads including faceted, starflake, pony and star.

AFRICAN TRADE

Sometimes called Slave Beads, were decorative beads used between the 16th and 20th centuries as a currency to exchange

for goods, services and slaves. Made mostly by Venetian merchants they were used to ease the passage of European explorers and traders mainly across the African continents. Trade beads are also found in the United States and Canada, and throughout Latin America. The production of trade beads became so popular that literally tons of beads were used for this purpose with the beads used as ballast in ships for the outbound trip. The beads and other trade items were then exchanged for human cargo as well as ivory, gold and other goods desired in Europe and around the world. In part the success of this form of currency can be attributed to the high intrinsic value African people placed upon decorative items. Africans often used beads for currency and wealth storage with social status determined by the quality, quantity and style of jewellery worn. This created a high demand for trade beads in Africa. To this end the beads were usually large, bright, colourful and often cylindrical in shape. To learn more about the European glass industries role in this trade read our [History of Venetian Glass](#).



Above are two Venetian glass African Trade beads from the early 1900s – a feathered elbow bead and a millefiori bead.

AGATE

Is a microcrystalline variety of quartz characterised by its fineness of grain and brightness and range of colours. Agates are normally associated with volcanic rocks but can also be found in certain metamorphic rocks. Agates have been used in jewellery making since ancient times with archeological finds in Crete placing its use to the Bronze Age. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of Banded, Blue Lace, Condor (Argentina), Dendritic (Kazakhstan), Fire, Green, Honey Brush, Moss, Polka Dot, Red, Rosette and Scottish Agates.

AIKO

Cylinder beads made by Toho in Japan that are precision made to be consistent in size and shape. LEarn more in our [Guide to Seed Beads](#)



Above is a run of Toho Aiko beads in Dark Amethyst.

ALABASTER BEADS

A form of **Gypsum** that is soft enough to be hand carved into beads, jewellery, or more ambitiously statues.

ALLOY

A mixture made from the combination of two or more metallic elements or metallic and nonmetallic elements usually fused together or dissolving into each other when molten. **Brass**, **White Gold**, **Sterling Silver** and **Pewter** are examples of alloys with, for example, brass being an alloy of zinc and copper.

ALUMINIUM OXIDE

A hard abrasive available in various grades and grain sizes for use in jewellery making.

AMAZONITE

Is a green variety of microcline feldspar and is found in coarse granite or pegmatite. It is mostly opaque and derives its name from deposits originally found in the Amazon. It is often found with white, yellow or grey inclusions and a silky luster or silvery sheen. Colors are blue-green, pale green. These stones can be found in Brazil, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Namibia, Russia, United States and Zimbabwe. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of Chinese, Pale Green (with grey inclusions), and Russian Amazonite.

AMBER

Fossilised tree sap resin that is cut and polished and used as a gemstone. It is typically golden brown in colour with translucent qualities. It is also a descriptive term relating to the colour of amber. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of Baltic, Black Sarawak (Borneo), Ciapas (Mexico), Dominican Blue, Golling (Austria), Lee Creek (USA), New Jersey (USA) and Sabah (Borneo) Ambers.

AMETHYST

A form of quartz, this semi precious stone has a purple translucent appearance created by the presence of iron and manganese when it was forming. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of African, Brazilian and Deep Purple coloured Amethyst.

ANKLETS

An ornament of gold, silver or other material worn around the ankle in the same manner as a bracelet on a wrist.

ANNEALING

Is the process of reheating a material and then cooling it slowly to make it stronger and more pliable. Examples of annealing would be the strengthening of metal wire whilst in turn making it easier to work with, and preventing lampwork beads from shattering.

ANTIQUÉ BEADS

Like **Vintage Beads** this is a subjective description used to indicate the age of an item. Strictly speaking an antique is an item over 100 years old but is a term that can also be used to describe styles and materials from another era such as 1930s Bakelite, Victorian cut beads, Native American beadwork, etc. Since this gives these beads a certain rarity, they are often sought out by designers wanting to create a unique one-of-a-kind piece you won't find anywhere else. Click to view a selection of our **Antique and Vintage**.

APATITE

Is a group of phosphate minerals found in sedimentary rocks. Apatite is the defining mineral for 5 on **Mohs Scale of Hardness** and occurs in colourless, yellow, blue, violet or green. As a gemstone their use is infrequent but good transparent stones of clean colour when faceted correctly can be bright, vitreous and strongly coloured. Usually they are cut as cabochons providing a cats eye effect. Read more in our **Gemstones & Minerals Glossary**



Above are examples of Asparagus Stone (Spanish), Blue, Cats Eye and Violet Apatite.

APPLIQUE

The art of sewing beads onto leather or fabric

AQUAMARINE

This gemstone is named after its resemblance to seawater with its coloration created by iron. Aquamarine is a hard gemstone, which makes it an excellent choice for jewellery that will be worn frequently. However, it should be stored in a dark place as it can become paler when exposed to sunlight. Colours are light to dark blue, blue green. These stones can be found in major deposits in Brazil. They are also found in Australia, China, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nigeria, the United States, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Read more in our **Gemstones & Minerals Glossary**



Above is an example of Light Blue Aquamarine.

ARAGONITE

Is a form of calcium carbonate, (like Coral or Marble), and is named after Molina de Aragon, Spain, where it was first found in 1790. It is transparent to translucent and is usually colourless or white when pure, but impurities can bring about shades of yellow, blue, pink or green. Read more in our **Gemstones & Minerals Glossary**



Above are examples of Blue, Peruvian Striped and Orange Aragonite.

AURORA BOREALIS (AB)

This is a micro-thin layer of metal giving a rainbow **iridescent** finish to a bead. First developed for use on crystal by Swarovski when working in association with the fashion designer, Christian Dior, in 1956. Now applied widely (not just by Swarovski) and it is extremely popular. This is a durable finish as the metal is permanently bonded with the glass.



Above is a Black Diamond Round Fire Polished Czech Glass Beads with Aurora Borealis finish.

AUGHT

Unit of measurement for **Seed Beads**. It is usually denoted by a number followed by a slash and a zero or a degree sign (e.g. 11/0 or 11°). The higher the first number, the smaller the bead. To learn more about Seed Beads and Seed Bead sizing read our [Guide To Seed Beads](#)

AVENTURINA

Is a glass paste composed of very fine copper flakes or powder which is used to decorate glass beads or to simply add sparkle. This technique originated in Venice in the 15th century but the powder is used in both genuine Murano glass and by many of its imitators. Learn more in our [Glossary Of Venetian Glass](#)



Above is an example of applied Aventurina decoration on a vintage orange and black pinched nugget bead.

AVENTURINE

This gemstone is a form of **Chalcedony** that contains small mineral inclusions. These additional materials, usually mica or iron oxide, give the stone a glistening effect. Aventurine's granular appearance and particular translucence are its most distinctive characteristics. It is also called aventurine quartz. It is usually dark green but it also comes in reddish-brown and golden brown. These stones can be found in Austria, Brazil, India, Russia and Tanzania. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of Blue, Green and Red Aventurine.

AZURITE

Is a soft, deep blue copper mineral produced by weathering of copper ore deposits. It usually occurs with green Malachite, which may form green stains or specks on Azurite crystals or aggregates. The two minerals sometimes occur banded together, forming what is called Azure Malachite. A rarer Azurite mixture, known as Bluebird, is Azurite mixed with dark red

Cuprite. Azurite is used for beads and as jewellery but due to its softness and tendency to lose its deep blue colour as it weathers its uses are limited. Heating also destroys azurite easily, so all mounting of azurite specimens must be done at room temperature. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Azurite with small [Malachite](#) inclusions.

B

BACK STITCH

A basic stitch used to apply beads to fabric. This stitch can be used to secure each bead in turn, every other bead, every third bead and onwards depending on the resilience required for the garment or design.

