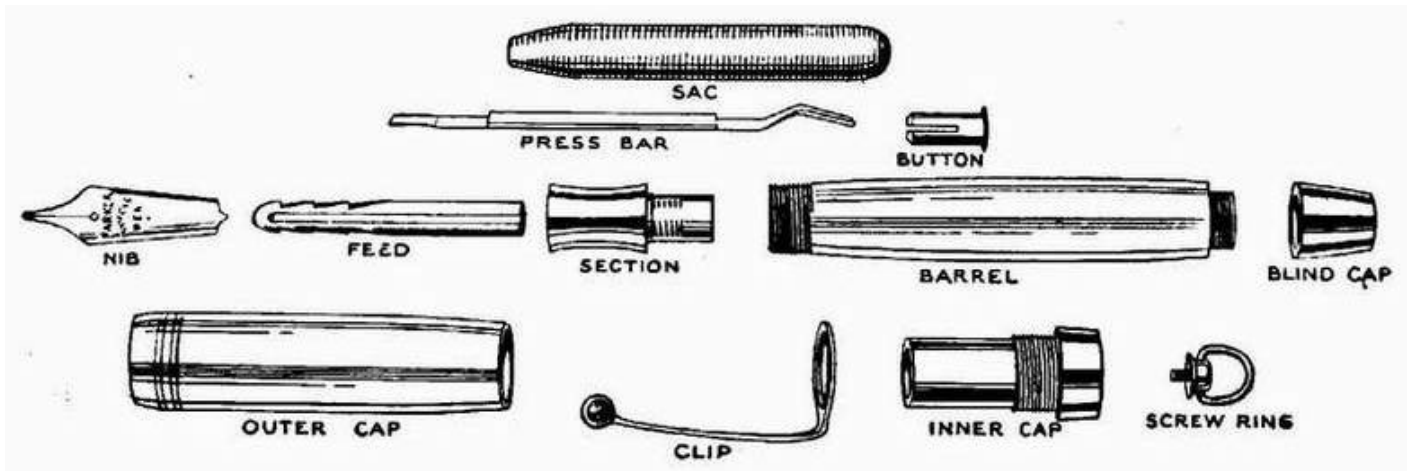


Fountain Pen Glossary Terms



Parts of the Fountain Pen

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

I have tried to make this glossary comprehensive and complete and to include both common terms and some of the lesser-known fountain pen terms. It should be especially useful to the beginning fountain pen user or collector. There is a lot of historical information sprinkled liberally within these definitions. I have strived to make all of the information as historically complete and accurate as possible. I understand that this is a daunting task for an individual so I solicit input and corrections from any and all of you. Thank you to all of the contributors to date.
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A

Accounting nib - One of several names for fine nibs used by bookkeepers. Also called "posting" nibs.

Acetone - A solvent often used to melt and re-fuse cracks in pen parts.

Acrylic resin - A modern thermoplastic with great clarity and durability used to make caps and barrels for many contemporary pens.

Adjustable nib - A Wahl nib first introduced on Dorics and later, on the Coronet line. The nib has a slide on top that adjusts degree of tine spread and hence, flexibility and line width.

Aerometric filler - Introduced by Parker in 1948. The barrel unscrews to reveal a sac surrounded by a metal casing. The pen is filled by pressing on a metal bar, which in turn compresses the sac. This is the same type of filler used in many modern pen converters. Other manufacturers adopted similar filling systems.

Ambering - One of several terms used to describe the discoloration of certain early plastic pen parts.

Arrow Clip- Parker's logo first appeared on the clip of the Golden Arrow, which was the forerunner of the Vacumatic. The arrow was used on most subsequent Parker clips and also on nibs and other parts. The arrow clip was redesigned in 1948 when the blue diamond was removed.

Art Deco - (short for *les arts decoratifs*) A school of design dating from before the Second World War, in which classical (ancient Greek or Roman) design motifs and details are applied to modern objects and materials. Many pens from the 1930s (such as the Eversharp Doric) exhibit Art Deco styling.

Aztec - An extremely rare and valuable Parker eyedropper filling pen with an Aztec Indian relief design.

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B

Bakelite - The first synthetic resin, seldom used in pens because of extreme brittleness. Parker did make some Bakelite eyedroppers and early button-fillers. Note: this is not pronounced "bake-lite," but rhymes with "bagel-ite," for the man (Bakel) who invented it.

