



Window Treatment Terminology

Banner Valance: A series of fabric triangles attached to a mounting board or threaded on a rod. Also called a handkerchief valance.

Balloon Shade: Curtain window treatments of Shirred or gathered fabric drawn up into billowy folds. Can also be called a balloon valance.

Baseboard: A narrow border that runs along the base of a wall where it meets the floor. Often made from wood. Also called skirting board.

Bay Window: A three-sided (or more) window that protrudes from the exterior wall of a house.

Bias: 45 degree diagonal to the direction of the weave in fabric.

Blackout Lining: A three-layer fabric consisting of two layers of cotton and one layer of opaque material. This lining helps completely block out light.

Bow Window: Bay windows that are semi-circular.

Box Pleats: Pleats formed by folding the fabric to the backside of the pleat in a "box" shape.

Braid: A flat decorative trim that can be used to embellish curtain window treatments. Gimps and woven ribbons can fall in this category.

Brocade: A rich fabric with an embossed design, usually gold or silver.

Buckram: A coarse cotton, hemp or linen cloth stiffened with glue or a glue-like substance used in the header of pleated curtains. Buckram can give lasting shape to a valance.

Bump: Cotton lining added to curtain panels to add body to a curtain.

Cafe Curtains: Short curtains hung on a rod.

Cafe Rod: A slim curtain rod.

Calico: A plain-weave fabric made from raw unbleached cotton.

Cartridge Pleats: Cylindrical pleats that are a great alternative for pleated valances and long curtain window treatments.

Cascade: A rippling or showering fall of fabric seen in curtains. Also called a jabot.

Casement Window: A hinged window operated by a crank mechanism that can open in or out.

Casing: A fabric pocket to encase a curtain rod or elastic for gathering. Usually made by folding fabric over twice and stitching. Basically, a hem with open ends.

Chenille: Very soft fabric made with fluffy cotton yarns.

Chintz: A floral printed cotton fabric.

Cleat: A metal or plastic hook placed at the side of the window to hold the cords of a shade or curtain.

Continental Rod: Flat curtain rods that protrude from the wall to add depth and interest to rod pocket treatments. The most common widths are 2-1/2" and 4-1/2".

Cornice: An ornamental band for covering a curtain rod. It is made of a rigid panel covered with fabric.

Cornice Board: A horizontal board used to support the cornice.

Cornice Pole: A pole with rings. Often used for heavy curtains.

Cotton: A natural fiber fabric made from fibers in the boll of the cotton plant.

Curtain Drop: The length of a curtain window treatment from the hanging system to the bottom edge.

Cut Drop: The finished bottom of curtain window treatments, plus allowances for hems and headings.

Cut Length: The length plus allowances for hems and seams or headers.

Cut Width: The width plus allowances for side hems.

Damask: A woven fabric made from wool, silk or cotton. The special weave gives the fabric a raised appearance.

Double Hem: A hem where the fabric is turned over twice, usually by the same amount, so the raw edge is completely encased.

Double-Hung Window: The most common type of window, consisting of an upper and lower sash.

Dowel Rod: A slender rod placed inside the fabric pocket to raise or lower a shade.

Drapery: Curtain window treatments covering, usually lined, made of mid- to heavyweight fabrics, and extending to the floor.

Drop Length: The distance from the top of the object to where you want the fabric to end.

Fabric Panel: The result of all fabric widths sewn together to make curtain window treatments.

Facing: A piece of fabric that strengthens the main piece of fabric.

Fascia: A vertical board that covers the curtain heading.

Festoon: A fabric treatment that is fixed at the top of a window.

Finial: An ornamental projection on the end of a curtain rod or pole.

Finished Length: The length of the curtain after all the hems and headers are sewn.

Finished Drop Line: The place where the curtain stops.

Flat Fell Seam: A seam that gives extra strength to a seam.

French Door: Doors with multiple windowpanes.

French Seam: A way of stitching fabric together with the seam hidden from view. Used on sheer fabrics.

Gather: Bringing fabric into a tighter position to add fullness.

Gathering Tape: A heading tape that creates a ruffling effect.

