

Garment Glossary

Compiled by National Network of Embroidery Professionals

Expand your Vocabulary and Expand your Sales!

Master the language of the apparel industry. Use words to draw pictures for your customers. Use the language of the apparel industry to give your customer a reason to make a decision. As you define each product for your customer they will immediately recognize your value as their sales person. All customers want to feel as though they are making an informed decision. When you describe their choices, they will feel more informed and therefore more comfortable to make a selection.

Your customer is looking for a long sleeve kelly green golf shirt. You locate several items meeting that description and you schedule a meeting with them to help them determine their selection. You show the style #00000 from company X, style #99999 from company Y and style #88888 from company Z. They are all kelly green long sleeve polos. You tell them the brand and the price point of each and wait for them to make their selection.

Or you could draw some pictures for your customer. As you show them Style 00000 from Company X you mention that this shirt is made of 100% combed cotton to ensure coolness as a pique knit. It has an athletic cut giving it the room needed for their favorite golf swing. It is trimmed with wood tone buttons for a sporty look and it has a three-button placket with a left chest pocket.

As you hold up Style #99999 from Company Y, you tell them that it is 60% ring spun cotton and 40% polyester thereby controlling the shrinkage and wrinkling. It has an under arm gusset giving extra room for reaching and tipped collar and cuffs in contrasting tan.

Then you describe Style 88888 from Company Z indicating that it comes in both men's and women's cut. It is made of a jersey knit 100% pima cotton resulting in a smooth soft comfortable finish due to the long fiber cotton. It has twin needle stitching at the hem and pearlized buttons in a four-button placket for a dressier look. The women's line has a princess line giving it a nice feminine appeal.

All the information you need is provided to you in the superb catalogs provided by the vendors. It is all there for you. However you need to be comfortable with the terms. You need to understand what they mean and never, never use a term you cannot explain. In the above scenario you need to be able to explain pique, combed cotton, athletic cut, placket, ring spun cotton, polyester, gusset, tipped, jersey knit, pima cotton, twin needle stitching and the princess line.

The following Glossary is intended to assist you to paint pictures for your customers. It is not a complete glossary but it highlights those terms commonly used by the embroidery garment suppliers. A note of warning so you don't drive yourself crazy - some of the adjectives used in the catalogs are somewhat altered words pulling together several of the terms below. The following list will give you enough words to wow your customers so you don't need to get tangled up in the latest new adjectives. Also, you will be able to guess most of the new combinations if you are familiar with the glossary.

2x2 rib – 1x1 rib: The rib design as determined by the number of purl stitches to knit stitches such as 2 purl 2 knit or 1 purl 1 knit.

Abrasion resistance: The ability of a fabric to withstand loss of appearance and function through the destructive action of rubbing. Fabrics listed as abrasion-resistant are typically highly durable and long lasting.

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Action back: See bi-swing back

Antron nylon: A taffeta nylon fabric with a reflective or shiny finish trademarked by DuPont.

Argyle: A popular two or three-color design in diamond shapes done in knit fabrics

Athletic fit / athletic cut: Generally a roomier cut allowing for greater reach in sportswear.

Barrel stop: A cord lock in the shape of a barrel used predominately on sporting goods.

Basket weave: A finely woven all-over texture resembling a weave commonly found in baskets.

Bias: A line cutting diagonally across the fabric.

Bi-swing back or Action back: A rear insert panel, typically used in jackets to allow more freedom of movement in the shoulder area.

Birdseye trim: A fabric woven with a pattern of small diamonds, each having a dot in the center

Bleach wash: The process of washing fabric or a garment with bleach to soften and distress the look of the fabric

Blended yarns: Yarns composed of two or more different fibers.

Blind stitch: a stitch that is nearly invisible.

Buckram: A stiff open weave coarse fabric often used as an interfacing and in the backing of caps.

Bungee cord: An elastic rubber cord used to fasten.

Burn out: A fabric made of two different fibers – then painted with a chemical that dissolves one of the fibers thus creating a design.

Broadcloth: Closely woven fabric with very fine embedded ribs and a lustrous finish. Made in many weights, fibers and blends. It resembles fine poplin. Worsted and woolen broadcloth have a glossy finish.

Brushed napping: Knit or woven fabrics of wool, cotton or synthetics with a flannel like texture.

Bryon collar: A pointed shirt-style collar.

Canvas: A heavy closely woven fabric of cotton, hemp or flax originally used for making tents and sails.

Cargo pockets: Large expandable pockets sewn with side pleats to the shell of a garment.

Chain stitch: A decorative stitch in which the loops are connected in a chainlike fashion.

Chambray: A broad class of plain weave fabric made of either cotton or synthetic fibers using a colored dyed yarn and white filling.

