

Archery Terms/Glossary

A

A/C/C

Aluminium/Carbon/Competition arrow shafts made by 'Easton'. Made of multiple layers of carbon graphite fibres in a epoxy resin wrapped over a high strength aluminium shaft (0.2mm thick). The code numbers printed on the shaft indicate its size: eg. 3-71/300 where 3 is the number of carbon layers, 71 is the last two digits of the core aluminium shafts thickness in thousandths of an inch (0.271") and 300 is the spine of the arrow in thousandths of an inch. There are specific types of points and nocks for this arrow shaft. These shafts are lighter than the 'Ultra-Lite' Aluminium shafts.

A/C/E

Aluminium/Carbon/Extreme arrow shafts made by 'Easton'. Made much the same as the A/C/C arrows, except the shafts are 'barrel-shaped', being thicker in the centre of the shaft and tapered at each end. This creates a much lighter and stiffer arrow. The code numbers printed on the shaft indicates its size: eg. 1206G/370 where 12 is the diameter of the aluminium core shaft measured in 64ths of an inch, 06 is the aluminium shafts thickness measured in thousandths of an inch, G indicates the model series and 370 is the spine of the arrow in thousandths of an inch. There are specific types of points and nocks for this arrow shaft. These shafts are lighter than the A/C/C shafts.

Actual Draw Weight

The measured or calculated draw weight of an Archer. eg. a marked bow of 30 lbs. at 28" draw when used by a person having a 27" draw length will have an actual draw weight of 28lbs. (a 1" difference in draw length will make approx. 2 lbs. difference in draw weight.)

Aim

To superimpose a sight pin on the centre of a target or, when not using a sight, the placement of the tip of the arrow on a particular point for a given distance.

Anchor

A combination of points to which the bowstring and/or index finger of the drawing hand are drawn to on the face and neck.

Anchor point

Definite spot on the archers body, normally the face, on which string and index finger come to rest.

Arbalest

A medieval crossbow that needed a windlass to draw the bowstring back.

Arm guard

A piece of stiff material used to protect the bow arm from the slap of the bow string upon release, worn on the inside of the bow arm.

Arrow plate

A plate, adjustable or fixed, to which the arrow rest is attached.

Arrow point or pile

Metal point inserted into end of arrow shaft. Can also be that the shaft fits inside the point as in wooden shafts and some carbon shafts.

Arrow rest

A projection or support on the bow or the arrow plate located in the sight window on which the arrow lies when nocked on the bowstring.

Arrowsmith

A person who makes metal arrowheads.

Axle

The bearing pin holding the wheel in the limbs of a compound bow.
(The length of a compound bow is measured from top axle to bottom axle).

B**Ballista**

A very large medieval crossbow used by an army attacking the walls of a besieged town. This crossbow was capable of firing large rocks and spears long distances.

Barebow

The discipline of shooting without a bow sight, stabilisers and release aid.

Belly

The side of the bow nearest the bow string. Now called the 'face'.

Blunt point

Usually a conical rubber arrow point with a flat tip designed not to let the arrow penetrate a target, but rather bounce off.

Bodkin

A medieval type of arrowhead designed to shoot through protective chainmail usually worn by Knights.

Bolt

A short arrow used in a crossbow.

Bow arm

The arm that holds the bow.

Bow hand

The hand that holds the bow.

Bowhunter

A person who hunts animals using a bow. Also, a competitive style of shooting using a compound bow, pin sight, and a stabilizer not longer than 11 inches.

Bow sight

A mechanical device attached to the bow with which the archer can aim directly at the target.

Bow sling

A leather or nylon strap, fastened to either the bow or the archer's hand, which prevents the bow from falling to the ground when the archer shoots without gripping the bow.

Bowstring

A multi stranded string of either Dacron, Kevlar, Fastflight or other material looped to the bow nocks or teardrops.

Bow stringer

Cord with two pockets of dissimilar size or one pocket and one saddle, used to string a recurve bow.

Bow stave

A piece of wood used to make a bow.

Bow square

T-Shaped device to measure brace height and nocking point location.

Bowyer

A person who makes bows.

Brace height

Shortest distance from the string to the pivot point of the bow when strung. (Old English : Fistmele).

Broadhead

An arrowhead with triangular shaped cutting blades used for hunting animals.

Bubble

See 'level'.

