

# Basic Sewing Terms



<b>BACKSTITCH</b>	Sew in reverse for a few stitches at the beginning and end of a seam to anchor the seam and prevent stitches from coming out.
<b>BOBBIN</b>	A small spool specific to your sewing machine. It holds the lower thread.
<b>FEED DOGS</b>	The spiky teeth sticking up from the bed of the machine under the presser foot. They feed the fabric through the machine.
<b>HAND WHEEL</b>	The wheel on the side of the machine away from the needle. It runs the machine and you should always turn it toward you.
<b>PRESSER FOOT</b>	A foot-shaped piece of metal below and around the needle. It holds the fabric down against the feed dogs as you sew. The foot lifts up and down with a lever nearby on the machine. There are different feet for different purposes. The presser foot must be down for the machine to sew properly.
<b>PRESS</b>	Use the iron to press fabric and stitching in place, rather than ironing it back and forth.
<b>RAW EDGE</b>	The cut edge of the fabric, especially before it has any stitching or other treatment to keep it from unraveling.
<b>RIGHT SIDE</b>	The right side of fabric is usually the printed or pretty side of the fabric. You usually sew things with right sides together so the stitching will be on the inside of the finished project. The other surface is the wrong side of the fabric. On some fabrics it is hard to tell the right side. Try to pick one side to be the right side and be consistent as you go. It helps to mark the right and wrong sides in these cases.
<b>SEAM ALLOWANCE</b>	The distance from the edge of the fabric to the stitch line. For many of our projects, we will use a 3/8" seam allowance.
<b>SEAM RIPPER</b>	A tool used to take out stitches.
<b>SELVAGE</b>	The finished edge on each side of a piece of fabric is called the selvage. The selvage edges will not ravel. They often have writing and fabric information on them.
<b>TOPSTITCH</b>	From the right side, straight-stitch about 1/8" from and parallel to an edge, seam, or another stitching line.
<b>TURN A CORNER/ PIVOT</b>	To turn a corner or pivot, stop stitching close to the corner. Put the needle down, lift the presser foot up, turn the fabric and line it up with your seam allowance line. Then put the presser foot down and keep sewing.
<b>ZIGZAG STITCH</b>	A zigzag stitch is that that zigzags or goes left and right to form a V pattern. It is used for stretch fabric, appliqué, to finish a seam, buttonholes, to sew on a button and decorative uses.