BAGUETTE

A rectangular shaped small diamond or gemstone, usually used as the centre piece of a ring or used repeatedly to form a bracelet.



Above is an example of a Baguette cut diamond.

BAIL

A jewellery finding that is used to connect and position a pendant onto a necklace using clips, glue or a ring embedded in the pendant itself.



Above is an example of a pair of bronze finish metal Bails.

BAKELITE

A hard mouldable plastic invented by Leo Baekeland in 1909, which helped to define the jewellery of the 1930s, whilst remaining highly collectable to the present day. Not to be confused with Catalin which came later in the 1930s, was made by a rival company, and had a far wider range of colours.



Above are two examples of decorative Bakelite products namely a green and gold dog brooch and a typical root beer coloured barrel bead.

BAROQUE BEADS

An irregularly shaped bead. Often a term applied to [Pearls](#), but it can be applied to any bead type.



Above is an example of a baroque bead in the form of an emerald green transparent pressed glass Czech bead.

BARREL BEADS

Not too surprisingly are barrel shaped beads that can be made of any material such as glass, metal, plastic or wood.



Above is an example of a handmade horn barrel bead.

BARREL CLASP

A [Clasp](#) made of two parts that screw together to form a barrel shape. Usually used to secure necklaces. They are available in most metallic finishes as well as ivory, black and Vintage.



Above is an example of a barrel clasp in a silver finish.

BASE METAL

Any metal other than gold, silver or platinum – which are all considered [Precious Metals](#).

BAUBLE

A decorative piece of inexpensive jewellery.

BEADS

A small pierced object, made of natural or man-made materials, that can be strung onto thread or wire for jewellery.

BEAD BOARDS

Useful to have for planning out jewellery designs ahead of stringing. They come in different sizes, but all have grooves into which you place your beads and components so that you can try out layouts. Some have multiple grooves so that you can plan multi-stranded items. Around the outside of the grooves are measurements to help you determine the length of the finished piece. Click to view our selection of [Bead Boards](#)



Above is a Beadalon bead board. The boards come in a number of different sizes to allow for large and small jewellery stringing projects.

BEAD CAPS

A pair of these can 'top and tail' a bead. They are shaped to fit round a bead, so are generally domed in shape. Bead Caps can be purely decorative, serving to off-set a bead, but can also help cover up a large hole giving a neater finish. Click to view a selection of our new and vintage [Bead Caps](#).



Above is an example of a vintage silver plated bead cap with Art Nouveau like detailing.

BEAD CROCHET

Using beads on crochet thread to slide them into the design as the crochet progresses

BEAD EMBROIDERY

A technique for adding beads to fabric using traditional embroidery stitches, some of which are detailed in this glossary.

BEAD KNITTING

Knitting beads into fabric at certain regular points in a design

BEAD LOOMS

A small frame that can be strung with warp threads so that a beaded weft can be used to create a piece of bead weaving.



Above is an example of a table top Bead Loom.

BEAD MATS

Make life easier and stop those errant beads from rolling away! A [Bead Mat](#) can be a piece of towel or fleece material that has enough pile to its surface to prevent speedy rolling. A bead mat will also protect your work surface.

BEAD THREADS

Bead threads are specifically designed to be strong and stretch resistant. Synthetic fibres reduce the risk of fraying or rotting. Sometimes they are treated with a coating to reduce the slippage of knots. Click to view a selection of our [Beading Threads](#) or read our [Guide To Cords Threads And Wires](#)



Above are three rolls of Nymo Size D bead thread.

BEAD TIPS

A metal [Finding](#) used to hide string knots. See also [Calotte](#).



Above are some gold-plated metal Calottes.

BEADED BEADS

A bead constructed of small beads such as Seed Beads or crystals, stitched together to form a three-dimensional shape.



Above is an example of a Beaded Bead using Peyote stitch and Seed Beads.

BEADING CONES

Are used to give a professional finish to the ends of a multi-stranded necklace. The metal cone covers and contains the knotted strand ends.

BEADING NEEDLES

These are essential if you are working with any type of supple thread. English hard needles have an eye no wider than the shank of the needle so they are very slim and will pass through the smallest of holes. Collapsible or large eye needles are easier to thread and they reshape as they pass through the bead. The higher the number of the needle, the finer it will be. The longer needles will curve when you use them, but many beaders prefer them this way as it makes them more dexterous! Read our guide to [Beading Needles](#) or view our John James and Beadalon needle stock [here](#).



Above is an example of a mixed size pack of John James Hard English Beading Needles.

BEADING TWEEZERS

Useful for handling tiny [Seed Beads](#) and unpicking knots in stringing materials.



Above is an example of a pair of fibre tipped Beadalon beading tweezers.

BEADING WIRE

Very fine wires twisted together and covered with a smooth coating. Tiger Tail is the common name of a beading wire made up of 7 strands of wire, but also available are wires made from 19 and 49 strands, these have better drape than the 7 strand. All have good strength, but can deform if jewellery is not looked after when stored. Beading wire will not knot, so you will need to use a crimp bead to finish designs or to space beads. Click to view a selection of our [Beading Wires](#) or read our [Guide To Cords Threads And Wires](#)



Above is an example of Olivine Tiger Tail Beading Wire 0.38mm by 80 metres.

BEAD WEAVING

Brings weaving techniques to beading allowing the creation of accessories, jewellery, and artworks. Weaving can be done on a [Loom](#) or with a needle and thread, otherwise known as off loom.

BEADWORK

The header term for the art of making jewellery or decorative items using beads

BEESWAX

A natural wax which in beading is primarily used to condition beading thread to make it easier to work with. Because it is sticky it is particularly useful when using multiple threads reducing the need to reposition the needle when thread is doubled up. It should be used sparingly so as not to clog the opening in smaller sized beads reducing the number of passes possible.



Above is a block of beeswax used to condition beading thread.

BEGGAR BEADS

Large, irregular or [Baroque](#) semi-precious stone beads usually made from [Agate](#). They are so called because it was believed that Agate was an attractor of wealth. The necklaces were worn by the beggars to attract alms.

BELL CAPS

Performs exactly the same function as [Bead Caps](#) above but are bell shaped. Also known as [End Caps](#)



Above is an example of a gold coloured Bell Cap.

BENT CHAIN NOSED PLIERS

Are useful for general wire work, holding, and especially when working for prolonged periods of time for example when making [Chain Maille](#). The tips are bent so that the users wrists are at a comfortable working angle.



Above is an example of a pair of Beadalon Bent Chain Nose Pliers.

BEZEL

A type of setting, usually made of metal, used to encircling and secure a stone or [Cabochon](#)

BICONE BEADS

An extremely popular bead shape – you cannot escape from crystals in this shape! Bicones resemble two cones stuck together flat end to flat end, and they can be faceted or gently rounded.



Above is an example of some gold-plated metallised acrylic Bicone Beads.

BIRTHSTONES

[Semi-precious](#) and precious stones assigned to each month or zodiac sign, purported to enhance qualities in the wearer or bring good fortune or health. There are several lists of 'official' birthstones and these vary. The birthstones list that Big Bead Little Bead uses is that of the National Association of Goldsmiths of Great Britain, created in 1937. On it are both precious and semi-precious stones, as each month has an association with a gemstone and a mineral. Go to our [Guide To Birthstones](#) for this list as well as the American version..

BLOODSTONE

This is an opaque, green, spotted variety of [Chalcedony](#). Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are two variations of Bloodstone.

BOHEMIAN GLASS

Is now a nostalgic name for glass sourced from the Czech republic. Historically this Eastern European region was named Bohemia and it was here that glassmaking grew into an art form in the late 1700s. To learn more read our [History Of Czech Glass Beads](#)

BRACELETS

An ornamental chain worn about the wrist, arm or ankle. Bracelet length will vary according to the style and the dimensions of the wearer. To work out the length of a bracelet, measure the circumference of the wrist and add 1.5 cm, then subtract the length of the closure method chosen. Make sure the bracelet is not too slack on the wrist or else it could slip off. To see how many of a particular sized bead are needed for a bracelet use our handy [Bead Calculator Tool](#).