Butt (Target Butt)

Any backstop to which a target face is attached.

C

Cables

The plastic covered steel cables that connect the string via the cams or wheels to the opposite limb of a compound bow. Cables can also be made of Fastlite string material.

Cams

The wheels on a compound bow have a 'cam shape' to one side that controls the amount of force and the shape of the draw/force curve of the bow. Many different cam shapes are available to choose from; eg. Hoyt's 'Accuwheel' = soft cam, smooth shooting for target archers, 'Performa Cam' = radical cam, stores maximum energy for bowhunters.

Cant

To hold the bow to the right or left while at full draw. The reference to right or left is determined by the position of the top limb.

Cast

The distance a bow can propel an arrow.

Centre serving

The protective winding on the centre of the string where the arrows are nocked.

Centreshot bow

A bow where the sight window has been cut past the bow's centreline.

Classic style

A method of shooting with as little deviation as possible from normal relaxed body position.

Clicker

Small strip of metal mounted on the sight window in front of the arrow rest giving precise indication of full draw by snapping off the arrow point with an audible "click".

Clout

A form of target shooting in which an arrow is shot into the air at a 15 metre diameter target on the ground at distances of up to 180 metres.

Cock feather

The feather or vane set at right angles to the slot in the nock (also called the index fletch).

Composite bow

A Bow made of more than one material. Not necessarily a laminated bow.

Compound bow

A hand-drawn, hand-held bow that for similar poundage at full draw, stores more energy than a recurve bow through the use of two cables and two eccentric wheels. Most modern compound bows have a 65% let-off of the peak draw poundage at full draw, e.g. a compound bow of 60lb. peak weight will have a holding weight of approx. 21lb. at full draw.

Creep

Letting the arrow move slowly forward before release (not maintaining draw length). Usually caused by loss of shoulder/back muscle tension.

Cresting

Coloured bands applied to the arrow shaft used as identifying marks.

D**Dacron**

A synthetic material used to make bowstrings.
Breaking strain = 50 lbs./strand. Very durable and consistent.

Available in the following colours; black, white, green, yellow, brown, bronze, red and blue.

Dead release

A release where the drawing hand remains at the anchor point.

Director of Shooting

The official in charge of an archery tournament.

Doinkers

A rubber vibration dampener fitted to the ends of stabilizer bars. The stabilizer weights are then fitted into the doinker.

Draw check

A device fitted to a compound bow so the archer can maintain a consistent draw length. Can be similar to a 'Clicker' as on recurve bows or more usually as two separate small plastic blocks, one fitted to each cable. As the bow is pulled to full draw, the two blocks move together, until they touch at full draw.

Drawing hand

The hand which draws the bow string back to the anchor point.

Draw length

The distance, measured in inches, from the pivot point of the bow to the slot in the arrow nock when at full draw.

Draw weight

The force, in pounds, required to draw a bow a distance. (Usually stated '# xx @ 28' , where xx = lbs at 28 inch draw length).

E

End

A set number of arrows that are shot before going to the target to score (usually 3 or 6).

F

Face

The surface of the bow that faces the archer.

FastFlight

A synthetic material used to make bowstrings. Breaking strain = 95 lbs./strand. Minimal stretch ensures consistency. Slippery material that requires specific serving to be used. Available in the following colours; red, blue, white, purple, light green, dark green, yellow and black.

FastFlight S4

A composite of Polyester 'Spectra' (FastFlight) and 'Vectran' materials used to make bowstrings.

Breaking strain = 160 lbs./strand.

Due to its strength, less strands are required to make a bowstring, so its lighter and faster.

Field captain

The official in charge of an archery tournament.

Field archery

An archery round in which an archer shoots from a variety of distances at targets set up in natural country.

Field point

Arrow point shaped to prevent skips if the arrow hits the ground.

Finger tab

A piece of smooth material worn on the drawing hand to protect the fingers and to give a smooth release of the bow string.

Fistmele

The Old English term for Brace Height.

Flax-linen

A natural material used to make bowstrings.
Used in medieval times and now used on re-enactment longbows.

Fletch

To glue a feather or vane to an arrow shaft.

Fletcher

A person who makes arrows.

Fletching

The feathers, plastic vanes or other devices attached to the arrow shaft which stabilise the flight of the arrow.

Fletching jig

A device used to hold the arrow shaft in place and correctly locate and align the placement of the fletching.