Balance Pen - Sheaffer's name for the streamlined pen design that all manufacturers moved toward in the early '30s replacing the flat-tops of the '20s. Sheaffer's introduced the Balance Pen in 1930.

Ballpoint - The first successful ballpoint, invented by Lazlo Biro, was introduced in 1945 as the Reynolds. Eversharp soon introduced a ballpoint as well, but it was not until the first Parker Jotter in 1954, that the ballpoint really caught on and signaled the end of the golden age of fountain pens. The ballpoint ink refill contains a thick, greasy, slow-drying ink, with a tiny textured ball at the writing end. Ink is picked up by the ball and transferred to the paper.

Barrel The part of the pen that holds the ink, whether directly or in a sac or cartridge.

BCHR - black chased hard rubber

BHR - black hard rubber

Big Red - Nickname for Parker's red Duofold Senior. The name was also used for a Parker ballpoint replica in 1972.

Black and Pearl - Black and pearl pens were made by most major companies in the late '20s and '30s and are one of the colors most prone to discoloration. Perfect color in black and pearl is extremely rare, and most collectors have never seen a specimen. Even pens, which were never inked, almost always show some discoloration due to the natural aging of this plastic. Chemicals that leach out of the rubber sac is most likely the cause of the discoloration. This discoloration can not usually be corrected.

Black Giant - A series of huge hard rubber pens made by Parker in the early part of the century. A Red Giant was also made of red hard rubber, and while both pens are very rare, the Red Giant is by far the rarer of the two.

Bladder - Any rubber or latex ink sac that is depressed by a variety of mechanisms to draw in and hold the ink supply. Also called a sac.

Blind cap - A threaded cap that can be removed from the end of the barrel, used to cover a filling mechanism. Most common are Parker's Duofold, which covers a button-filling device, and Parker's Vacumatic and vacumatic-filling 51s, which cover pump plungers.

Blotter - Absorbent paper in the form of a card or strip, commonly used to absorb excess ink from handwriting. Blotters printed with advertising messages were popular promotional giveaways during the fountain pen era, and are now avidly sought by collectors.

Blow Filler - Best known blow-filling pens are those by Crocker. Air blown through a hole in the barrel depresses the sac inside. When the blowing stops, the sac inflates and draws in ink.

Blue Diamond - Introduced in 1939 on the Vacumatic, the blue diamond at the top of the clip signified Parker's lifetime guarantee as did Sheaffer's white dot. The blue diamond was also used on the vacumatic filling 51s through 1948.

Brassing - A term used to indicate wearing of gold-filled, gold-plated or rolled gold finishes. The base metal was often brass which became visible after wear, hence the term. Parts can be replated if the value of the pen warrants this treatment.

Breather hole - A small hole, drilled or stamped into the point at the base of the split of the tines. Commonly supposed to assist smooth ink flow, although many pens do not have a breather hole and do just fine without it.

Breather tube - A small plastic tube that runs from the end of the feed into the sac or barrel. During filling, ink is drawn in through this tube. Some manufacturers (notably Parker and Eversharp) adopted the breather tube as a means to minimize leakage from pens used on aircraft (where the cabin pressure is often lower than normal sea level atmosphere).

Broad point - A point having a large rounded nib, which typically writes with a wide, wet line. Broad points are great for signatures or large writing, but work less well for typical note taking or correspondence duties.

Bulb filler - A type of pen in, which repeated squeezing of a rubber bulb at the end of the pen, draws in ink through a breather tube. Similar to vacumatic filler.

Burnishing - A method of straightening bent nibs by stroking them with a tool. Burnishing is difficult to accomplish and should not be attempted by novices on valuable nibs.

Burp - A nickname given to the Eversharp Ventura which was the last pen produced by the company prior to its purchase by Parker. The burp pen supposedly relieved itself of air pressure in the sac resulting in a more consistent ink flow.

Button filler - A type of sac pen that uses a small button in the end of the barrel (usually concealed under a blind cap) that, when pressed, compresses a spring bar to collapse the sac. Parker introduced the design in 1913, and it became Parker's primary filling mechanism until the Vacuumatics were introduced in the early '30s. Parker continued to make button fillers well into the '40s.