BRASS

A metal produced from varying proportions of copper and zinc with different alloy formulas producing different brass colours and levels of ductility or workability.

BRICK STITCH or COMANCHE STITCH

Refers to the stitch in which **Seed Beads** are sewn together to resemble the spacing of a brick wall.

BRILLIANCE

In reference to a gem, refers to the brightness of the stone, which is related to the surface polish and the internal reflection of light from the back facets.

BRIOLETTES

Pear or tear shaped beads or gemstones typically used for drop earrings. They can be faceted or smooth.



Above is an example of a Preciosa Crystal Briolette.

BRONZE

An [Alloy](#) of copper and tin in various proportions, sometimes with small traces of other metals added.

BRONZITE

A brown gemstone of the pyroxene mineral family. The iron like substance creates a metallic bronze like sheen on the surface of the gemstone. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Bronzite.

BUGLE BEADS

Short thin tubes of glass. Made by drawing out a long tube of glass and then cutting it into shorter lengths. Good for shine and swing. Think fringing on flappers' dresses. Read our [Guide To Bugle Beads](#) or view a selection of our [Bugle Beads](#).



Above are a number of hexagonally faceted vintage emerald glass Bugle Beads from the 1920s.

BULLION

A length of wire worked over a thread end to produce a tight 'Spring' thereby providing added protection and a professional finish. See also [French Wire](#).

C

CABOCHON

A flat backed domed or faceted bead that is usually applied using glue to a setting or woven into position. As with normal beads they come in a great variety of shapes, sizes, materials, and finishes.

CALCITE

Calcite is an anhydrous carbonate, and one of the most widely distributed minerals on the Earth's surface. It is also the defining mineral for 3 on [Mohs Scale of Hardness](#). Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of Blue, Golden, Mangano and Yellow Calcite.

CALIPERS or CALLIPERS

A tool or instrument used to precisely measure the dimension of small objects such as beads. In beading they are usually in the form of a graduated ruler with one sliding jaw and one that is stationary allowing measurements to be taken precisely from the ruler.



Above is an example of a set of brass Calipers.

CALOTTES

Also known as a **Bead Tip**, **Clam Shell** or **Knot Cup**. Small metal finding used to hide the method of ending a strand. Two halves of a hollow sphere encase a knot or crimp thereby giving the appearance of a neat end. [Calottes](#) can be simple or decorative.



Above are some gold-plated metal Calottes.

CAMEO

Traditionally, cameos are made from shell or gemstone. The surface is carved so that the design (perhaps a head and shoulders portrait) is raised and of a different colour to the background. Modern cameos are often made of plastic or resin.



Above is an example of a Cameo charm.

CANDY GLASS BEADS

See [Furnace Glass Beads](#)

CANE GLASS BEADS

See [Furnace Glass Beads](#)

CARAT

A unit of weight in part used to determine the relative value of precious stones. One carat equals one fifth of a gram.

CARNELIAN or CORNELIAN

Is gemstone from the quartz family. It is a warm reddish orange or brown colour. These stones can be found in Brazil, India, and Uruguay. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Carnelian.

CAT'S EYE BEADS

Also known as **Fibre Optic Beads**. These glass beads are called cat's eye beads because of the **iridescent** white streak that glows from the middle and resembles a light-reflecting cat's eye. This is due to light refraction within the bead.



Above are some Royal blue Cats Eye Beads.

CELLULOID BEADS

Was one of the first plastics to be used in beadmaking pre-dating **Bakelite** and **Catalin** by several decades. As with all plastics decorative items were easy to mass produce and affordable and came into their own with the bold geometric designs of the Art Deco period.



Above is a 1930s shiny maroon coloured celluloid bead with a deeply carved art deco pattern.

CERAMIC

A medium, including clay, parian, porcelain, terracotta, raku and earthenware, that can be modelled, moulded, and pressed before firing to harden it. After which it is usually decorated with glaze or paint.



Above is an example of Ceramic in the form of a twilight fern heart glazed pendant.

CEYLON BEADS

A glass bead finish that is used with translucent or transparent beads to give a shiny pearlised finish.

CHAIN

Comes in many different designs and is made from a variety of different metals as well as light weight polyester for a modern alternative. Small lengths can be used to link different components or single links from a large chain can be used as a focal feature. Click to see the Contemporary and Vintage **Chain** offered on our website



Above is a length of sterling silver belcher Chain.

CHAIN MAILLE

Maille, also known as Chain Mail, Chainmail, Chainmaille, Mayle, or just plain Mail. It is a flexible material composed of small interlocking metal rings or loops of chain. It was historically used to make body armour, but is commonly seen today in jewellery, sculpture, and fashions.

CHAIN NOSE PLIERS

Are the perfect all purpose tool and should be on the list of essential jewellery making tools that you will need. They are used to bend, cut, hold and manipulate wire and findings. They are used for similar jobs to flat nosed pliers but have a smaller jaw and a pointed tip which makes them ideal for working on small items and in small spaces. They are also smooth faced to avoid leaving marks.



Above is an example of a pair of Beadalon Chain Nose Pliers.

CHALCEDONY

This gemstone, found in Brazil, India, Madagascar, Namibia, Sri Lanka, the United States, Uruguay and Zimbabwe, has a semi-transparent or translucent quality alongside a solid colour, commonly pale bluish-gray. It also has a near wax like lustre. Colours are blue, purple, pink, white, yellow, orange, and gray with blue and purple the most popular hues. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of Pale Blue, Grey and White Chalcedony.

CHARLOTTE BEADS

Originally these were Czech made size 13 [Seed Beads](#), with one hand-cut side, making them slightly faceted. Now it is possible to buy Seed Beads of other sizes with a single facet, and these are called one-cut or true-cuts. Read our [Guide To Seed Beads](#) to learn more.

CHARLOTTE CRIMPS

Small findings used to produce a neat professional ending to a strand. Two halves of a hollow sphere are used to encase a crimp or knot to provide a neat and secure end.



Above is an example of silver-plated Charlotte Crimps.

CHARMS

Small ornaments or **Pendants** generally added to bracelets, necklaces or anklets. To learn more read our [History Of Charms And Charm Bracelets](#)



Above is a pewter cockle shell Charm.

CHARM BRACELETS

A bracelet worn on the wrist used to carry the aforementioned **Charms**, which are either purely decorative or have an important significance in the life of the person wearing the jewellery. To learn more read our [History Of Charms And Charm Bracelets](#)

CHATON

A jewellery setting where the stone is held in place by metal claws. It can also be used to refer to a cone shaped crystal or stone where the top circular edge is bevelled.

CHEVRONS

Also known as **Rosetta** or **Star Beads** are made of multiple layers of different coloured glass laid down in a corrugated fashion so as to form a starburst when the ends have been ground away thereby revealing the pattern. They were first produced in Murano at the end of the 14th century and to learn more you should read our [Venetian Glass Glossary](#).



Above is a contemporary Venetian chevron bead produced by acclaimed Italian bead artist Luigi Cattelan.

CHINA CRYSTALS

These lead free glass beads are made to resemble **Swarovski Crystals**. They are less expensive than the crystals they are trying to imitate and as such the difference in quality is noticeable.

CHLORITE

The chlorites are a group of phyllosilicate minerals commonly found in igneous rocks. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Chlorite.

CHOKER

A tight fitting **Necklace** worn at the base of the neck. Measures about 16 inches / 40.6 cm depending on neck size. To see how many of a particular sized bead are needed for a choker use our handy [Bead Calculator Tool](#).

CHRYSOBERYL

The mineral or gemstone chrysoberyl is an aluminate of beryllium. The name is derived from the Greek for a *gold-white spar*. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Chrysoberyl.