'Fletch-tite'

A clear glue used to apply fletching to the arrow shaft. Also used to apply nocks to the arrow shafts.

It sets rapidly and remains slightly elastic (not brittle) to resist repeated shock and vibration in all weather.

Flight Arrow

An arrow used in Flight Shooting. Usually very light and very stiff and fitted with very small fletching to reduce wind drag.

Flight Bow

A very strong bow specifically made for flight shooting.

Usually with 'shoot through' riser and short limbs.
Draw weight can exceed 100 lbs.

Flight shooting

A discipline of archery purely aimed at attaining the longest distance able to be shot with a bow.

Flinching

Moving bow arm and/or drawing hand just before release.

Flu-Flu

A arrow fitted with many feather fletches spiralled around the arrow shaft. The arrow can only be shot a very short distance due to the amount of wind drag on the feathers.

Follow through

Movement of the drawing hand/arm and bow arm after the release.

Foot markers

Lines, golf tees or other devices to indicate the archer's foot positions at the shooting line.

Free style

A method of shooting using a bow-sight to aid the archer in aiming.

Freeze

Inability to move the sight to the desired position while at full draw, or inability to release.

Full draw

The position of the archer when the bow string has been drawn and the drawing hand is at the anchor point.

G

Goose feathers

The feathers of the Grey Goose were used by medieval archers due to their excellent arrow flight quality.

Grip

To hold the bow, used in reference to holding the bow, too tightly.
The handle of the bow held by the archer.

Ground quiver

A device, generally metal, pushed into the ground to hold arrows and/or bow.

Group

The pattern of arrows in the target.

H

Handle

The centre part of the bow exclusive of the limbs.

Heel

Exert pressure with the heel of the hand on the lower part of the handle during the shot.

HyperSpeed A/C/C Arrow

A brand name of arrow recently developed by Easton.
(Approx. cost \$35 each, so deep pockets required).

I**Index fletching**

The feather or vane set at right angles to the slot in the arrow nock (also called the cock feather).

J**Judo point**

A arrow point fitted with spring-loaded wire prongs that will catch on grass or scrub to stop the arrow quickly.

K**Kevlar**

A synthetic material used to make bowstrings.

A very strong and light material, but has no stretch, which causes more shock to the limb tips. Some bows cannot use Kevlar bowstrings.

Limited life-span of this material when used for bowstrings as it will break due to repeated bending.

Kisser button

Small protrusion placed on the bow string as an additional anchor reference point. Touches the archer's lips, teeth or nose at full draw.

Kyudo Archery

A ceremonial style of archery, first practised in Japan over 1200 years ago, involving Zen meditation to 'become one with the bow'.

Kyudo arrows

Traditional arrows used in Kyudo Archery.

These arrows are over 1 metre (40 inches) in length and fletched with traditional feathers.

Kyudo Bow

A Japanese longbow, approx. 2 metres (79 inches) in length. The 'grip' is about one third distance from the bottom tip of the bow. The bowstring is drawn using a shooting glove fitted with a thumb groove for the string to sit in. The drawing hand is pulled back until over the rear shoulder and the bowstring is released by relaxing the thumb, allowing the bowstring to slip out of the groove.

L**Laminated bow**

A bow made of several layers of different material glued together, usually two layers of fibreglass and a hardwood core.

Launcher

A style of arrow rest used extensively on compound bows.

Left-handed archer

An archer who holds the bow in the right hand and draws with the left hand to bring the arrow back under the dominant eye.

Left-handed bow

A bow with the sight window cut out on the right hand side when viewed from the face of the bow.

Let-off

The reduction in draw weight of a compound bow, when pulled to full draw, usually expressed as a percentage.

Most modern compound bows have a 65% let-off;

eg. a marked peak weight of 50 lbs. and a full draw weight of 32.5 lbs.

Level

A small spirit level, fitted in the bow sight, to indicate when the bow is being held vertical (compound bows only).

Limbs

The energy storing parts of the bow above and below the riser.

Limb Dampeners

Recently developed product consisting of a 'mushroom' shaped rubber form attached to the limbs of a bow to reduce the vibrations in the limbs after the release.

Limb pocket

A recessed slot in the top and bottom of the riser, shaped to fit the ends of the bow limbs and maintain correct limb alignment.

