

ART DECO – A jewellery style that originated in Paris. It was popular from about 1915 until 1925. This style has distinct geometric lines and angles.

ART NOUVEAU – A jewellery style popular around the turn of the 19th century exemplified by curves, women with flowing hair and enameled pieces.

ASSAY – There are four official assay offices in the UK. Based in London, Birmingham, Sheffield and Edinburgh. They conduct tests on the purity of the metals and alloys to determine whether the piece is pure enough for a hallmark.

BANGLE – A stiff bracelet that slides over the hand. Bangles may be completely solid or open at the ends that pass each other creating a cuff style bracelet.

BAND – A ring which is the same width all the way round.

BASE METAL – Any non-precious metal other than Gold, Silver, & Platinum. ie, Copper, Nickel, Bronze, Brass, Stainless Steel, Aluminium, Lead and combinations of these are base metals often used in the manufacturing of fashion jewellery.

BOX CHAIN – A type of chain where links are wide and square so they form boxes.

CABOUCHON – A gemstone that is a polished domed shape on the top and flat on the bottom. Opaque gems such as Onyx, and translucent stones such as Sapphires are typically cut as cabochons. They can be in many shapes.

CAMEO – A shell or other gemstone that is relief carved, ie, When the carved material is composed of two different coloured layers, a raised design in one colour will contrast against a different coloured background.

CASTING – A process used to manufacture jewellery. Molten metal is poured into a mould and allowed to cool, resulting in a copy of the shape of the mould, also called a casting. Items can be cast one at a time, or in very large quantities with specialized manufacturing techniques.

CHANDALIER EARRINGS – These closely resemble mini chandeliers.

CHARM – A decorative pendant or trinket worn on a bracelet, earrings or necklace- usually with sentimental value to the owner.

CHARM BRACELET – An open style link bracelet that charms can be attached to.

CLASP – A lock or closure that fastens a necklace, bracelet, etc Typical clasps are a Lobster Claw, Barrel Lock, Pearl Clasp, or Spring Ring. Clasps may be hidden or a featured part of an item's design such as a toggle clasp.

CLUSTER RING – A ring set with many gemstones. The gemstones may be of similar or different colours or sizes.

COCKTAIL RING – A type of cluster ring that's generally more elaborate. An eye catching ring that you might wear to a dressy occasion or cocktail party.

CONCAVE – Hollow and curved, like the inside of a hollow ball.

CONVEX – Curving outward, like the surface of a ball.

COSTUME JEWELRY – Any jewellery made from materials other than Gold, Silver and Platinum metals. Costume jewellery can also be very expensive, especially when associated with a designer. Costume jewellery is usually fashionable, in design, and often much bolder in shape, material, and size because of lower material costs.

CUBIC ZIRCONIA – A man-made material, created in 1977, usually faceted so it looks very similar to a Diamond.

CUFF – A type of bangle bracelet that does not meet and is put on from the side of the wrist instead of being slipped over the hand.

CULTURED PEARL – A genuine pearl formed within a mollusk such as an Oyster. In cultured Pearls, a bead known as a nucleus is inserted into the shell, while in nature a grain of sand or other irritant enters the shell, this starts the process that results in a natural Pearl. Layers of "nacre" are secreted by the mollusk as a natural reaction to a foreign irritant, and are built up layer after layer. The length of time a pearl is allowed to grow and/or the size of the irritant determines the size of the Pearl that will be harvested. Cultured pearls are cultivated on farms in fresh water or saltwater

CURB-CHAIN – A flat link chain with rounded edges.

DECORATION:

ETCHED: Very faintly carved on the surface

CARVED: Cut into the surface – at varying depths.

FACETED: Carved with a regular pattern of facets

GROOVED: Routed out in a line

PIERCED: The material has been cut completely through

INLAID: A space is routed out of the material, and a contrasting material is fitted into that space. Mother of Pearl is commonly used for this process.

DIE CASTING – A method of casting where the metal to be cast is forced under pressure into a mould.

DOUBLET – A stone made of two pieces. Any natural or synthetic materials may be used in any combination. Usually the lower half of the stone is synthetic, glass or a composite and the more valuable gemstone is used for the top – this is common for Opals.

DROP EARRING – Any earring which hangs below the earlobe. Also called a dangle earring.

EARRING BACK – A closing part that fits over an earring post and holds it securely in place.

ELECTROFORMING – A jewellery manufacturing process, similar to electroplating, that creates a lightweight layer of gold or silver over a wax model which is then melted out of the finished piece.

ELECTROPLATING – The Process of placing a thin layer of metal upon another metal by suspending an item to be plated in a solution containing the plating material. An electric current is then applied to the solution causing the negatively charged plating material to adhere to the positively charged item being plated. The amount of time used in the process determines the thickness of the plating.

ETERNITY RING – A ring set with gemstones that go all the way around, It has no beginning or end hence the term.

EXTENDER CHAIN – A chain which may be attached to another in order to provide a longer length.

FACET – The flat polished surface of a gemstone. This style of cutting gives the stone many small faces at varying angles to one another.

FANCY CUT – A gemstone cut into a shape other than round.

FIGARO CHAIN – Similar in style to a curb chain, but instead of uniform links, the links alternate between long ones and round ones.

FINISH – The way the surface of a piece is polished or textured.

FASTENINGS – There are a wide variety of fastenings each with their own special names:

Bolt Ring – The basic type of fastening, consists of a hollow loop with an internal spring operated catch, which is retracted then released when attached to a link at the other end of the chain.