CHRYSOCOLLA

Chrysocolla is a very soft stone that comes in a bluish green colouring. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Chrysocolla.

CHRYSOPRASE

Is a gemstone variety of **Chalcedony** that contains small quantities of nickel. Its colour is normally apple green, but varies to deep green. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of standard and Citrine Chrysoprase.

CHRYSOTINE

Is also known as *Grass Turquoise*. Though normally green in colour, chrysotine can also be cream coloured or light yellow. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Chrysotine.

CINNABAR

Has come to refer to different things over time. Originally a soft brick red stone formed of mercury sulphide carved into intricate shapes, it now more commonly refers to **hand-carved lacquered wood beads** originating from China, or moulded **Polymer Clay** beads imitating the aforementioned carved and lacquered beads.



Above is a large vintage hand carved chinese patterned Cinnabar bead.

CITRINE

A yellow to brownish variety of quartz which is nowadays mis-sold as **Topaz**. These stones can be found in Argentina, Brazil, Madagascar, Myanmar, Namibia, Russia, Scotland, Spain, and the United States. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Citrine.

CLAM SHELL

Another name for a **Calotte**.



Above are some gold-plated metal Calottes.

CLARITY

A measure of the clearness or absence of impurities in a gemstone.

CLASPS

A jewellery component used to join two ends of a piece of jewellery together. Available in many different styles and sizes. To view a selection of our Contemporary Clasps [click here](#) or to view our Vintage Clasps [click here](#).



Above is an example of a silver plated vintage three strand clasp with small hematite stones for subtle sparkle.

CLOISSONNE

An enamelling technique. Strips of bent wire are soldered onto a metal base (usually both these are of copper) to form a pattern. The spaces between the wires are called cloisons, and these are filled with enamel. The object is then fired and polished several times. The exposed wire outline is sometimes given a gold plated finish. There are other cheaper to produce methods that also produce a finish referred to as cloisonné, but the best quality **Cloisonne** work is produced as described above.



Above is an example of a floral Cloisonne Bead with black background.

COBALT GLASS

Is glass pigmented none too surprisingly with the element cobalt. This gives the glass a rich deep blue colouring. It is also refers simply to the same deep colour blue but without the presence of cobalt!

COMANCHE STITCH

See [Brick Stitch](#) above

COLD WIRE WORK

Wire-working techniques that don't require solder or heat – i.e. cutting, wrapping, hammering, coiling and bending.

COLOUR LINED

Or **Inside Colour**, a transparent bead lined inside the hole with an opaque colour. This coloured lining may wear away over time and some colours may fade.



Above is an example of some vintage Japanese red heart green glass beads Colour Lined with an earthy red colour.

CONE BEADS

Beads shaped like cones!

CONE ENDS

Also known as **End Cones** or **End Caps**. A cone used at the end of piece to gather together multi-strands and to hide knots and crimps.

CONFETTI BEADS

Glass beads rolled in tiny pieces of glass while the bead is still hot. Also known as [Sugar Beads](#).

CORAL

Comes in black, reds, and pinks and has a distinctive wood-grain texture that can help identify it as the real thing – against the plastic, glass, porcelain and stained bone which is used to imitate it. Sponge coral, when polished smooth, has visible pores like a sponge. Bamboo coral grows in segmented branches that resemble bamboo stalks, with beige/brown sections partially covering the black under layer. Coral is much softer than other gem materials, and as a result it should be stored carefully to avoid scratches. Cosmetics, hot water and bright daylight are damaging to it. It can be found in the Mediterranean Sea or in the Pacific off Japan and Taiwan. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of Apple, Fossil and Red Coral.

CORD

A string or thread made up of twisted strands. There are many types of cord suitable for stringing, including cord made of silk, synthetic fibres and waxed cotton. Click to view a selection of our [Beading Cord](#) or read our [Guide To Cords Threads And Wires](#)



Above is an example of some Blue Bird Beading Cord.

CORD ENDS

Another name for **Folding Crimps**.



Above is an example of Cord Ends or Folding Crimps in black antique finish.

CORUNDUM

Corundum is the crystalline form of aluminium oxide and one of the basic rock-forming minerals. It is the defining mineral for 9 on **Mohs Scale of Hardness**. Read more in our **Gemstones & Minerals Glossary**



Above is an example of Corundum.

COSTUME JEWELLERY

Has come to describe 20th century jewellery that has all the appearance of precious metals and jewels but is made from faux gemstones and plated metals. It takes its name from the theatre where it was necessary to accentuate the jewellery props used on stage so that they could be seen by the wider audience. Miriam Haskell was a notable costume jewellery designer who came to the fore in 1930's America. You can read more about this area of jewellery and her work in particular in our **History of Miriam Haskell**

COWRY or COWRIE SHELLS

Are small rounded shells with a creamy porcelain like quality, a narrow slit like opening, and interestingly patterned outer surface.



Above are examples of polished yellow Cowrie sea shell beads.

CRACKLE GLASS BEADS

Beads are made by plunging molten glass into water, causing the exterior to crack whilst the still hot interior stays solid. A Venetian glass making discovery.



Above are examples of Emerald and Crystal Crackle Glass Beads.

CRIMPS or CRIMP BEADS

These are tiny metal beads made of a soft metal. They can be used for helping attach Necklace or Bracelet beading wires to clasps, holding beads in position on stringing wire or cord and for holding together multiple wires. Crush the crimp with flat nose or crimping pliers to lock its position on the wire.



Above is an example of black antique finish metal Crimps.

CRIMPING PLIERS

This is a specialist two part tool that will give a neat finish to your crimp beads. A pair of flat nose pliers will flatten a crimp bead – perfectly functional – but **Crimping Pliers** will produce a rounded shape to the crimp that looks better and more professional if you are leaving them exposed. These pliers have two different shaped holes (when the jaws are closed) to squash and then round the crimp so that it securely grips the wire. Some crimping pliers have several different sized holes so that they can be used to crimp different sized findings.



Above is an example of a pair of Beadalon Crimping Pliers.

CROSS HOLE

The hanging hole passing through the end of a Drop or **Pendant**.

CROW BEADS

Slightly oval glass beads resulting from the tumbling process used in their manufacture. **Pony Beads** have similar qualities but are larger.



Above is an example of Vintage Marbled Topaz Acrylic Crow Beads.

CRYSTAL

A clear transparent mineral formed from crystallised quartz. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Crystal.

CRYSTAL GLASS

Glass with a high lead content (typically greater than 30%) which gives it a brilliant transparency and shine. As the lead is contained within the glass crystal beads there is no issue with toxicity. **Swarovski** and **Preciosa** are the two big names that make crystal beads and pendants, but crystal is also available from Chinese manufacturers. Crystal beads are nearly always faceted to show off the light refracting qualities of the glass, the best quality beads are precision cut by machine.

CUBIC ZIRCONIA

A synthetic substitute for diamonds. To the untrained eye they are very similar in appearance though Cubic Zirconia has a Mohs hardness rating of 8 as opposed to 10 for a Diamond. They also result in a heavier stone than similar sized diamond. A process perfected in Russia, they have been available commercially since 1976.

CURB LINK CHAIN

Has oval but twisted links which are designed to lie flat against the wearer.



Above is an example of an antique copper finish Curb Link Chain.

CUTTERS or SIDE CUTTERS

Are compact round headed cutters used for general wire work. They are used for cutting most wire end, with side cutters putting a neat finish on your wire (sand the end of the wire for a super smooth finish). However, **Memory Wire** is a different kettle of fish as it is so tough, and needs to be cut either with specialist **Memory Wire Cutters**, or a pair of sharp household pliers. Use your jewellery pliers and risk ruining the jaws. Likewise do not be tempted to use scissors for wire cutting as even the finest wire will make grooves in the blades and ruin them.

D

DANGLE

Are generally beaded **Head or Eye Pins** finished with a loop, or a small object with a top loop, attached to bracelets, necklaces or earrings in the same manner as a charm might be. And yes, they dangle . . . adding extra movement to piece of jewellery.