Limb twist

A failure in the bow limb where the bow tip turns away from aligning with the bowstring. Can be caused by over-stressing or over-exposure to very high temperatures making the laminations deflect.

In extreme cases, the bowstring can slip off the limb at full draw.

Longbow

Self bow in the tradition of the old English bows, slightly deflexed and without or with minimal reflex at the bow tips, approximately 1.7 metres (5 ft. 6 inches) in length.

Loop

The woven or served looped ends of the bowstring that fit in the bow nocks when the bow is strung.

Loose

To release the bowstring. (Old English term).

Command given to archers to begin shooting, usually in battles.

M

Mass weight

The actual physical weight of the bow.

N

Nock

To place an arrow on the bow string.

The attachment to the rear end of an arrow which is placed on the bow string and holds the arrow on the string.

Nock set

A small brass attachment added to the string to mark the nocking point.

Nocking point

The specific point where the arrow is to be nocked on the string.

O

Open stance

The position of the feet on the shooting line, where the left foot is behind an imaginary line extending between the archer's right foot and the centre of the target (for a right handed archer).

P

Peak Weight

The maximum draw weight of a compound bow.

The peak weight is adjustable on a compound bow by turning the limb bolts, giving approx. a 15 lb. weight range.

Peep sight

Also known as string peep. An aperture in a small round piece of plastic or metal which is set between the strands of the string above the nocking point to sight through in line with the bow sight for aiming a compound bow.

Pinching

The squeezing of index and middle fingers against the arrow nock during the draw, causing deflection of the arrow.

Pivot point

That point of the grip about which the moment forces (reactions) act. Normally the physical centre of the bow.

Pluck

Pulling the string away from the face in any other direction upon release than that dictated by a correct follow-through.

Pile or point

Metal tip of an arrow.

Point of aim

A method of aiming in which the point of the arrow is sighted on an object, usually on the ground.

Poundage

Draw weight of a bow.

Pressure button

A spring loaded button in the sight window against which the arrow lies and compensates for side-ways bend of the arrow.
Also called Plunger button.

Q**Quarrel**

A crossbow bolt.

Quiver

Device for holding arrows. Different forms are back, belt, bow, and ground quivers.

R**Rebound**

An arrow that bounces off the scoring area of a target.

Recurve

The end of the bow limbs that curve away from the archer when the bow is held in the shooting position.

Recurve bow

A bow that has recurve limbs.

Release

To allow the string to leave the fingers or the release aid.

Release aid

A mechanical device for releasing an arrow (compound bows only).

Right-handed archer

An archer who holds the bow in the left hand and draws with the right hand to bring the arrow under the dominant eye.

Right-handed bow

A bow with the sight window cut out on the left hand side when viewed from the face of the bow.

Robin-Hood

A bandit archer of legend who lived in Sherwood Forest, near Nottingham, UK. Said to have unsurpassed skill with the bow and arrow, able to split an arrow at will. Also robbed the rich and gave to the poor.

A term given to two arrows shot end to end, the second arrow embedded into the rear of the first.

(Happens rarely, so the arrows are usually kept as a trophy.)

Round

The shooting of a definite number of arrows at specified target faces from set distances. "Rounds" are given names, usually of towns or cities, in the country of origin, e.g. "Brisbane" = 30 arrows at 70 metres at a 122cm face + 30 arrows at 60 metres at a 122cm face + 30 arrows at 50 metres at a 80cm face + 30 arrows at 40 metres at a 80cm face. 120 arrows total for possible score of 1200 points.

S

Scope sight

A bow sight with a magnifying lens. Usually used in conjunction with a peep sight on a compound bow.

Semi-recurve bow

A bow that is neither straight nor fully recurved.

Serving

The protective wrapping of thread around the loops and centre of the bow string to protect it from wear.

Serving jig

A device that holds the serving thread and maintains consistent tension as the thread is wrapped around the bowstring.

Shaft

The arrow excluding the point, nock and vanes.

Shooting glove

A leather glove with only three fingers for holding the bowstring.

Shooting line

A line parallel to and a specific distance away from the targets from which all archers shoot.

Sight

Bow sight.

Sight extension

Bow sight extension which attaches to the bow .

Sight block

The movable part of the sight which holds the sight pin, aperture or scope.

Sight window

The cut out section of the bow above the grip.

