

Expanded Glossary from the book: “The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards”

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for illustrations and examples of many of the terms and phrases, see [the book](#)

1P: acronym for “one-pocket.”

3-cushion billiards: see “three-cushion billiards.”

30° rule: the principle stating that a rolling cue ball’s path deflects by approximately 30° after impact with an object ball for a cut shot between a 1/4-ball and 3/4-ball hit.

7 and out: see “give the X and out.”

8-ball: a pool game, played with all 15 balls racked in a triangle pattern, where the objective is to pocket the 8-ball after pocketing all seven of your designated balls (stripes or solids).

9-ball: the pool game played with only the first nine balls (1-9), racked in a diamond pattern with the 9-ball in the center. The lowest numbered ball must always be hit first. The person who pockets the 9-ball wins the game.

90° rule: the principle stating that the cue ball and object ball will separate at 90° after impact provided the cue ball strikes the object ball with no vertical plane spin (i.e., stun).

ACS: American Cue-Sports Alliance pool league and tournament association.

action: term used to refer to money games (i.e., competitive wagering); also, term used to describe the quality of a hit (e.g., the cue has good “action”) or the motion of the cue ball (e.g., the English created good “action” off the rail).

address the ball: move and settle into your stance in preparation for a shot.

after-collision massé: massé shot where the cue ball curves mostly after contact with the object ball (e.g., if the object ball is close to the cue to begin with).

aim and pivot: method (e.g., BHE or FHE) used to compensate aim for squirt. The cue is initially aimed for a center-ball hit and is pivoted to apply the amount of English desired. This is done before the shot.

aiming line: the imaginary line through the cue ball in the direction of the intended target (e.g., the center of the ghost ball) that results in contact with a rail or the object ball at the desired contact point.

aiming point: the center of the imaginary ghost ball target resulting in contact with the object ball at the desired contact point.

air barrel: not having the money to pay off a loss when gambling.

angle of incidence: same as “approach angle.”

angle of reflection: same as “rebound angle.”

angle to the pocket: the angle of approach of a ball to a pocket measured relative to the pocket centerline. A straight-in shot has a 0° angle to the pocket.

APA: American Pool Players Association pool league and tournament organization.

approach angle (AKA “angle of incidence”): the angle at which a ball approaches a rail, measured from the rail perpendicular. A ball driven directly into (perpendicular to) a rail has an approach angle of zero.

avoidance shot: a shot where the cue ball path is controlled to avoid hitting surrounding balls.

AZBilliards: popular pool and billiards website and online discussion forum.

AZB: short for AZBilliards.

back cut: a cut shot where the cue ball is shot well away from the target pocket (e.g., when the cue ball is much closer to the target pocket rail than the object ball). In other words, the butt of the cue passes over one of the cushions adjacent to the target pocket. The more perpendicular the cue is to that cushion, the greater the back cut. In other words, a shot into a “blind pocket.”

back-hand English (BHE): method used to compensate one’s aim for squirt. You aim the shot assuming a center-ball hit on the cue ball (i.e., no English). Then you pivot the stick with your back (grip) hand, keeping your bridge hand firmly planted, until the desired amount of cue tip offset is reached. For a certain bridge length, the pivot angle will exactly cancel the squirt angle, and the cue ball will head in the original aiming line direction.

backer: person with money willing to provide a bankroll for gambling and take a stake of the winnings in return.

backspin: same as “bottom spin.”

bad hit: not hitting an object ball first, resulting in a foul.

bad roll: unfortunate roll of the ball (e.g., bad position due to roll-off); or, just bad luck.

balance point: the center of gravity of the cue.

balkline: a carom game where the table is subdivided into regions (e.g., 9) separated by straight lines. There are restrictions on the number of points can be scored (e.g., 2) when both object balls stay within the same region after a carom.

ball banger: see “banger.”

ball grouping. two or more balls of the same type (“stripes” or “solid”) in the same general area of the table.

ball-compression deflection-angle: slight change in the object ball’s direction due to the slight amount of compression of the cue ball and object ball during impact.

ball-hit fraction: for a cut shot, the fraction of the object ball covered by the projected cue ball. For a square hit (0° cut angle), the ball-hit fraction is 1. For a half-ball hit, the ball-hit fraction is $1/2$. For a glancing hit (close to a 90° cut angle), the ball fraction is close to 0.

ball-in-hand: situation when the cue ball can be placed anywhere on the table as a result of a foul or scratch by your opponent.

ball turn: very slight curve of the path of a ball with sidespin, caused by cloth friction.

banger: derogatory term for a novice player who hits the balls harder than necessary and doesn't try to play for position.

bank pool: game where points are scored for pocketing bank shots only.

bank shot: a shot in which the object ball is bounced off one or more rails before being pocketed.

bankroll: total money you have available for gambling.

bar box: small (3 1/2' by 7') coin-operated tables found in bars.

bar rules: sometimes arbitrary and often different rules by which novices play pool in bars.

barrels: number of payoff units available in your bankroll or in a ring game.