DELICA BEADS

Japanese **Seed Beads** trade marked to to the Miyuki Shoji Corporation. They are made of precisely cut glass giving them a uniform size, shape and colour. They typically have large holes compared to their diameter. To learn more read our [Guide to Seed Beads](#)



Above is an example of Miyuki Delica beads in lavender blue transparent lustre.

DENIER

The unit of measurement used to denote the thickness of **Silk Thread**.

DIAMOND

Diamond is the defining mineral for 10 on **Mohs Scale of Hardness**. Read more in our **Gemstones & Minerals Glossary**



Above is an example of Diamond.

DICHROIC GLASS

This incredibly beautiful glass of oily, rainbow iridescent colours is the result of super high-tech aerospace engineering. Multiple layers of metal oxide are applied to a base coat of glass to the thickness of approximately 1/40th of a sheet of paper. The oxides are applied using an electron bombardier inside a vacuum chamber. As many as 50 layers can be added in specific order and thickness to create the result desired. The thin layers of metal over glass allow some wavelengths of light/colour to pass through and others to reflect, and this creates the shimmering chameleon visual effect. The combination of the metal oxide types used determines the colours presented, and the base glass can be of any colour. The presence of tiny amounts of metal particles in glass can create a similar effect, and this is a far older technique – see the **Lycurgus Cup** in the British Museum collection that dates to 4th century A.D.

DIAMANTE

Glass stones that cut and finishes applied to make them sparkle like a diamond. Similar to **Rhinestones**

DISC BEAD or DISK

A very short cylindrical sliced bead with parallel faces and a central or tabular hole (from edge to edge). In effect a squashed round bead!



Above is an example of vintage light sapphire glass Disc Beads.

DOLOMITE

Is a carbonate mineral composed of calcium magnesium carbonate. It comes in hues of white, grey, pink, green, brown and black. Read more in our **Gemstones & Minerals Glossary**



Above is an example of Dolomite.

DOUGHNUT or DONUT BEADS

These are flattened disc like beads with a large central hole usually fashioned from glass, stone or wood.



Above is an example of a semi precious Donut Bead in red jasper.

DOUBLE CUP BEAD TIP

A component used to conceal knots at the end of beadwork and also to connect **Clasps**.

DOUBLE NYLON JAW THREAD PLIERS

These pliers have removable plastic covers over the metal jaws so that they don't scratch or mark the softest wire. They are ideal for working with precious metals, coloured metal wirework and for straightening bent or tangled wire.

DRAWN BEADS

Beads sliced from a long tube of glass drawn from a ball of molten glass. An air hole is used to make the bead hole and when hardened they are usually tumbled or reheated to soften their edges give a more rounded finish. **Bugle, Crow, Pony** and **Seed Beads** all fall into this category. To read more about this process see our [Guide to Seed Beads](#)

DROP BEAD

A bead which is wider at one end than the other. Similar in shape to a droplet of water with a hole passing through the length of the centre of the bead or at the small end perpendicular to the bead.



Above is an example of a vintage Japanese turquoise glass Drop Bead.

DRUK

A spherical pressed glass bead made in Czechoslovakia. No seam line should be visible and it should be optically perfectly round.



Above is an example of a vintage peridot Druk Bead.

DUCTILITY

The ability for a metal to be drawn into wire.

DUMORTIERITE

Is a fibrous aluminium boro silicate mineral which forms vitreous crystals of brown, blue, green and more rarely pink and violet. It was first described in 1881 and named for the French paleontologist Eugene Dumortier (1803-1873). Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Dumortierite.

DYED BEADS

Some beads, notably [Seed Beads](#), are dyed or painted. A surface colourant is applied after the bead has been made. This seems to apply most to some beads of a pink, purple or fuchsia colouring, and the result is that beads of these hues are more likely to fade or have their colouring rub or wash off. A spray of acrylic varnish can help to slow the deterioration. UV light (from the sun and fluorescent bulbs) may also fade dyed beads.

E

E BEADS

A larger [Seed Bead](#) – size 6/0 or bigger. Also known as [Pony Beads](#).

EARRINGS and EARWIRES

These **Jewellery Findings** come in a variety of styles and finishes, both for pierced and unpierced ears. They are easy to work with to produce a quick piece of jewellery, as there will either be a hoop to attach dangles to, a plate to glue a stone to, or you can thread the beads straight onto the earring.



Above is an example of a pair of silver-plated flat wire Fish Hook Earwires.

EARRING POST

The straight part of the **Earring** that is passed through the ear.

EBONY

A very hard dark brown wood from the Tropics used to make beads as well as other decorative items.

ELASTIC THREAD

Perfect for making quick fashion bracelets or for childrens projects. Simply add beads and knot together the ends (add a drop of glue for extra security). It comes in a variety of colours including clear. Don't overload our [Elastic Thread](#) with heavy beads as it will stretch.



Above is an example of an Elastic Thread called Stretch Magic.

EMBOSSSED

A moulded or carved pattern which stands proud of the surface in low relief – think of the face of a coin.

EMERALD

A gemstone variety of **Beryl** with a green colour caused by chromium or vanadium. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Emerald.

ENAMEL or ENAMELLED

A decorative technique that sees coloured powdered glass or glass paste fused to metal using heat. This technique has a heritage stretching back to ancient Greece.

END CONES or END CAPS

Jewellery Components which are used to finish a strand of jewellery. See [Cone Ends](#).

END CUTTERS

Also referred to as **End Nippers** or **End Cutting Pliers**. They are used to cut wire.



Above is an example of Beadalon End Cutters.

END HOLE

Half drilled hole located at the hanging end of a **Drop** or **Pendant**

ENGLISH CUT

Ironically without a cut in sight these are crudely moulded round beads with irregular facets and traces of the mould remaining on the bead surface.

ENGRAVED

A pattern that is carved, etched or inscribed into a surface using tools, stamping or a drill. This usually applies to glass, metal or wood.

EXTENSION CHAIN

A short length of **Chain** added at the clasp point of a necklace or bracelet, to allow the necklace length to be worn at variable lengths, or to fit a larger wrist.



Above is an example of a silver plated Chain Extender.

EYE BEADS

Beads with a circle, a dot, or a combination of the two so that it resembles an eye. The intention being to avert the gaze of the Evil Eye.



Above is an example of a vintage turquoise Eye Bead in lampwork glass.

EYE PINS or EYEPINS

A short length of wire ending in a turned loop. Add beads to produce a dangle or other decorative flourishes. Use the loop to join to other findings or components



Above is an example of three vintage brass Eye Pins.

F

FACET

The flat face or surface of a cut bead, gem, or crystal. The more facets there are the more the item sparkles as light is reflected off the surface in multiple directions.

FACETED BEADS

Are cut to produce multiple sides or faces to reflect light and to create sparkle and different depths of colour.

FAUX

Originally from the French meaning false or fake this refers to jewellery that is artificial or imitation.

FAUX PEARLS

Today these are usually plastic or glass beads with a coating that creates an imitation 'pearl' look. These pearls can be very inexpensive but the coatings can rub away or crack over time leaving the plain surface of the bead that was used. Read our fascinating [History of Faux Pearls](#) to discover the more unusual products that were used to make Faux Pearls in earlier times.

FETISH

An amulet, charm or pendant usually resembling an animal or a person.

FIBRE-OPTIC BEAD

See [Cat's Eye](#)



Above are some Royal blue Cats Eye Beads.

FIGURE OF EIGHT KNOT

Produces a more substantial knot than an [Overhand Knot](#), so can be useful for providing a tie-off within a [Calotte](#). See illustration for how to tie:



FILLIGREE

In jewellery terms this usually refers to a decorative metal component with an open lace-like structure.



Above is an example of a bronze finish metal fancy Filigree beading embellishment.

