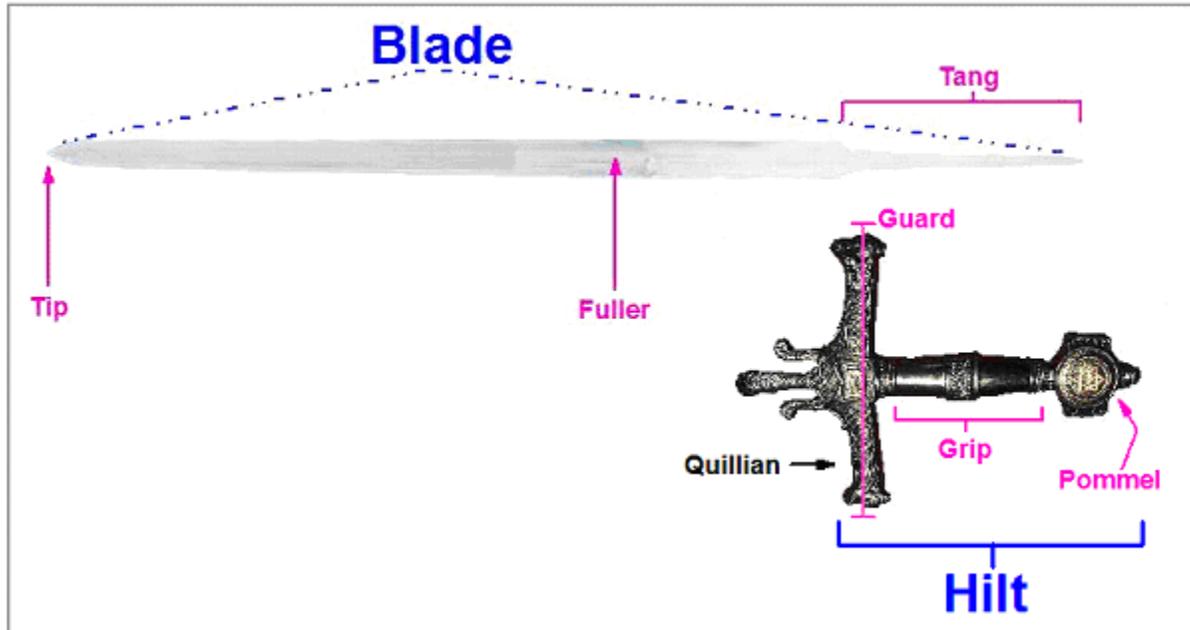


The Sword

The sword diagrams below and the accompanying list of sword terms and definitions are provided as a fundamental reference for understanding basic sword parts and blade terminology.



BASIC SWORD PARTS AND BLADE TERMONOLOGY DEFINITIONS:

Annulet (Finger-Ring)

Additional loops incorporated into the guard/quillion portion of a sword and extend forward past the guard. Small in size, they were designed to protect a finger when wrapped over the guard. Originally developed in the middle-ages, they are common on many styles of Renaissance cut and thrust swords, rapiers, small swords, and Late-Medieval swords. (Referred to as the "*pas d'ane*" incorrectly.)

Back

The portion of the blade which is opposite the sharpened edge. A double-edged sword, which has both edges sharpened, has no back.

Blade

The elongated, often sharp portion of the primary sword part to which all other parts are added. One end tapers to a sharp tip while the other end is dull (the tang) to be used for mounting the guard, grip and hilt. Better known as the 'working part' of a sword, a blade is the foundation of a sword's strength.

Blade forms include straight-short (gladius) and straight-long (two-handed) with one or both sides sharp, curved with crescent tip (scimitar), curved double-edged (shotel), curved with a convex cutting edge (saber), curved with concave cutting edge (yataghan), and great double-edged blade (keris), non-edged (estoc).

Compound-Hilt (Complex-Guard)

Elaborate protective covering encompassing the guard. Typically include side-rings, knuckle-bar and finger-rings. Most common in rapiers and many renaissance and some late-medieval swords, these designs include the cage-hilt, swept-hilt, ring-hilt, and some basket hilts.