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C

CA - An early ballpoint by Eversharp introduced in 1945. The pen operated by capillary action, hence the name.

Cap - A portion of the pen that covers the point while the pen is not in use, and usually can be posted (attached) to the back of the pen during writing. Comprised of an inner and an outer cap that creates airtight chamber for the nib when the pen is closed. It is either threaded or friction fit.

Cap band - trim consisting of one or more bands near the lip of the cap. The bands both decorate and reinforce the cap lip to prevent cracking. Some wide bands were used for personalized engraving.

Capillary filler - Parker introduced this fill system in 1956 in the model 61. Rolled cellophane was encased in a housing within the barrel. When the end of this housing was dipped in ink the ink was absorbed through capillary action. The unit had no moving parts but a limited ink supply. These pens are prone to problems when the ink is allowed to dry in the pen.

Cartridge - While there were some very early ink cartridges, generally the cartridge filler is thought of as a late fountain pen development, developed to respond to the quick and easy refilling of the new ballpoints. Many contemporary pens can use either cartridges or a piston converter. Very early cartridges were made of glass.

Casein - A material used in some early pens prior to plastic. Casein is derived from milk protein and permitted pastel colors. But the pens discolored quickly and did not hold up. Parker produced casein pens as early as 1914, and these may have been the first pens other than black and red. Briefly used for transparent or colored pen barrels and caps before the perfection of celluloid. Also called "milkstone" or "galalith". Also known as Radite, Pyroxalin, Pyralin, Permanite, etc.

Celluloid - One of the first synthetic plastics. The first plastic pens were made from a celluloid variation called Radite by Sheaffer in 1924, and Permanite by Parker in 1926. Celluloid is very flammable and these early pens should be protected from any flame potential.

CF - A cartridge filling pen by Waterman in the '50s.

Challenger - A line of button-fillers by Parker in the '30s. Made in two different sizes with several different clips and in a variety of colors, Challengers are often thought of as an economy line. The Deluxe Challenger added some trim, but the Royal Challenger, which came in three colors with a herringbone pattern, was arguably one of Parkers best-looking pens of the period, Early Royal Challengers has a unique sword clip while later models had a stepped clip.

Chased (chasing) - The machined engravings on hard rubber and metal pens. Before the colorful plastics emerged, chasing was one way to add some decorative flair to pens. Many different patterns of chasing were used. Embossed with regular geometric patterns (fish scales, chevrons, etc.).

Chevron - One of many chasing patterns. In the form of multiple "Vs", chevron chasing is most often found on pens by Wahl-Eversharp.

Clip - The element usually made of spring metal attached to the cap to secure the pen in a pocket. Early fountain pens did not have clips. Clips were optional and made by several manufactures. Lady's pens and ring tops do not have clips but were intended to be secured with a necklace or a ribbon.

Clutch ring - A pressure ring contained in the cap that secures the cap on a detent on the barrel. Used on the Parker 51s and many other pens.

Coin filler - One of many variations on the mechanism used to depress an internal pressure bar against a rubber sac for filling. Coin-fillers had a slot in the

barrel through which a coin was inserted and pressed.

Collector - A finned ink trap inside the hood of pens such as the Parker 51 and 61.

Combination Pen - A fountain pen and pencil combined in one instrument. Not the most practical of writing instruments, since they often have short sacs (low ink supply) and have to use short leads. These were very popular through the '30s and many second-tier companies marketed them as economical since they provided two instruments in one. Combinations by Parker, Waterman, and Eversharp are rare, while Sheaffer produced many.

Converter - A piston or aerometric filling device used in place of a cartridge so that cartridge pens can be filled with bottled ink.

Cracked ice - A distinctive Conway Stewart pattern of irregular black blocks separated by thin lines of silver.

Crescent filler - A sac pen (usually a Conklin or one of its imitators) that has a crescent or disk protruding from the side. The pen is filled by unlocking and then pressing on the crescent tab to depress the internal pressure bar against the rubber sac. Crescent fillers were the first commercially successful self-filling pens.

Crest - Introduced by Sheaffer in 1939, the Crest began the popularity of metal caps. It was a high-end pen, and the name has been re-introduced on a line of contemporary Sheaffer pens.

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D

Debutante - Any smaller version of a pen model. The term was used especially with the Parker Vacumatic Debutante of the '40s.