Gingham: Plain-weave cotton cloth with a checked pattern.

Goblet Pleats: A pleat that is pushed out and filled with curtain lining instead of folded inward.

Grain: The direction of threads in a fabric. Can be crosswise or lengthwise. **Header:** The extra fabric above the curtain rod pocket.

Heading: The very top of curtain window treatments.

Hem: Turning under and stitching a raw edge.

Holdback: An ornament used to hold curtain window treatments off the window when open.

Interlining: A soft fabric placed between the fabric and the lining that provides insulation.

Jamb: The molding around the window.

Lath: The top of a shade is fitted to this piece of wood, which is usually 2" x 1". The lath can be attached to the wall, ceiling, or window frame.

Leading Edge: Where the curtain panels overlap in the center of a two-way traverse rod.

Lining: Fabric layer placed on the back of curtains to protect them from light and dust.

Mitering: A diagonal seam that joins two pieces of fabric at a corner.

Mullion: The vertical strip of wood that separates the panes of glass in a window.

Palladian Window: A series of windows with an arch on top.

Pattern Repeat: The distance between identical motifs in a pattern. The total measurement of one complete design. Knowing the distance between the pattern repeats on the fabric is vital in order to join patterned fabric and also is key in determining how much extra fabric to buy.

Pelmet: A panel that covers the top of a curtain. Also called a cornice.

Pencil Pleats: Pleats created using a special tape sewn to the heading of a valance or curtain. When the tape is drawn up, it creates a narrow row of folds resembling a row of pencils laid side by side.

Picture Window: A large window with fixed panes.

Pinch Pleats: A style of pleat, usually triple folded, used at the header of curtain window treatments.

Piping: A decorative edge made from bias-cut fabric strips that cover a cord.

Pleat: A crease or fold.

Pleater Tape: A ready-made strip sewn to the top of curtain window treatments and attached to the hanging system.

Poplin: Cotton fabric with corded surface.

Railroading: Turning fabric on its side so the width becomes the length. Used to eliminate seams for sewing valances, cornices, or ruffles.

Recess Window: A window set back into a wall. Curtain window treatments are often hung inside the recess.

Return: The measurement from the front of the rod to the wall.

Rod: A metal fixture that holds curtain window treatments instead of a pole.

Rod Pocket: The flat casing that runs the width of the panel. The curtain rod is in the rod pocket.

Roman Shade: A window shade made from fabric that hangs flat when down but folds like an accordion when raised.

Rosette: Decorative trim shaped like a rose.

Scallops: Deep round curves. Often seen at the bottom edge of cafe curtain window treatments.

Sconce: A wall-mounted fixture that is great for draping fabric through.

Seam: The join where two pieces of fabrics are sewn together.

Seam Allowance: An extra amount of fabric used when joining fabric.

Self-Pelmet: A piece of fabric stitched to the top curtain window treatments to make it appear to be separate.

Selvage: A finished edge that runs the length of the fabric piece.

Sheers: Curtain window treatments made with sheer fabric that allows daylight in while providing limited privacy.

Silk: A very strong, yet soft fabric made from threads produced by silkworms.

Slot Heading: *See Rod Pocket.*

Smocked Pleats: A heading that resembles a hand-worked smocked pattern.

Spring-Tension Rod: An adjustable rod that fits inside the window frame. The internal spring makes it possible to adjust this rod.

Support: A pole or track that holds a curtain window treatment or shade.

Swag: Curtain window treatments that can be hung on a rod or attached to a mounting board. A length of fabric loosely draped over a rod can be dressed to form a casual style swag treatment.

Tail: The fabric that hangs from the end of a swag.

Tapestry: Machine-woven fabric that looks hand-woven.

Thermal Lining: Fabric that is layered with aluminum on one side for insulation.

Tieback: Fabric, rope, ribbon, trim, or other materials used to hold curtain window treatments back.

Valance: A top window treatment that can stand alone or be mounted over curtains.

Voile: Light plain-weave cotton fabric often used for a sheer curtain window treatment.

Weights: Small metal discs placed in the hem of curtain window treatments to make it hang better.