Edge

The thin sharpened side of a blade used for cutting extending from the guard to the tip. Swords with two edges sharpened are referred to as 'double-edged'. The Japanese katana is a well known single edge sword just as the Roman short sword is known for its double-edges.

Ferrule

Metallic rings (or bands) overlying and retaining the grip at both ends.

Forte'

Portion of blade between hilt and mid-blade (is thought to be the stronger blade area).

Fuller

A center channel, or groove, cut-out of the blade's surface designed to increase a sword's strength and blade flexibility. It typically starts at the hand-guard and extends 2/3 of the blade's length on one or both sides. Although only a small portion of blade material is removed, an additional result is a lightening of the blade weight.

Variations include one or multiple thin parallel lines cut into the blade. The fuller has been mistakenly known as a 'blood groove', 'blood lines', or 'blood run' due to a misconception that blood would be channeled within the fuller. It actually functions to stop the suction (resistance) caused as the sword was being removed from a victim.

Grip (handle)

Area behind the guard designed to safely hold and control a sword. The center part of the hilt encompassing the tang. Outer materials include leather, wire and fabric, or metal plates applied to a hollow cylindrical core of wood, horn or metal.

Other designs include two pieces of wood (or other material) applied to both sides of the tang as found in Japanese swords like the samurai or katana. Modifications and variations have been developed based upon safety needs, as well as comfort and fashion.

Guard (cross guard, hand guard) (see also, upper guard, lower guard or quillon)

Protective part of the hilt designed to block, deflect, pin or redirect an opponent's sword thereby minimizing or avoiding injury. Typically located between the blade and grip with the tang passing thru the center.

Some of the various styles include straight perpendicular designs as found in medieval knight swords, petite cylindrical designs as in Roman short swords, and elaborately coiled designs common to rapiers. Other unique designs exist on sabers, foils, cutlass, etc.

Hilt

Commonly referred to as the 'handle of a sword'. Comprised of three parts: Guard (hand-guard), Grip (area to safely hold and control sword) and Pommel (secures guard and grip to blade). Often the most distinctive part of a sword giving it charm, character and status. Is a basis for determining sword history, value and classification for many sword collectors. These sword parts can be reused or replaced to make a sword more unique or personalized for the owner.

Langet

A forward protrusion of the guard (on the blade side) designed to fit around the mouth of the scabbard to securely hold the sword in place when holstered.

Lower end

Medieval sword term for the tip of a sword.

Lower Guard

A smaller guard positioned between the grip and pommel (or pommel nut) to provide sword balance and strength and user protection when striking a blunt blow with the pommel.

Point (tip)

Sharpened end of the sword blade, opposite the tang and hilt assembly. Designs vary between rounded, diamond, and angled (as in a Japanese samurai katana). Where as the blade's edge is used for cutting, the point is primarily used to penetrate a target when thrusting forward, or it can deeply scratch if swung in any horizontal, vertical or diagonal direction - as in the mark of Zorro ("Z"). The strength of the point is very important to the versatility of a sword's use as an offensive weapon.

Pommel

Rear-end part of a sword's hilt (handle). Designed to function as a counter-weight, of specific weight, to offset the blade heaviness of a sword. Gives balance to the sword close to the guard increasing the user's ability to maneuver the sword, and with increased speed. Common to broad swords, Roman short swords and rapiers with varying styles elaborately designed to complement the guard. Are often threaded for mounting directly to the tang, or attached to the tang by using a small bolt known as either a pommel nut, tang nut, pommel bolt or capstan rivet.

Quillion

The extended portion of the guard occurring on either side of the blade in either a straight or 'cross' design (as in medieval knight swords), or curved (as in Renaissance rapiers and swords).

Riser

Opposite to the design of a 'fuller', the riser is a raised center-line on the blade which improves the overall rigidity of a sword's blade.

Ricasso

Area of blade closest to the guard which remains unsharpened to provide a safe surface for "fingering" (a technique involving the wrapping of one's index finger around this portion of the blade to achieve increased control of the sword's point, or tip). Not common to every sword type, but on very large swords, the ricasso is large enough to be grasp by the second hand for a two-handed grip on the sword.