FINDINGS

Covers all those useful jewellery components that turn a handful of beads and a length of thread into a wearable piece of jewellery – [Clasps](#), [Earwires](#), [Crimps](#), [Head Pins](#), [Jump Rings](#), etc.

FIRE POLISHED

These glass beads start life as a pressed round which is then machine-faceted, it is then placed in a polishing furnace that heats the bead's surface and softens the facets. The resulting facets don't have the machine-cut precision of, say, crystal glass beads, but this gives them a charm of their very own. Fire-polished beads do not contain lead, so they are distinct from crystal glass and should not be labelled as such. Czechoslovakia produces beautiful fire-polished beads in a myriad of colours and applied finishes. India produces similar beads but they are generally of lesser quality – the facets won't meet as neatly and the glass is less reflective.

FISH HOOKS

A type of **Earring Finding** that hooks through the ear and resembles a hook used for fishing. Sometimes these are referred to as **French Earwires**.



Above is an example of a pair of silver-plated flat wire Fish Hook Earwires.

FISH HOOK CLASPS

A type of Necklace Clasp

FLAT NOSED PLIERS

These pliers have straight sided outer and inner jaws. You will need the flat inner jaw for squashing shut crimp tubes, folding down ribbon ends and keeping a good hold of wire when the need arises (wrap your jaw ends in plastic tape to avoid scratching the metal). Used in pairs they can be used to open and close jump rings, to hold the wire when wire wrapping and for a multitude of other wirework tasks. Pliers without serrated teeth are preferred as these will not mark the wire. These pliers have fine jaws for delicate work.



Above is an example of Beadalon Flat Nosed Pliers.

FLOURITE

Is an extremely variable stone in terms of colour but has an enviable glassy lustre and richness whatever the colour. They can be an intense purple, blue, green or yellow; also colourless, reddish orange, pink, white and brown. Flourite is the defining mineral for 4 on **Mohs Scale of Hardness**. These stones can be found in Brazil, Canada, China, England, Germany, Morocco, Spain and the United States. Read more in our **Gemstones & Minerals Glossary**



Above is an example of Flourite.

FLUSH CUTTERS

Are similar to **Side Cutters** but have a pointed tip so that they can be used to trim wire from hard to reach places. These cutters will cut wire flush and not leave jagged edges thereby avoiding sharp wire ends.

FOB

A short chain traditionally used with pocket watches, now repurposed for jewellery pieces and in particular charm bracelets and necklaces.

FOCAL BEADS

An eye-catching centrepiece bead, usually larger than its companions, or used alone.



Above is an example of a winged heart lampwork Focal Bead.

FOIL BACKED

A transparent or translucent stone that has had its back face coated with gold, silver, or coloured foil in order to enhance the colour and brilliance of the the stone by reflecting back more light. Typically used in costume jewellery and Rhinestones.

FOIL-LINED or FOILED BEADS

A glass bead made around a tiny piece of silver or gold foil. The metal foil used can be 24 ct gold, **Sterling Silver**, or simply gold or silver coloured metal. Genuine Murano glass beads use pure metal and this is reflected in their price.

FOLDING CRIMPS

Also known as **Thong Ends** or **Cord Ends**. If you are stringing with lengths of leather, suede, ribbon etc. you may use these **Crimps** at the ends of your work. Place the end of your thong or cord on to the middle of the crimp (use a drop of glue if you like), and fold first one then the other of the sides over the centre. They have an end loop.



Above is an example of Cord Ends, Folding Crimps, or Thong Ends in black antique finish.

FRENCH EARWIRES

See **Fish Hooks**.



Above is an example of a pair of silver-played flat wire Fish Hook Earwires.

FRENCH WIRE

Also known as **Gimp** or **Bullion**. A length of thin wire tightly coiled like a spring. Use a short length of this to feed your thread through at the clasp end, and thereby add some protection to the thread as it would otherwise rub directly on the loop of the clasp. Gives a professional looking finish.

FRESHWATER PEARLS

As their name suggests form in freshwater mussels in the same way pearls form in saltwater oysters. The difference is they are irregular in shape rather than the perfectly round pearls derived from oysters. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of a Freshwater Pearl.

FRINGES

An embroidery technique used to add interest and movement to garments and objects. It can be seen on objects as varied as lampshades to beaded purses and cowboy jackets! It is also commonly used to finish jewellery created with brick stitch and associated bead stitching techniques.

FRIT

Crushed particles of coloured glass applied to the surface of molten lampwork glass beads as decoration.

FROSTED BEADS

Have a dull finish similar to a coating of ice across the bead surface. See also [Matte](#)



Above is an example of some Frosted aqua glass flowers.

FURNACE GLASS BEADS

Also known as **Cane Beads** or **Candy Beads**. Created in a furnace or kiln, glass canes are fused together to create a pattern in cross-section. A bubble is blown into the centre of the glass, and then the glass is pulled to create a long hollow tube which may be as long as 24 metres/ 80 ft!. This long cane is then cut into small lengths, tumbled and fire polished to smooth the edges and create a shiny finish. The process is carried out by hand so these beads can be expensive!

G

GALVANISED BEADS

Beads (especially [Seed Beads](#)) that have been plated with zinc or other metals. This type of finish can, unfortunately, be lost over time due to friction or acidity from the skin. You can coat the beads with an acrylic spray in order to stabilise the finish and slow down the wear.

GARNET

Is typically a dark red gemstone although they do appear in yellow, green, pink, white and gray. They are found in Australia, Brazil, India, Scotland, Tanzania, the United States and Uruguay. Its most appealing quality is its brilliance. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Garnet.

GAUGE

The American unit of measurement for the thickness of wire. The higher the number, the thinner the wire. Wires produced in the UK are listed by their dimensions in mm, however as so many beading reference sources are American it is useful to know the gauge gradings too. To learn more read our [Guide to Cords, Threads & Wires](#)

Wires most frequently employed for jewellery making are listed below:

34 gauge wire = 0.16mm (0.006") Good for wire knitting and twisting. Too fine for firm shaping. Will fit through the smallest seed beads and pearls.

28 gauge wire = 0.32mm (0.013") Good for wire twisting and knitting. Will fit through smaller seed beads, pearls, smaller semi-precious stones and crystals (2-3mm).

26 gauge wire = 0.40mm (0.015") Good for wire twisting and knitting. Use for semi-precious stones with holes too small for 24 gauge wire, pearls and smaller seed beads and crystals.

24 gauge wire = 0.51mm (0.020") Good for wire crafts and general use including wire wrapping beads and stones. This wire type should fit through slim semi-precious stone holes, seed beads, pearls, smaller crystals.

22 gauge wire = 0.64mm (0.0253") Good for wire crafts and general use including wire wrapping beads and stones. This wire type should fit through slim semi-precious stone holes, size 11 seed beads, 4mm and larger crystals, smaller metal beads (2-3mm) and glass beads (including Czech glass).

20 gauge wire = 0.81mm (0.032") Good for making jewellery, clasps, findings, wire wrapping (beads and stones), ear wires and jump rings. Will fit through most crystals 4mm and larger, larger seed beads (size 8 plus), larger semi-precious (you may need to use a reamer), and glass beads (including Czech glass).

18 gauge wire = 1.02mm (0.040") Good for making heavy jewellery as long as the bead holes are big enough, and for clasps and findings. Use for lampwork and other large glass beads, also larger metal beads.

GEMSTONE

These are beads made from Precious or **Semi-Precious** stones. Many of these stones are described in greater detail within this glossary as well as in our dedicated [Glossary of Gemstones](#).

GHOST

Translucent **Matte** beads with an **Aurora Borealis** coating giving a beautiful iridescent finish.

GIMP

See [French Wire](#).

GIVRE

Pronounced *gee-vray* refers to a crystal (colour) or transparent bead with a swirl of interior color similar to that found in a child's marble. The beads are usually made using a glass encasing technique before they are pressed into moulds, and then polished. The term appears to have been first used by Swarovski and it comes from the French word meaning *frosty*.