Demi - Like debutante, a term referring to a smaller version of a pen line. Parker 51s in the smaller size were called Demi.

Demonstrator - Many pens were produced with transparent barrels to be used as salesman's models to demonstrate internal working mechanisms. More recently, the clear pens have been produced for style rather than as sales demos, although these are still referred to as demos. Best known is the Pelikan 800

F

Feathertouch - Sheaffer's name for their non-lifetime nibs and later, a line of pen models.

Feed - A part that fits into the section of the pen, tight against the point, which provides for the smooth flow of ink from inside the pen out to the point. Feeds are typically made from hard rubber or plastic, and may be either smooth or comb-like in appearance. It is usually located beneath the nib.

Felt-tip pen - A pen with a dense, shaped fiber point. Ink is drawn from inside the pen through the point by wicking or capillary action and left on the paper. Typically, the ink is itself stored inside a less dense matrix or wick of fibers. Felt-tip pens were first used in commercial and graphic arts, but became popular for general writing during the 1970s. They are less popular now, perhaps because the points wear rapidly and the ink is prone to evaporate.

Fifth Avenue - An Eversharp model during WW 2 that attempted to compete with the Parker 51 having a hooded nib and a metal slip cap. The pen was not successful and was only made a few years.

Filigree - Generally refers to any cutout metal work in a pen's decorative metal overlay. Often made into elaborate patterns (floral, spider-web, etc.). Basic pens were fitted with filigrees after purchase by jewelers or silversmiths. Very popular decoration on more expensive pens up through the 1920s, filigrees can be found today on limited-production or custom made pens. . Parker and Waterman produced many filigree pens in the early part of the century.

Filler Unit - The element consisting of the button and diaphragm which expels air from the barrel and allows ink to be drawn into the barrel by vacuum. This is a component of the Parker Vacumatic filler.

Fine point - A pen point that has a small nib, and writes with a very thin line. Most pens produced overseas have fine point nibs.

Fingertip - An unusual looking pen from Moore introduced in 1946. The pen featured an inlaid nib. It was made in several sizes and while not successful at the time, they are very collectible today and are one of the better writing pens of the era.

Flexibility - A measure of how easily the tines of a nib give and spread under hand pressure. Stiff nibs are called manifold nibs and are preferred for writing through multiple copies. Flexible nibs can produce a variable line width or shaded effect, and while not common since the '30s in the US, they are making a popularity comeback. In fact, some buyers are led to believe that the more flex the better, which is not necessarily true.

Flighter - beginning with an aerometric 51 in 1950, Parker began a series of all stainless steel pens called flighters. Although George S. Parker had died years before, he was a great aviation fan and the company had always been associated with aviation motifs. Flighter in the 61, 45 and 75 lines followed.

Foto-fill - The original name of Parker's aerometric filling system for the 51. It was introduced as foto-fill in its first year, '49, then changed to aerometric in 1950.

Fountain pen - Generally any pen that holds and automatically feeds its own ink supply (including ballpoints, rollerballs, and stylographs). Specifically, a pen with an exposed or hooded split metal point, possibly with a hardened nib, fitted against a feed. A precision writing instrument with an internal ink reservoir where the ink flow is controlled by a technically advanced feed and collector system delivering a constant flow of ink to the nib.

Füllfederhalter - The German word for fountain pen, literally "fillable quill holder".

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G

GF - gold filled.

Glass Point - A pen where the point is made entirely of glass. Glass point pens were both durable and good writers. Economics and war played a significant role in when glass point pens were produced. Many glass point pens were imported from Japan in the late 1920s.

Gold seal - Wahl's double check mark in a gold circle used to signify their lifetime guarantee. The seal was introduced in 1928, but the double check marks were used earlier to signify the Wahl pen and the Eversharp pencil. Pens with the gold seal should also have a nib marked Gold Seal, although some Dorics and Coronets were made with the adjustable nib. The factory sometimes sent out pens with the gold seal but without the Gold Seal nibs. In these cases, the small gold seal was punched to indicate the pen did not have the lifetime guarantee.

Gold-filled (Gold fill) - Crated by welding or bonding thin sheets of gold to the base metal. The base can then be worked in various ways without tearing the gold fill. The fill is typically thick enough for engraving of monograms, etc. The proper nomenclature for a gold-filled item identifies the karat rating of the gold layer, and the percentage of the item's total weight accounted for by this layer, e.g., "1/10th 14k" means that the item contains (1/10 x 14/24) = 5.9% total gold by weight. The term **rolled gold** is synonymous, but appears to be less specific in its meaning.