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Chamois: A cotton fabric resembling chamois leather.

Chenille: A soft tufted silk, cotton or worsted yarn used in embroidery to most often make varsity letters. Often times the end product such as the letters used on a varsity jacket are referred to as chenille.

Clean finished self-shell: The seams are finished leaving no raw edges, with no lining.

Coating: A finishing process in which a substance – like rubber, resin or synthetic compounds – cover the fabric on one or both sides. Polyurethane is a common coating for outerwear. Coating typically aids water-resistance.

Colorfastness: The ability of a fabric to withstand exposure to sunlight, dry cleaning and laundering without fading or running. The types of fiber, dye and treatment used for setting the color determines how colorfast a fabric will be.

Color block: a term used to describe large patches or blocks of color.

Cord lock: A fastening that controls the length of a cord.

Corduroy: A cut pile fabric woven with either wide or narrow wales formed by using extra filling. It may be either plain or twill weave, the later being the better quality.

Cotton: Thread or cloth manufactured from the fiber of a cotton plant

Cover stitched armhole seam: This refers to the inside arm seam being serged or finished – most often referred to in knits.

Crepe: A fabric characterized by a crinkled or grained surface.

Darts: A tapered tuck adjusting the fit of a garment.

Delrin zipper: A heavy zipper with large teeth, often left exposed for style.

Denier: The weight measurement of filament yarns. The low numbers represent the finer sizes and the higher numbers, the heavier yarns.

Denim: A coarse twill cloth used for material used for jeans, overalls and work uniforms. It is often used to infer a color of dusty blue.

Destroyed: See distressed

Direct embroidery: The process of sewing a name or design directly onto a garment.

Distressed: Impairments intentionally put in the fabric to make it look rugged and old.

Double knit: A knit fabric of double thickness.

Double needle (safety) stitching: Seams topped stitched with two needles running side by side (also can be as high as 3 and 4 needle stitching).

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Double side fleece: Fuzzy on both sides for maximum durability.

Down: Fine, soft, fluffy feathers on a young bird or the soft, fluffy feathers underlying the contour feathers on an adult bird.

Drape: A fabric's ability to hang gracefully as a finished product.

Draw cord: a cord generally around the bottom of a jacket that can be pulled up to snug in the hem of the jacket.

DWR: durable water-repellent

Egyptian cotton: A fine, long staple cotton grown chiefly in northern Africa.

Elastic: Easily stretched rubber usually prepared in cords, strings or bands.

Enzyme finish or washed: A process of washing using organic substances that cause transformation or accelerate of the aging of the dyes

Epaulet: A shoulder "strap" or collar trim that is styled with a military look.

Face: Traditionally, the side of the fabric that offers a finished or polished appearance. The face is normally used for outward print and decoration.

Finish: General term for processes used in converting raw goods into finished cloth. Bleaching, mercerizing, streaming and dyeing are typical finishing processes.

Flannel: Plain or twill weave, can be fabric with a slightly napped surface.

Flat felled seams or just felled: A seam in which it is stitched twice, the second seam covering the raw edges of the first. This may sometimes be referred to as flat locking seam.

Fleece: Refers to a pile or napped fabric with a deep, soft, woolly-style surface.

Full fashion – A term applied to a fabric made on a flat-knitting machine, such as hosiery, sweaters and underwear, which have been shaped by adding or reducing stitches.

French terry: A knit jersey with loops on one side – sometimes napped to make fleece.

Gabardine: tightly woven durable twill often used in trousers and rainwear.

Garment dyed: Apparel dyed in the garment form rather than in the fabric form.

Garment washed: after the garment is sewn it is washed to cut down on shrinkage and softness to the garment.

Glazed: A finishing resulting in a smooth glossy finish on the fabric.

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Glen plaid: A popular Scotch pattern for suiting and sportswear that is characterized by two checks of different sizes.

Grommets: Metal, plastic or stitched holes creating fabric reinforcement at stress points.

Grain: Another word used for the lengthwise (warp) threads or the crosswise (weft) threads in a fabric.

Gusset: Added panel of fabric in a seam to provide room for action movement.

Hand: The tactile qualities of a fabric. The way it feels to the touch – soft, firm, elastic, etc. Example, “This garment has a real smooth hand, just feel it and see how comfortable it is to the touch.”

Herringbone: A broken twill weave giving a zig zag effect.

Hook and loop: Materials that latch together but do not carry the Velcro name.

Horn button: (real or simulated) have tan/khaki swirls of light color that resemble the crosscut textures of the horn of an antelope. Generally used to enhance a sporty look.

Houndstooth: Design woven into a fabric that looks like a star.