BB: bar box.

BCA: Billiard Congress of America pool trade association and tournament

BD: Billiards Digest.

bed: the playing surface of the table.

bending a shot: using massé spin to curve a ball's trajectory (e.g., with a massé shot or with an angled kick shot with draw or follow).

BEF: Billiard Education Foundation.

behind the eight-ball: snookered by your opponent with the cue ball behind the 8-ball; also, a general phrase used to indicate you are in a tough spot.

BHE: back-hand English.

big ball: an oversized cue ball (e.g., in some bar boxes); or an obstacle ball close to a rail or other balls blocking shot paths; or an object ball close to a rail that is easy to hit with a kick shot.

big balls: same as "stripes."

big fish: a "fish" with lots of money.

big pocket: a pocket with a wide margin for error for a specific shot (e.g., if the object ball is very close to the pocket and/or if there are nearby balls that provide ample carom opportunities).

billiard shot: a shot where the cue ball is deflected off an object ball to strike a second object ball.

billiards: term for all cue games including pool (pocket billiards), snooker, and carom games.

blank: a dull or unsuspecting player or gambler.

blind pocket: a target pocket for a cut shot with a line of aim away from the pocket (i.e., you are not looking toward the pocket).

blocker: obstacle ball that blocks the desired path of the cue ball.

body English: contorting your body in a feeble attempt to change the path of balls in motion.

bottom: below-center hit on the cue ball.

bottom spin (AKA “backspin” or “draw English”): reverse rotation of the cue ball resulting from a below-center hit on the cue ball (see draw shot).

bowliards: pool game or drill played with ten balls. Bowling-like scoring is used. After the break, you get ball in hand. If you pocket all ten balls without a miss, you get a “strike.” After the first miss, if you pocket the remaining balls without a miss, you get a “spare.”

break: the first shot of a pool game where the cue ball is hit from behind the head string (i.e., in the “kitchen”) into the racked balls.

break-out shot: a shot where the cue ball is directed, after striking an object ball, to strike a ball cluster to scatter the balls into more favorable positions.

break-up shot: same as “break-out shot.”

bridge: the support for the shaft end of the cue during a shot stroke, either the left hand (for a right-handed player) or an implement (see “mechanical bridge”).

bridge distance: same as “bridge length.”

bridge length: the distance between the bridge and the cue ball.

bumper: rubber cushion on the end of the butt of a cue.

bumper pool: game with two opposing pockets and multiple obstacle bumper pegs off which balls can be rebounded. The goal is for each player to make all of their balls into their designated (opposite) pocket with the fewest number of strokes.

burn mark: discoloration of the cloth (usually white) caused by friction between the ball and cloth during fast speed and/or strong impact shots (e.g., break or jump shots).

butt: the handle or grip end of the cue.

bye: a tournament term used to designate when a player has no opponent and automatically advances to the next round.

Calcutta: a tournament gambling arrangement where spectators bid on the player they think will win the tournament. The winning bidder(s) get a percentage of the betting pool.

called shot: a shot for which you specify the ball being targeted and the target pocket (e.g., “9-ball in the corner pocket”).

cannon: snooker or British term for a “carom shot.”

carom shot (AKA “kiss shot”): a shot where an object ball is deflected off an incidental ball before being pocketed or striking another object ball; sometimes, also used to describe a “billiard shot.”

carombole: a game based on carom shots (e.g., three-cushion billiards).

case game: the deciding (final) game of a match (e.g., when a match is “hill-hill”).

CB: cue ball.

CCB: "Cue Chalk Board" online discussion forum maintained on Billiards Digest's website.

center ball: when aim at the dead center of the cue ball.

center of percussion (COP): technical term used to describe the "normal roll impact height."

center-to-edge: see "CTE."

chalk: the dry, abrasive substance applied to the cue tip to help prevent slipping by increasing friction between the tip and the cue ball.

cheat the pocket: aim an object ball away from the center of a pocket to alter the path of the cue ball.

check English: same as "reverse English."

cheese: money ball.

cherry: same as "hanger."

chicken bone: a "choke."

choke: miss a shot due to nervousness under pressure; also, same as "shorten."

choke up: move the grip hand up on the cue.

chop the pot: the two players in a tournament finals match splitting the total winnings regardless of the outcome of the final match.

cinch a shot: choose an easier shot resulting in less-than-ideal position for the next shot, instead of a more difficult shot that might result in better position.