Gold-plated (Gold Plate) - Describes base metal part with thinner gilding (typically applied to an item by chemical or electrochemical processes). Plating is usually thinner than gold fill, and **gold wash** is thinner still. Gold plating is not usually thick enough to allow engraving. One type of gold plating deserves special mention: vermeil is thin gold plate over silver. This process results in a very striking finish that combines the best of both materials.

Greek Key - a pattern used most often by Wahl, first on hard rubber pens for a chasing design, then on metal pens and finally on the wide band of the Oversize Personal Point which, because of this band, is known as the "Deco Band." The design, like many of Wahl's innovations, is currently being used by Omas.

Gregg - A system of shorthand; several makers produced Gregg models, which typically have an enamel Gregg logo set into the top of the cap.

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H

Hard rubber - Material used for pen barrels, caps, and other parts. Derived from natural latex resin, vulcanized (boiled with sulfur or other reagents) to form a solid, resilient, lightweight plastic-like material that can be machined into shape. Can tarnish or dull with age and exposure. Also called vulcanite or ebonite.

Hatchet-filler - A lever-like device shaped like a hatchet so that the protruding end goes through a slot in the barrel and depresses a pressure bar to fill the pen. The John Holland Co. introduced the hatchet-filler in 1915.

Holder - In older fountain pen parlance, the "pen" was the nib, and the rest of the pen was termed the holder.

Hooded nib - Describes a pen in which the point is largely covered by a plastic shell (first seen in Parker 51s, widely imitated).

Hundred Year Pen - A Waterman from the '40s that featured a hundred year guarantee. They were offered in three sizes and several colors, and with smooth barrels and those with distinctive concentric ridges.

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I

Imprint - most commonly refers to the company name often found on the barrel of a pen. But imprints are also found on clips, nibs, the back of caps and other locations. Condition of imprints is an important consideration in assessing a pen's value.

Ink - The writing fluid used in a fountain pen. Modern fountain pen inks are generally water solutions of aniline dyes, with various additives to improve flow and inhibit mold or other growths. Care should be taken when using modern pigment ink in vintage pens. The heavy pigments tend to clog fine feeds.

Inlaid nib - A nib permanently fixed to the outside of the section or hood.

Inner cap - Fits inside the cap against which the section fits snugly when the pen is closed to prevent ink from leaking and to slow the evaporation of ink from the point. Inner caps also hold clip assemblies in place and usually must be removed to remove the clip. This is done with a special tool known as an inner cap puller.

Inx - A pen made for a short time in the late '20s by the Carter Ink Co. The pen was not successful even though it was of high quality, and Carter returned exclusively to the ink business.

Iridium - a hard metal of the platinum family used to tip pens because of its combination of qualities such as taking a high polish and withstanding wear.

Italic point - A pen point that is ground off perpendicular to the length of the pen and that has no nib or iridium tip. Used for italic calligraphy.

Italic - A form of shaded writing practiced by modern calligraphers using stub or chisel pointed pens. Based on old-style italic typefaces, which were in turn based upon an Italian handwriting style of the renaissance.

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J

J-bar - see pressure bar.

Jewel - A decorative part on the end of a cap or barrel, typically resembling a gem or a pearl, often used to hide a screw or to neatly finish off the end of a machined barrel or cap.

Jotter - While the first ballpoints were introduced in the mid '40s, the Parker Jotter, introduced in 1954, was the first widespread success. In 1957, a tungsten point was developed called the "T-Ball Jotter." Parker's ballpoint refills of today still fit these early pens.

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K

Knockout block - a wood or metal stand with holes of various sizes. A section with nib and feed are inserted into the correct size hole nib down, and the feed and nib can be tapped out.

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L

Ladies' pen - Any of a number of small pens designed for women, usually with ringtops for chains or ribbons. Ladies' pens have become increasingly collectible, but still represent a good value in the vintage pen market.

Lapis - A blue color similar to lapis lazuli, a natural stone, introduced by Parker in 1927.

LaPlume - A French-made Parker, small in size and shaped like a small 51 but with an exposed nib and a threaded cap. These are rare and considerably more valuable than their appearance might suggest.