Sling

Strap fastened to either the bow or the archer's wrist or index finger and thumb, to prevent the bow from falling when shooting with a relaxed bow hand.

Snap shooting

Releasing the arrow without pausing to aim carefully.

Spine

The arrow's resistance to bending, classified by hanging a 2 lb. weight at the centre of an arrow resting on two supporting points 26" apart, and measuring the amount of the bend.

Spinwing

A type of fletch made from mylar and is 'c' shaped in section.

A good fletch to use on A/C/C and A/C/E arrows as they rapidly stabilise the arrow flight through rapid spinning.

Stabilizer

An extension rod holding a small weight used to minimise the vibrations which occur during the release.

Stacking

A characteristic of bow performance where the force/draw curve rises more rapidly over the final part of the draw.

Stance

The position of the feet and body assumed when addressing the target.

String

A cord used to shoot a bow, ready for shooting and to propel the arrow in the act of shooting.

To place a bow string on a bow in the proper position for shooting.

String jig

An adjustable frame used to make bowstrings.

Stringer

A device to aid in the stringing of a bow.

String alignment

The placement of the string when at full draw in relation to the bow sight or the bow.

String angle

The angle formed by the string at the nocking point when at full draw. (also pinch angle).

String fingers

The fingers used to draw back the bow string.

String hand

Drawing hand, the hand used to pull the bowstring.

String height

Brace height or fistmele.

String peep

Peep sight.

T

Tackle

An inclusive term for archery equipment.

Tackle line

A line, set behind the shooting line, behind which is placed all such equipment which is not used during shooting (also equipment line).

Take-down bow

A bow which can be taken apart, generally in 3 pieces, for ease of travelling, storage and limb change-over.

Target captain

The person who decides who is to call the value of each arrow, record the scores and draw the arrows from the target.

Target face

The paper which is attached to the butt and indicates the scoring areas.

Target Panic

A mental condition causing a loss of control in shooting form. Symptoms can include; aim freezing, snap shooting, flinching and trigger punching.

TFC

Torque Flight Compensators are adjustable rubber vibration dampeners fitted to stabiliser rods, usually on v-bars.

Tiller

To shape the limbs of an unfinished bow for even bending. The reaction of the limbs whereby the nock ends propel the arrow in a straight line by moving an equal distance in equal time to return to brace height by means of the various stresses in the top and bottom limbs with compensation for the bowhand pressure below and the arrow axis/centre line above the centre of gravity of the bow.

Torque

Any rotation or twisting motion of the bow in the horizontal plane.

Toxophilite

A devotee of archery.

Trigger

The mechanism in a crossbow to release the bowstring.

To release the bowstring using a release aid.

Tune

To adjust the arrow rest, pressure button, string height and nocking point height to achieve good arrow flight.

U

Ultralite

A model of aluminium arrow made by 'Easton'.

The wall thickness of the shafts are either 11 or 12 thousandths of an inch thick. Available in sizes 1511 to 2512.

A much lighter arrow than the X7 and XX75 models.

V

Vane

Plastic fletching.

V-bar

A short extender fitted between the riser and long stabiliser that allows two short stabiliser rods to be added as a counter balance to the long stabiliser. The addition of the two short stabilisers on each side of the riser helps resist twisting reactions from the bow hand.

The v-bar is used in conjunction with TFC's.

W

Windage

The adjustment of the bow sight or the pin on the bow sight to allow for the wind deflecting the arrow.

Windlass

A medieval device to pull the bowstring back on a crossbow.

X

X7

A model of aluminium arrow made by 'Easton'.

Usually blue or black in colour.

A better quality of arrow than the XX75 model.

XX75

A model of aluminium arrow made by 'Easton'.

Usually gold in colour and also available in camouflage colours.

The printed code number on the shaft indicates its size;

eg. 1816 where 18 is diameter of the shaft in 64ths. of an inch and

16 is the wall thickness of the shaft in thousandths of an inch.

Available sizes range from 1413 to 2514.

X10

A model of aluminium/carbon arrow made by 'Easton'.
Used by the top archers at the Olympics.
(Approx. cost \$59.85 each plus points and nocks !!!,
very deep pockets required to buy a set of these).

Y**Yarn tassel**

A large tuft of yarn that is used to wipe mud and dirt from arrows.

Yew

The wood of a European evergreen tree used for making medieval longbows.