Above is an example of some unusual vintage frosted blue and yellow cut glass Givre Beads.

GLASS BLOWN BEADS

Are those made in a real Murano glass furnace in Venice. They are made using a technique called **Filigrana**. The glass blower rolls out canes of coloured glass giving the distinctive stripping in each bead. They are then turned as spirals or straight stripping, before being fashioned into into balls, teardrops or pennies. They may also be made using lampwork techniques, or *perle a lume* as it is in Italian. In this case they begin life as a larger cane of Moretti glass which is then melted into a soft ball on the end of a small blow pipe. To learn more about Venetian glass manufacture look at our [History of Venetian Glass](#) and our [Glossary of Venetian Glass](#).



Above is an example of a yellow and white spiral Blown Glass Bead.

GLAZE

A glassy coating applied to ceramic and then fired to protect the object and to make the surface impervious



Above is an example of glazed ceramic in the form of a twilight fern heart pendant finished front and back in a glossy dark glaze with vivid blue highlights.

GLUE

Used to keep thread knots from unravelling and to keep small items such as beads in place. Also known as bead cement. To view a selection of our bead cements to buy [click here](#).



Above is a tube of G-S Hypo Cement used for gluing beads in place, strengthening knots and other creative applications.

GOLD COLOUR

Means that a **Base Metal**, such as brass, has been covered with a thin layer of gold, but this layer will be extremely thin and impure.

GOLD FILLED

A thin layer of gold over a **Base Metal**. To be classified as gold-filled, a piece must be at least 1/20 gold by weight.

GOLD FOIL BEADS

Beads that contain gold foil leaf to add depth and sparkle.



Above is an example of a black and Gold Foil Lined lampwork circular cushion bead.

GOLD or GILT LINED

A transparent bead with a gold coloured lining to its hole. Not as hard wearing as **Silver Lined** beads, and the gold coloured lining may be lost over time.

GOLD PLATED

Means that a **Base Metal**, such as brass, has been covered with a thin layer of real gold. This must conform to an industry standard thickness of .15mm to .25mm and of at least 10 carats. 10 carats means that the metal contains 10 parts gold to 14 parts other metals (24 carats is pure gold). See also **Rolled Gold** and **Gold Filled**.



Above is an example of Gold Plated metal round spacer beads.

GOLDSTONE

See **Aventurina**

GRAM

The unit of measurement used to package small beads such as **Seed Beads**. 100 grams equals 1 Kilo.

GROUND STITCH

An off loom bead weaving stitch which can be used to create daisies, gods eyes, and lightening eyes. It can be used to make rope style anklets, belts, bracelets, chokers and necklaces.

GUILLOCHE

Pronounced *gee-oh-shay*. It is a technique where an enamel finish is applied over a craved metal surface.

GYPSUM

Gypsum is the defining mineral for 2 on **Mohs Scale of Hardness**. Read more in our **Gemstones & Minerals Glossary**



Above is an example of Gypsum.

H

HALF DRILLED BEADS

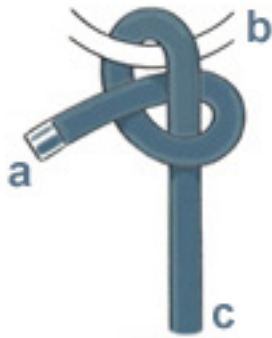
Simply put these are beads where the hole only goes half way through the body of the bead. There are **Findings** designed specifically to make use of these beads for varied applications such as for in ring settings, as memory wire end caps or to finish earring posts.



Above is an example of vintage Czech speckled green Half Drilled Beads.

HALF HITCH KNOT

Serves a similar purpose to the [Overhand Knot](#), and can be used for securing tail ends of threads and weaving in new ones. See the illustration below for how to tie it and read our [Guide to Beading Techniques](#) to learn when to use it.



HALLMARK

A mark stamped into precious metals to indicate its purity or fineness, the maker or sponsor, the Assay Office where it was tested, and the year that it was tested. This process of hallmarking dates back to 1300 when Edward I instituted the assaying and marking of precious metals to reduce fraud and to maintain fair competition.



Above is an example of a UK silver Hallmark denoting the maker, the Assay Office, in this case London, and the quality stamp.

HAMMERED METAL

A jewellery making technique or finish that results in a piece of metal with a pitted surface where it has been struck repeatedly with the jewellers hammer to form a shape or to give surface interest.

HAND KNOTTED

Relates to items of jewellery where individual beads are strung one at a time with a knot placed between them to provide added strength and to avoid abrasion between beads. An obvious example being [Pearl Necklaces](#).

HANK

A bundle of bead strands, usually 10 to 12 strands of a approximately 18 ins in length. Traditionally the measurement for a hank = 3.333 fathoms or 6.667 yards or 20 feet or 6.096 metres. However this does vary by type and size of bead, manufacturer and country of origin. To learn more about hanks read our [Guide To Seed Beads](#).



Above is a hank of cut transparent dark olive Picasso fire polished glass beads.

HASSONITE

Belongs to the grossularite garnet group. Its vivid orange brown colouring has resulted in the nickname *cinnamon stone*. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Hassonite.

HEAD PIN

A short length of wire ending in a 'Head' to prevent the bead falling off (a **Seed Bead** can be used to add a little extra diameter if needed). Generally head pins end in a tiny round of metal soldered on horizontal to the wire, but look out for decorative **Heads**.



Above is an example of some black antique finish Head Pins.

HEAT TREATED or TREATMENT

The application of heat to precious stones and minerals to change their physical or chemical properties, usually with a view to changing colours or improving clarity or hardness. For example applying heat to a blue green aquamarine will make it turn blue. This can be done for aesthetic reasons but also to disguise one stone for another perhaps more lucrative one.

HEIRLOOM BEADS

Beads and jewellery that have been passed down through a family.

HEISHE or HEISHI BEADS

Pronounced *hee shee* are tiny tube or disc shaped beads cut from shells, wood, or ground and polished stones. Originating with the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico. Authentic heishe beads are completely handmade and it can take days to produce a strand of beads. Typically strips of shell or stone are drilled with evenly spaced holes, then cut into squares, before being shaped and sanded by hand.



Above is an example of some disc shaped turquoise Heishe Beads from Pueblo New Mexico.

HEMATITE or HAEMATITE

Is the mineral form of iron oxide which has a rust red colouring. As gemstone beads they are quite striking and are usually heavy shiny and silvery black in colour. These stones can be found in Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, England, New Zealand, and the United States. True hematite leaves a red streak when scratched across a piece of unglazed porcelain, while simulated products usually leave a gray streak. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Hematite.

HEMIMORPHITE

Is a zinc containing mineral with its name derived from the unusual character of its crystals – with one end formed of a point but the other being pedion or flat faced without a geometric link to any other faces. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Hemimorphite.

HEMP

Used in **Macrame** jewellery, it is a strong and versatile cord derived from the coarse fibre at the centre of the cannabis plant.



Above is a ball of Hemp.

HERRINGBONE STITCH

A stitch where beads are sewn together to create a pattern similar to herringbone fabric.

HEXAGONAL BEADS

Are faceted and resemble a small tile

HOLLOW BEADS

Made from blown glass for lightness or to allow decoration inside the clear glass. This term can also apply to carved beads of bone, stone or wood.

HOWLITE

Is better known for imitating other minerals than it is in its own right. For instance when dyed blue its distinctive veining makes it resemble turquoise. It is a calcium borosilicate hydroxide first discovered in southern California in 1868 and named after Canadian mineralogist Henry How (1828 to 1879) who first described it. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Howlite.

I

ILLUSION CORD

Soft and flexible 'invisible' cord, for use in floating and illusion designs as it can be knotted to hold the beads in place (or you can use glue or discreet crimp tubes).



Above is an example of Beadalon Supplemax Illusion Cord.