Lever - The external element used to depress an internal bar, which in turn compresses the sac against the barrel. See pressure bar.

Lever box - Sheaffer's original lever was pinned directly to the barrel; Waterman and others pinned it to a lever box, which was held in the barrel by tabs.

Lever-filler - A type of sac pen that has a lever built into the side of the barrel that, when lifted, compresses a pressure bar, which collapses the sac. The lever-filler was introduced by Sheaffer in 1912. Lever-fillers became the dominant fill mechanism for Sheaffer, Wahl and Waterman from the '10s through the '30s.

Lifetime - Sheaffer was first to offer a lifetime guarantee and used the term to designate both pens and nibs. Initially, the term was used only on the nib, but soon after the white dot was added to the pen body. The lifetime guarantee was introduced in 1920 and the white dot followed in 1924.

Lockdown filler - On Parker's early Vacumatics, the filler plunger locked in the downward position with a twist enabling the blind cap to be small.

Lucky Curve. Parker's trade name for its early j-shaped feed that extended into the barrel and curved outward to drain ink from the point when the pen is not in use (thereby to prevent leakage or dripping). Patented in 1894 it became a logo for Parker until 1929.

Lustraloy - Parker's name for brushed stainless steel used in the caps of 51s and later, 21s.

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M

Major - A Parker Vacumatic very similar to the standard size of the '40s but slightly longer.

Mandarin Yellow - Parker's yellow color introduced in 1927 on the Duofold line. The story is that the color came from a vase the Parker's found while travelling in the Orient. The color was not popular so it is now scarce and more valuable than common colors. The light color is subject to discoloration.

Maniflex - A line of plastic lever-filling pens by the Moore Co. of Boston from 1929 through 1946.

Manifold Point - The opposite of flexible in a nib - one that is rigid. Manifold nibs were popular for bookkeeping and pressing through multiple copies.

Marbled - An irregularly patterned combination of translucent colors; used to describe plastics but not hard rubber.

Matchstick filler - Another of the many approaches to depressing a sac inside the barrel to fill a pen. A matchstick or a small rod attached to the cap was used through a small hole in the barrel. Some Weidlich pens used this device.

Maxima - The large version of Parker's Vacumatic which replaced the earlier "Oversize Vacumatic." The O/S Vacumatic had three cap bands while the Maxima had a single wide engraved band, and later, the blue diamond on the clip.

Medium point - A pen point that falls somewhere between fine and broad. Most pens produced in the US are medium point.

Methyl methacrylate - A synthetic resin used in the caps and barrels of more expensive pens. Also called acrylic, Lucite, Plexiglas, etc. First used on the Parker 51 in 1941. It was used in part to combat corrosive inks.

Military clip - Clips that were mounted near the top of the cap to allow the pen to ride low in the pocket so a flap could be buttoned over it as required by military regulations. Sheaffer addressed this need in a novel and cost-cutting way by using their regular clip mounted upside down, then bending it over the top of the cap onto the other side.

Mnenhitsu - The Japanese word for fountain pen, literally "never-ending brush".

Moderne - a name first used by Parker in 1929 for their "Moderne" Black and Pearl Duofold. It was later used for the "Moderne" Green and Pearl Duofold as well.

Moire - Most commonly used to describe a line of Parker pastel pens from the late '20s with a fine lined pattern. Skylines with the striped cap and barrel are also sometimes referred to by this name.

Moss Agate - A green, bronze and gold color pattern used for the Waterman Patrician.

Mottled - early hard rubber was available only in black and in red and therefore difficult to decorate or provide variation. One approach was to swirl the black and red together which is known as mottled. The term is sometimes incorrectly used to refer to ripple and woodgrain hard rubber patterns.

Music point - A pen point with two slits specially adapted for music manuscript, usually similar to an italic point. This is a rare pen point.

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N

New old stock (NOS) - Describes an older pen or related item that has never been sold (i.e. is still in its factory packaging). Such pens are usually more valuable to collectors than "used" pens.

Nib - The metal writing point of a fountain pen. Usually made of gold but sometimes gold-plated or plain steel. May also be made of glass. Usually tipped with iridium or another hard metal. The nib is the element that controls the flow of ink onto the paper. Properly, it is a small bead of iridium or other hard metal soldered to the very tip of the pen point. Also nib is popularly used to mean the **point** itself (although many points, such as italic points, do not have nibs). See Point.