Jump Ring – This is a fixed ring used to connect components in a finished item

Padlock – Looks just like a traditional padlock (but without a key), this fastening simply clicks into place.

Trigger – Also known as a lobster claw clasp (one look at it shows why!), this is related to a bolt ring and operates like a mountaineer's karabiner. This is a popular fastening for heavier chains.

Magnetic – A recent innovation using powerful mini magnets.

FASTENINGS FOR EARRINGS

Clip – A traditional hinged earring fitting for un-pierced ears.

Hook fitting – Usually for drop earrings and also called a hook wire, these earring fittings hook through the ear and hang down behind the lobe.

Lever back – Usually for drop earrings, this is a type of hook fastening for pierced ears that has a hinged lever on the main part of the earring to close the gap to the end of the hook.

Post and Butterfly – For stud or drop earrings. This is the commonest form of earring fastening for pierced ears using a 'post' attached to the earring, which connects with a separate scroll shaped device (butterfly) to hold the earring in place.

FAUX – A copy, fake, synthetic used as an imitation

FETISH – An amulet, pendant or charm often representing an animal or person.

FINDINGS – All types of fasteners, and construction components used in jewelry making

FILIGREE – An openwork, pierced style, usually delicate and finely constructed.

FOUR C'S – An abbreviation used to describe the Color, Clarity, Carat and Cut of a gemstone – used to grade diamonds.

FRESH WATER PEARL – A pearl which is harvested from a fresh water mollusk as opposed to one from salt water.

GRAM – A unit of weight measurement – usually used for silver – the weight of the jewellery is important, since it is constructed from a precious metal, therefore the weight will contribute to the price.

HALLMARK – A stamped mark which guarantees the content of the metal used to make an item. Examples are: Sterling ".925", 14 karat gold "14K" In the UK jewellery over 7.78gms must be independently hallmarked by a UK hallmark office. They will stamp the makers, or importers mark into the piece, so that there is traceability of the piece of jewellery.. The mark consists of four components: The sponsor (or manufacturer) mark; the standard mark, which denotes the precious metal content of the item; the Assay Office Mark and the date letter which shows the year in which the article was hallmarked.

HIGH POLISH – A finish achieved by buffing the surface of metal so it shines brightly, often with a mirror-like finish.

HOOP EARRING – A circular-shaped earring made from metal wire or tubing. Variations include the traditional shape as well as hoops with charms and other ornaments to be hung from the hoop. – often called Gypsy hoops

IMITATION GEMS – Any gems made of material other than the gemstone they are intended to mimic

INLAY – The process of setting stones into a channel or cut out so that they are flush with the surface of the metal.

LOCKET – A charm or pendant that opens to hold one or more pictures.

MOTHER OF PEARL – The lining of a seashell that's iridescent.

MOUNTING – The process of setting or attaching a gemstone. Its also, a piece of jewellery, that gemstones can be set into.

NATURAL – Used to describe a gemstone which is mined from the earth or a pearl that is created without the assistance of man. Laboratory created gems may be considered real or genuine because they are of the same chemical composition as their natural counterparts, although they are created by the hands of man rather than naturally.

NICKEL – This metal used to be used in fashion jewellery. However, due to some adverse reactions to nickel, recent European legislation (the Nickel Directive) now defines the amount of nickel that jewellery can contain, to ensure that it remains far below the level at which such skin reactions are become likely.

OPAQUE – Not transparent and does not reflect light.

OXIDATION – A chemical process which tarnishes the surface of a metal leaving a "patina" or film/finish. Copper oxidizes to green (verdis), Silver oxidizes to black, Gold dulls but doesn't really change colour. Exposure to air alone causes this process over time- which is why silver jewellery has to be polished from time to time.

POLISH – Process used to make metal smooth and glossy. Increases shine and eliminates flaws. In silver jewellery, double polishing increases the shine.

PENDANT – A charm or other item worn on a chain that swings freely.

PERIOD JEWELRY – Articles of jewelry that exemplify the design style of the times in which they were created. Such as Victorian, & Art Deco.

SANDBLAST FINISH – A dull matte looking finish applied to the surface of metal using sand and air to blast the surface and create the finish.

SATIN FINISH – A matte finish achieved by sandblasting, brushing with a stiff wire brush, or chemically altering a high shine surface.

SEMI-PRECIOUS – A term used to describe colored gemstones other than Ruby, Sapphire and Emeralds.

SHANK – The bottom part of a ring, to which the setting is attached.

SOLITAIRE – Used to describe a ring or pendant set with a single gemstone.

SPRING RING – A ring shaped clasp with an internal spring which is drawn back to open and released to close.

STAMPING – A jewellery manufacturing process used to make ultra light weight jewellery. Lightweight earrings and charms are often made in this manner.

STERLING SILVER – An alloy of 92.5% percent silver and other metal, (usually copper) used for strength.

STUD EARRINGS – Also called studs, small post style pierced earrings, sometimes set with gemstones

SYNTHETIC – A man-made material.

TENNIS BRACELET – A flexible bracelet made up of evenly matched stones,

TRANSLUCENT – Allows light to pass through, but not transparent.

TRANSPARENT – Easily seen through.

Y NECKLACE – This style gets its name from its shape which features its own delicate dangle forming a Y-shape around the neck. Usually 16 to 18 inches in length.