IMPERIAL JADE

The popular name given to fine quality, translucent, emerald green **Jadeite**. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Imperial Jade.

INGOT

Metals cast into a bar or other shape for further processing. In the case of precious metals such as gold, silver and platinum they can also be seen as currency or as a currency reserve.



Above is an example of a platinum Ingot.

INLAID

A pattern that has been set into a surface, retaining the overall surface level.



Above is an example of an Inlaid Abalone shell pendant.

INSIDE COLOUR

See [Colour Lined](#).



Above is an example of some vintage Japanese red heart green glass beads Colour Lined with an earthy red colour.

IOLITE

Named from *ios* the Greek word for violet it is a purplish blue hard cordierite mineral. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Iolite.

IRIDESCENT BEADS

Glass beads traditionally processed with arsenic to create a rainbow or pearly lustre. The arsenic is chemically sealed inside the glass meaning there is no health risk to the wearer. As light catches the surface of an iridescent bead it provides an almost metallic effect.

IRIS

A rainbow or **Iridescent** coating on opaque glass.



Above is an example of some Czech round glass green, blue and red Iris finish druks.

IRRADIATION

The process of exposing gemstones and minerals to radiation to enhance their colour.

IVORY

A hard, smooth, natural white material derived from the tusks of elephants, extinct mammoths, and sea mammals. It has been used throughout history for beads and other decorative items but with the possible extinction of many of the animals it has been traditionally 'harvested' from it is now illegal to trade in new ivory. Synthetic alternatives are made from **Plastic**, **Celluloid** and **Casein**.

J

JADE

Has been a highly valued gemstone for thousands of years especially in the Orient and in particular in China. Colours are a variety of green hues, off white and yellow. These stones can be found in Australia, Canada, China, Guatemala, Japan, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Russia, Taiwan, the United States, and Zimbabwe. In 1863 it was discovered that the name Jade was being applied to two distinct minerals. These two minerals, Nephrite and Jadeite, are relatively hard to distinguish from each other and so the name Jade has persisted. Nephrite, is an amphibole silicate and usually displays only green and creamy white, whilst Jadeite, is a sodium aluminum silicate and can have the full range of jade's colours. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)

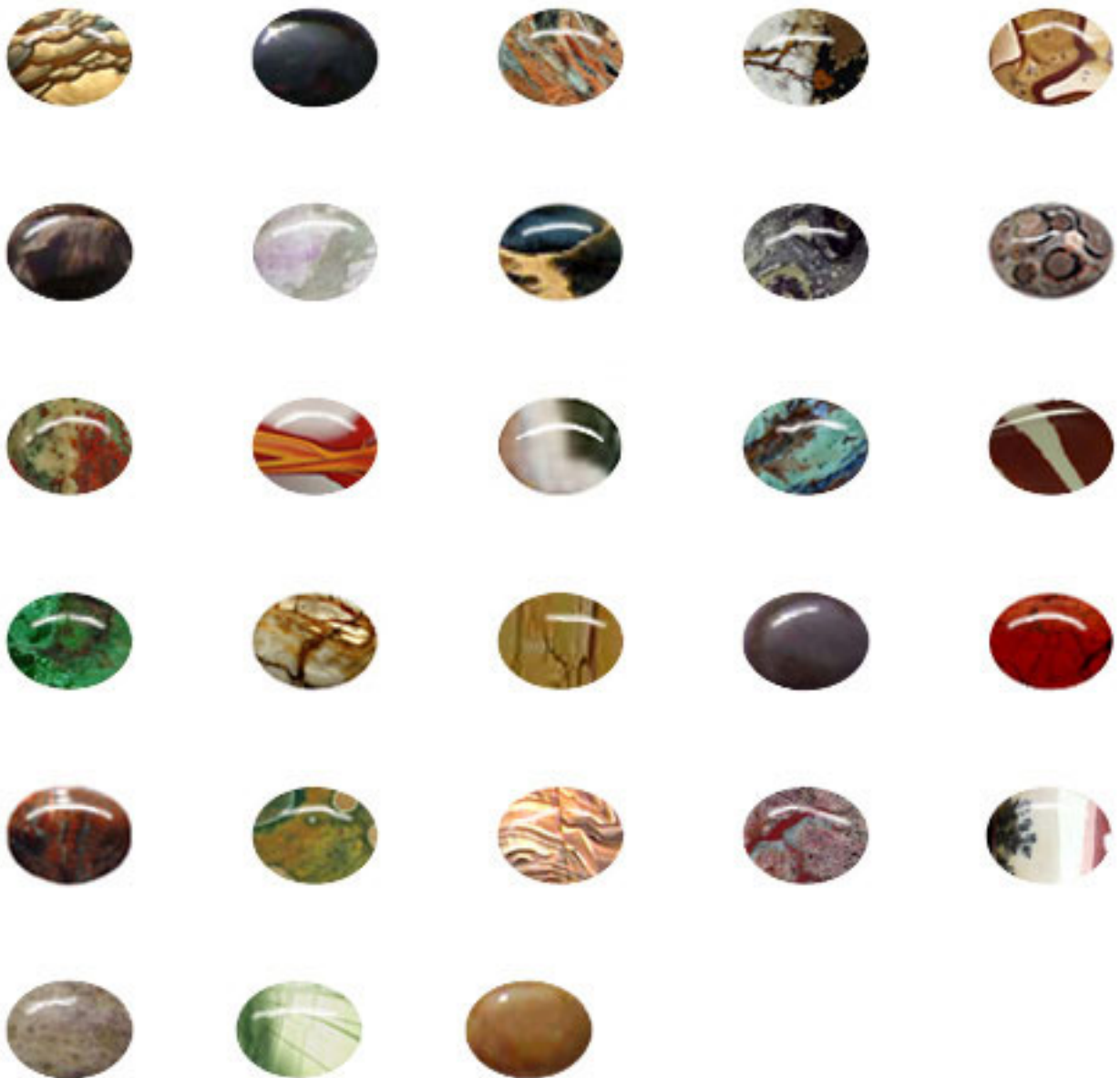




Above are examples of Soft Canadian, China, Green, Lavender, Nephrite, New, White, and Yellow Jade.

JASPER

Is a member of the quartz family and is one of the oldest known gemstones. Because Jasper is found in many colours it is often named by appearance, for example **Leopard Skin Jasper**. Its main features are stripe, circles or spots with colours ranging from white to gray, pink, red, brown, yellow, and green. These stones can be found world wide, but the primary sources are Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, India, Madagascar, Russia, the United States, and Uruguay. Its polish might wash away in water, so clean with a soft, dry cloth. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above are examples of Biggs (USA), Blood, Brecciated, Chinese Painting, Deschutes (USA), Firewood, Florence, Imperial (Mexico), Kambaba (Madagascar), Leopard Skin, Morrisonite (USA), Noreena (Australia), Ocean (Madagascar), Opal, Owyhee (USA), Peacock, Picasso, Picture, Polychronic, Poppy, Rainbow, Rainforest, Royal Sahara Picture (N Africa), Russian, Sagebrush, Silver Leaf, Spiderweb Imperial and Yellow (China) Jasper.

JET

Is petrified coal or more precisely the product following the decomposition of wood under high pressure from millions of years ago. It is easily shaped and polished and is considered to be a minor gemstone. Read more in our [Gemstones & Minerals Glossary](#)



Above is an example of Jet.

JEWELLERY WIRE

In general this is aluminium, brass, copper, silver, gold, silver-plated, gold-plated or gold-filled wire. This wire is sold in several sizes, called **Gauges**, with the larger gauge wire being smaller in diameter. You can [buy coated wires](#) in all sorts of fabulous colours.



Above is an example of Copper Jewellery Wire.

JIG

A peg board used for bending wire into specific repeatable shapes.

JUMP RINGS

Circles of wire with a split used to join together different jewellery parts.



Above is an example of silver plated metal Jump Rings.

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