No-name - A pen or pencil with no markings to indicate the manufacturer. Many minor makers did not put their company's name on their products. These are most often cheap instruments, but some are of surprisingly high quality.

Nozac - A twist-piston filler by Conklin introduced in 1931. Early models were round, but later pens were faceted. Nozacs came in several sizes and colors including a herringbone pattern. Some had "word gauges," markings on the barrel that supposedly told the writer how many words were left in the ink supply. This was an early sac-less pen, and the name Nozac was a takeoff on "no sac."

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O

Oblique point - A chisel point ground at a small angle from the perpendicular, used for italic writing or for left-handers. Oblique points are usually associated with broad or stub nibs.

Octanium - An alloy of eight metals used by Parker to make nibs in the '50s. Octanium nibs perform equally well compared to 14k nibs. Octanium nibs are found on the Parker 21 line.

Open nib - A "retronym" designates a pen with a fully-exposed point (i.e., not hooded like the Parker 51).

O-ring - A rubber gasket necessary to maintain vacuum in Sheaffer's touchdown and snorkel filling pens. This is a vital replacement part often overlooked in restoration of these pens.

Overlay - A decorative covering, typically solid or filigreed precious metals, fitted to the barrel and cap of a pen. Often found on pens made up through the mid-1920s, Top-quality overlays add greatly to the collector value of a pen. See filigree.

Oversize - Any pen larger than standard size. Most of the major pen lines of the '20s and '30s came in oversize models. They include Parker's Duofold and Vacumatic, Waterman's 58 and Patrician, Sheaffer's Balance, Wahl's Equipoise and Doric, and Conklin's Endura and Nozac.

Over-under feed - A feed that contacts both surfaces of the point (found principally on some older Onoto pens and on the Parker 180)

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P

Parker "51" - The world's most solid fountain pen. The first pen with a hooded nib. Over 20 million were sold in nearly 30 years of production, 1941 to the mid 1970's.

Pastel - In the late '20s Parker introduced a line of small pastel colored pens. In the '50s Esterbrook made a line of pastel purple pens. Both are today referred to as pastels.

Patrician - A large high end pen from Waterman, introduced in 1929. They were a very art deco styled pen and are highly valued by collectors today. A smaller lady's pen was added called the Lady Patricia.

Permanite - The name Parker gave to its early plastic. Parker made its first plastic pens in late 1926.

Personal Point - A nib/section assembly introduced by Wahl in 1929. It permitted the nib and feed to be screwed out of the section and replaced in a minute. Esterbrook also made a user removable point. See Re-new Point.

Peter Pan - a very small novelty pen made by Salz in the '20s and '30s. They came in a variety of decorative finishes and as either eyedropper or lever-fillers.

PFM - Sheaffer's popular "Pen For Men." A large snorkel-filler, the PFM came in eight grades. It also featured an inlaid nib. PFMs are highly valued by collectors and by those who uses vintage pens because it is such an excellent performer.

Piston Filler - A pen that uses a piston that moves through the barrel to draw in ink. The Conklin Nozac is an early example. Today both Pelikan and Mont Blanc use the system. Converters that replace cartridges also use the piston device.

Plunger Filler - This pen has a moving gasket in the barrel similar to the piston but is operated by pumping a rod. Pressing the plunger creates a vacuum behind the gasket which in turn causes ink to be drawn into the barrel. This system was used on Sheaffer and Wahl pens in the '30s. They are difficult to restore and pens with these systems are considered somewhat less valuable than their lever-filling counterparts. Also called the vacuum filler.

Point - The metal portion of a fountain pen that fits against the feed and conducts ink down a split to the nib. The most desirable points are of solid gold (either 14k or 18k), although points have been made from other precious metals such as titanium and platinum and also glass. Steel points are functionally identical but esthetically less pleasing to some, and typically of less value to the collector. The term nib is commonly used interchangeably with point. See nib.

Posting - Refers to placing the cap on the rear end of the barrel while in use. One must be very careful in doing this with early pens that are brittle. Most cap lip cracks resulted from posting the cap too firmly. The term also refers to a very fine nib used by accountants for posting numbers.