Hydrophilic: An adjective indicating moisture wicking properties.

Interlock: A plain stitched knit fabric, which looks the same on both sides. Often used in T-shirts and golf shirts.

Jacquard: Woven-in pattern created by a special loom. A raised or pattern woven into the fabric as opposed to being printed on the fabric.

Jersey knit: A single-knit, plain-stitched fabric with a face side that is markedly different from the backside.

Jet spun: A system that utilizes air to twist the yarn during the manufacturing of the yarn.

Johnny collar: A knit, stand-up collar.

Jute: Is obtained from the plants. Jute is often divided into classes, white and dark, and then subdivided into grades denoting quality.

Jute spun: indicate that a yarn has been spun on a machine designed to spin jute.

Kasha: A light flannel lining.

Knits: Fabrics constructed by interlocking a series of loops by machine or hand. Knitted fabrics tend to mold to the body: woven fabrics, in contrast, drape. Knitted fabrics will “run” if the looping is broken i.e. in stockings.

Locker loop: A loop at the neck for hanging the garment on a hook.

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Lycra: A fiber that is blended with other fibers. It can stretch 500 percent without breaking. It holds dye well and is heat resistant. DuPont owns the Trademark.

MTR – Maximum Thermal Retention – Columbia

Mandarin/stand-up collar: A collar with a short height that does not lie against the garment.

Mercerized: A treatment of fine cotton yarn or fabric that increases shine, luster and strength.

Merrowing: The stitched edging found on the edge of patches.

Mesh: A fabric with an open network of interlocking threads.

Microfiber: Microfibers are man-made ultra fibers available in acrylic, nylon, polyester and rayon producing an extremely flowing, drapes nicely and is a soft and luxurious fabric.

Micro suede: Usually a nylon/polyester blend yarn that is spun into a microfiber like fabric. It is then brushed twice to achieve the suede touch.

Muff pocket: a pocket that can be entered on both sides, typically on the front of a sweatshirt.

Nap or Napped: A downy surface given to cloth when part of the fibers are raised from the basic structure and brushed.

Neck tape: A protective band of tape sewn over the seam between the shell and the collar for a more comfortable feel to the garment.

Nicking details: Little slashes making it ragged looking or distressed.

Non-woven fabrics: Materials that are produced by interlocking or bonding fibers together.

Nylon: Any of a family of high-strength resilient synthetic materials whose long-chain molecule contains the recurring amide group COHN. This is a DuPont product.

Ottoman knit: A horizontal raised rib textured knit.

Oxford weave: A coarse, plain weave

PCR: post consumer recycled

Patch pocket: A pocket added to a garment usually made of the same material and without pleats or lining, like a shirt pocket.

Peach wash finish: A “peach fuzz” like finish applied to washed poplin with a light nap for a soft, supple feel.

Pigment dye: Washed down colors that will continue to soften and age with washing. Great for outdoor and casual looks.

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Piled fabric: Fabric with cut fibers or uncut loops, which stand up densely on the surface. Usually has a plush feel (i.e. bath towels, velvet).

Pill: To form small balls resembling pills. Generally, one does not want fabric to pill.

Pima cotton: (After Pima County, AZ, where it was developed) a very strong, medium staple cotton developed from selected Egyptian cottons in the southwestern US.

Pinpoint: Indicating very small. In the garment industry, it is alluding to a finely woven fabric.

Piping: A round strip of cloth trimming for garments.

Pique: Knit fabric with raised lengthwise “cords” which are part of the weave.

Plain weave: The basic crisscross method of weaving cloth.

Pleat: A fold in material made by doubling the material upon itself and then pressing or stitching into place.

Plush: A silk, cotton or synthetic fabric having a deep thick pile.

Ply: The number of single yarns twisted together to form ply yarn: also the number of ply yarns twisted together to form a cord. By twisting two or more yarns together, a stronger single yarn is created.

Pointelle: A kind of drop needle fabric resulting in an open work design (as in knitted fabric) typically in the shape of chevrons.

Poplin: A ribbed fabric of silk, rayon, wool or cotton used in making clothing and upholstery.
Pouch pocket

Polyester: A synthetic resin used in waterproofing fibers.

Polynosic: a type of microfiber that is a blend of advanced polyester and rayon fibers. Characteristics include luxurious soft touch and nice draping.

Preshrunk: Shrunk during manufacturing to reduce the chance of later shrinkage.

Princess seams: Long curved seams running vertically with the body, designed to make the garment enhance the feminine figure.

Raglan (sleeve): Sleeves are all one piece from collar to cuff, allowing for ease of movement.

Rayon: A synthetic textile fiber produced by forcing a cellulose solution through fine spinners and solidifying the resulting fiber. Fabrics made of the above are called Rayon.