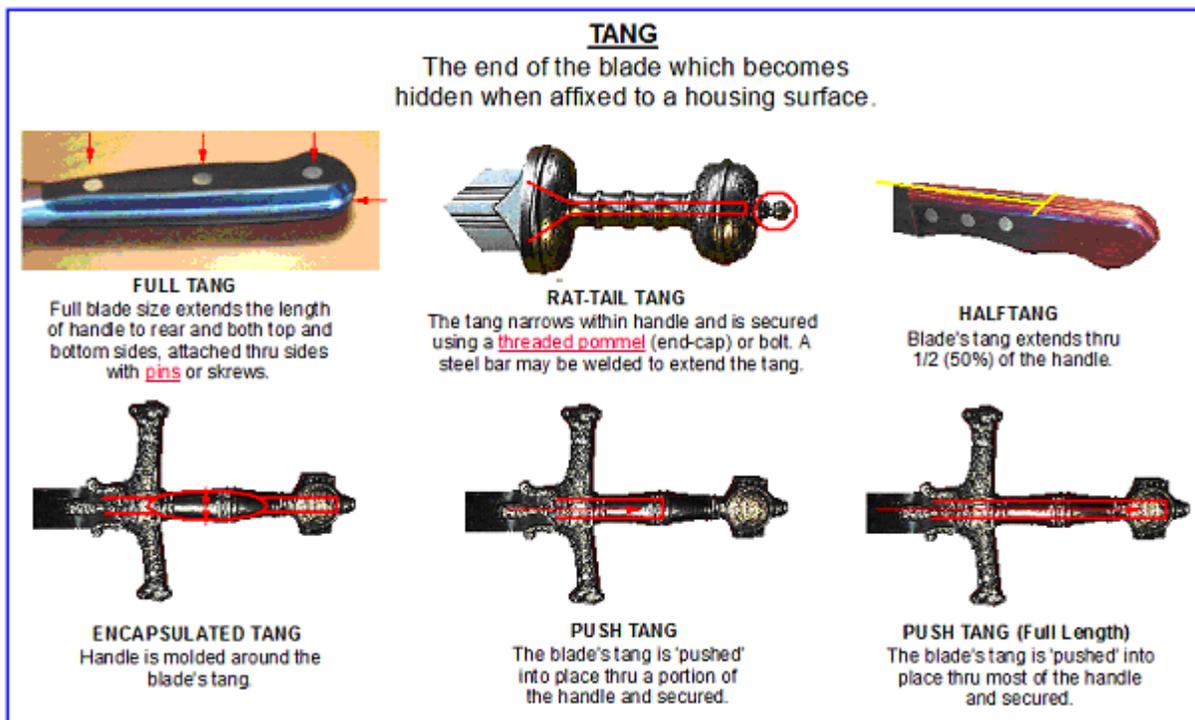
Sword

Defensive or offensive weapon used in personal combat for cutting and thrusting to inflict injury against an opponent. Primary components are a blade and hilt. The blade is elongated, sharp on one or both cutting edges, tapering to a sharp point. The hilt has three sections: Guard (hand-guard), Grip (area to safely hold and control sword) and Pommel (secures guard and grip to blade).

Tang

Rear-end part of a sword's blade, opposite the point (tip) and is unsharpened. Designed to function as the foundation for the hilt to be mounted upon. Provides increased blade strength based upon the type of tang used (shorter tangs do not provide the same advantages of full-tangs).

Most tangs taper down to a lesser width and thickness from the guard towards the pommel nut. However, the length it extends depends upon the specific sword design and may only extend as far as mid-hilt. "Full-tang" swords have tangs designed to retain the width and thickness of the blade throughout the full length of the hilt. Tangs do not have to be part of the original blade. A separate piece of metal can be used and welded to the blade, but this would not have the same strength as a solid one-piece blade.



Tang nut

A small bolt used to attach the grip and guard to the tang. Pommels may function in this capacity when they are threaded, however a 'threaded pommel' is not a tang nut. Also known as a pommel nut, pommel bolt or capstan rivet.

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