Pressure bar - Almost all pens using a rubber ink sac employ a bar inside the barrel that compresses the sac and also provides spring bar resistance against accidental operation of the lever. The bar is activated by a lever, button, crescent, coin etc. One rubber sac pen that does not use a pressure bar is the Twist Filler. Also called the J bar.

Propel-Repel - A mechanical pencil that advances lead by twisting a mechanism and retracts it by twisting in the opposite direction. Early models were propel only. Repeater pencils were introduced in 1935, but many companies continued the propel/repel.

Pyralin - Wahl's name for the early plastic used in their first plastic pens.

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Q

Quink - Parker's brand name for their ink. "The only ink that contains Solv-x."

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R

Radite - Sheaffer's name for their early plastic. Sheaffer made the first plastic pens in 1924.

Re-new Point - Esterbrook's name for their system of user replaceable points. Esterbrook made more than 40 different point styles. Wahl also made a replaceable point. See Personal Point.

Repousse - Refers to a floral relief metal pattern best known in early Watermans. Some of Waterman's repousse pens are among the most beautiful and the most valuable.

Resin - The "raw" form of plastic. Resin isn't a very descriptive or precise term, as it can be applied to any material from bakelite to celluloid to acrylic.

RHR - red hard rubber.

Ring-top - Usually a small pen, with a ring for a chain or ribbon on top instead of a pocket clip. These are usually lady's pens since it was considered inappropriate for women to wear pens in an external pocket.

Ripple - another pattern used to adorn hard rubber pens. Ripple designs are best known in Waterman's pens and came in several color patterns.

Rolled Gold - See gold-filled.

Rollerball clip - Wahl's exclusive clip that had a small ball at the end that aided in moving the clip over pockets. Wahl probably obtained the patent for the clip when they purchased the Boston pen company.

Rollerball pen - Similar in construction to a ballpoint pen, but uses a liquid ink. Gives some of the appearance and feel of fountain pen writing.

Royal Challenger - A special line within Parker's Challenger series. Royal Challengers had a distinctive sword clip early on which was changed to a stepped clip. They are also distinctive in their herringbone design in three colors: gold, silver and burgundy.

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S

Sac - See bladder.

Safety Pen - An early eyedropper filler that employed a device that withdrew the nib assembly into the barrel like a lipstick by turning a knob at the end of the barrel. When the cap was on tight, this prevented the pen from leaking.

Section - The part of the pen at the end of the barrel that holds the nib and feed. Sections are either threaded into barrels or are designed to friction fit. This is where one's fingers rest when writing.

Self-filler Pen - A pen that holds its own ink supply and refills the nib automatically rather than having to dip it. It can be filled without using an eyedropper or other external device. This is usually considered a criterion for a pen to be a "fountain pen." Waterman and several other companies designated pens as "self-fillers."

Shaded writing - Writing that shows natural variations in thickness due to variable pressure and rotation of the pen point in the hand, due to flexible, stub, or italic points.

Signet - A model of the Parker "51" that had a gold-filled cap and barrel.

Skrip - Sheaffer's brand name for their ink. "Skrip writing fluid successor to ink."

Skyline - Wahl-

was changed to Vacumatic. The Vacumatic underwent many changes and styles before it was discontinued in 1948.

Vent - The hole in the nib, which allows air to be drawn into the reservoir to replace expelled ink.

Ventura - One of the last Eversharp models before the company was bought out by Parker. Also called the burp pen, the ventura was not a high quality pen and was not a commercial success.

Vermeil - A pen that is sterling with gold-plating overlays. Vermeil pens are scarce, usually of very high quality, and considerably more valuable than sterling or gold-filled models.

Visualated - A section that is clear allowing one to view the ink supply. Fewer pens in most models were made with these sections, and they tend to enhance value.

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W

Wahl-Oxford - A line of pens from Wahl in plastic with either plunger or lever fillers. These are often thought of a lower quality pens, but many are of equal quality to the Wahl models.

White dot - Sheaffer's lifetime guarantee symbol first introduced in 1920. The white dot was first placed on pens in 1924. "Sheaffer's Lifetime pen guarantee covers everything except loss, for your lifetime." Wahl copied it with the gold seal, and later Parker with the blue diamond.

Woodgrain - A pattern in hard rubber pens used widely by Waterman and Wahl, and also by several other companies.

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Last updated 3.2.2002