Reactive printed fabric: A fabric printed with a reactive dye that promotes colorfastness.

Recovery: The capacity of a fabric to return to its original shape after being stretched out of shape.

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Ringer tees: A tee shirt with a contrasting collar binding.

Ring spun: A spinning technique designed for greater strength.

Ripstop nylon: Nylon taffeta with double yarns creating the box pattern to provide extra strength and resistance to tearing.

Saddle stitch: A simple overcasting stitch, usually of contrasting thread. Used primarily as ornamentation on clothing.

Sanded: A finishing process that brings fabric in contact with sand paper or other abrasive materials.

Sand wash: The process of washing a garment with sand to soften and distress the fabric.

Satin: a smooth fabric, of silk, nylon or rayon, with a glossy face and a dull back.

Scotchguard: A water repellent application trademarked by 3M Corporation.

Seam sealing: A process in which the stitch line in a garment is made leak proof by application of seam tape or seam -sealing glue.

Set-in sleeve: Sleeves constructed to run from the shoulder to the cuff.
Shrinkage

Slash pockets: Angled pockets that are formed by cutting a slash in the shell and attaching a pouch inside the garment.

Silicone washed: A process of washing using silicone to increase softness.

Space dyeing: A yarn dyeing process in which one strand receives one color at irregular interval producing a random effect.

Spandex: A synthetic fiber or fabric made from a polymer containing polyurethane, used in the manufacturing of elastic clothing.

Sizing: Treatment of a surface or material with size. Size is any of several gelatinous or glutinous substances usually made from glue, wax or clay and used as a glaze or filler for porous materials such as paper, cloth or wall surfaces.

Soil release: Any one of a class of finishes that when applied to material allows the removal of stains through normal household laundering.

Suede: Leather with a soft napped surface.

Staple: Refers to a certain uniformity of the length of a fiber.

Stone wash: the process of washing fabric or a garment with stone to soften and distress the look of the garment.

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Storm flap: A strip of fabric covering the zipper or snap closures of a jacket and/or its pockets.

Supplex: A DuPont trademarked fabric made of nylon fibers available in a range of finishes – it is lightweight, soil-resistant, colorfast, quick drying and breathable.

Taffeta: Basic plain weave that is crisp and smooth on both sides, usually with a sheen. It may be plain, printed, striped, checked, plaid or antiqued.

Tagless: The label information is most likely printed in the inside of the collar replacing the “tag” label that is often irritating to the wearer.

Teflon coating: DuPont product for a water and stain repellent coating which remains breathable.

Texturing: To achieve a matte, cotton-like texture, a jet of air is blown on a fiber to give it a rough, non-reflective surface. Texture fibers offer greater bulk and airiness to a fabric without increasing its weight.

Taslon: A DuPont trademark for a method of bulking and texturing fabric using compressed air.

Tipped: small stripe on a collar or cuff

Tricot: (pronounced tree-coe) French for a warp knitted fabric. Tricots are flat knitted with fine ribs on the face (length-wise) and ribs on the back (widthwise).

Tucks: Folds in a garment often intended to be decorative.

Twill: A fabric whose weave is made up of 2 or 3 warp yarns or threads to every one-weft thread. Warp threads run up and down and the weft threads run across or through the warp.

Urethane coated: Thin layer of polyurethane is sprayed onto the backside of fabric to waterproof it.

Velcro: Closure material consisting of a fabric with small hooks that stick to a corresponding fabric of small loops.

Warp: The lengthwise yarns found in all woven fabrics. The warp is stronger and denser than the weft (crosswise) threads.

Water resistant: The ability of a fabric to resist penetration by water, but not stop its penetration over a prolonged period of time.

Waterproof: A fabric that withstands penetration by water. Waterproof fabrics are generally coated with chemicals or laminated with a film that closes the pores.

Weft: The horizontal (crosswise) threads that intersect the warp threads (lengthwise) in a woven fabric.

Weight: The weight of a fabric is measured in ounces per yard.

Welt: A welt is a pocket opening treatment that uses a cut and sewn piece of fabric to finish the pocket opening.

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Wicking: Is the movement of moisture by capillary action within a fabric to where it can be evaporated quickly.

Windproof: Is the ability of a fabric to shut out wind or air.

Yarn dyed: A fabric such as a plaid, check, or stripe where the color is in the dyed threads or yarns before weaving or knitting the fabric, as opposed to the color being printed on the fabric after being woven.

Yoke: A part of the garment that is fitted across the shoulders at the back of a shirt.

Yoke vent: As above but open at the bottom.

If you know a term that is not in this glossary, please email it to NNEP@nnepeg.com and we will update this resource!