CIS: cut-induced spin.

CIT: cut-induced throw.

clean: when a ball is pocketed without touching any other balls.

clear the table: same as "run the table."

cling: excessive friction and throw caused by non-ideal surface conditions at the point of contact between two balls (e.g., a chalk smudge).

close the angle: same as "shorten the angle."

close to your work: a phrase used to indicate that the cue ball is too close to the target object ball, making a cut shot more difficult.

closed bridge: hand bridge where the index finger is curved over the cue providing solid support.

cloth (AKA "felt"): wool or wool-nylon blend material covering the table's playing surface.

cluster: two or more balls close together or touching.

C-note: \$100 (see also: C-note, dime, fin, nickel, Sawbuck).

coefficient of friction (COF): technical term used to describe how much tangential friction force is generated between sliding surfaces (e.g., a ball sliding on the table cloth, or two balls colliding with spin or a cut angle), as a percentage of the normal force between the surfaces.

coefficient of restitution (COR): technical term used to quantify the “rail rebound efficiency” or the impact efficiency between two balls.

collision-induced English: same as “cut-induced spin.”

collision-induced spin: same as “cut-induced spin.”

collision-induced throw (CIT): same as “cut-induced throw.”

combination shot: a shot where the cue ball hits an incidental object ball which then hits and pockets a different object ball, possibly after other intermediate ball collisions.

combo: same as a “combination shot.”

contact point: the point of contact between the cue ball and the object ball at impact.

COF: coefficient of friction.

COP: center of percussion.

COR: coefficient of restitution.

Coriolis: famous French mathematician and physicist who wrote a book on billiards physics.

Corner-5 System: a Diamond System for aiming three-rail kick shots.

corner hooked: when the cue ball is left in the jaws of a pocket with the path to an object ball blocked by one of the pocket points.

cosmo: a “roadmap” layout.

counterman: pool-hall worker who rents tables and sometimes serves as a “middle man” to set up gambling matches.

cross-corner: a bank shot off a long rail into a corner pocket, where the cue ball crosses the line of the shot.

cross-side: a bank shot off a long rail into a side pocket, where the cue ball crosses the line of the shot.

crutch: slang term for “mechanical bridge.”

CTE: center-to-edge, referring to the line of aim going through the center of the cue ball and the edge of the object ball, which creates a ½-ball hit. This line of aim is used as a reference or point-of-departure in some aiming and alignment systems.

cue: the tapered wooden implement used to strike the cue ball.

cue ball: the white ball struck by the cue.

cue ball angle error: the angle between the actual cue ball aiming line and the desired aiming line.

cue ball deflection: angular displacement of the cue ball path away from the cue stroking direction caused by the use of English. The effect increases with the amount of English. This phrase is also sometimes used to describe “effective squirt.”

cue ball “on a string”: having complete control over CB position after each shot, as if you were moving the CB around, hanging from a string.

cue stick: same as “cue.”

cue tip: the shaped, leather component on the end of the cue that comes in contact with the cue ball.

curve shot: a shot using a slightly elevated cue and bottom-side English to create massé (swerve) action to curve the cue ball a small amount around an obstacle ball.

cushion (AKA rail): the cloth covered triangular-cross-section strip of rubber bordering the playing surface, off which the balls rebound.

cut angle: the angle between the cue ball aiming line and the object ball impact line for a cut shot.

cut shot: a shot where the cue ball impacts the object ball at an angle to the impact line (i.e., the shot is not “straight-in”).

cut-induced spin: sidespin imparted to the object ball during a cut shot, caused by sliding friction between the cue ball and the object ball.

cut-induced throw: throw caused by sliding friction between the cue ball and the object ball caused by a cut angle.

cut-throat: a casual pool game played with three people. Each person is assigned five balls to protect (1 through 5, 6 through 10, or 11 through 15). The objective of the game is to pocket your opponents’ balls. The last person with one or more balls remaining on the table wins the game.

dart stroke: a stroke, similar to the throwing motion for a dart, used to execute a jump shot, usually with a shorter, lighter cue.

dead: term used to indicate that a carom or combination shot is lined up perfectly (i.e., you can’t miss).

dead ball: no sidespin (e.g., a “dead ball” kick shot)

dead stroke: when you are in a state (“in the zone”) where you can make no mistake and your play seems effortless, automatic, and confident.

defensive shot: a shot where you try to pocket a ball; but if you the shot, you try to leave the cue ball or object ball in a difficult position for your opponent.

deflection (AKA “squirt”): short for “cue-ball deflection.”

deliberate foul: same as “intentional foul.”

diamonds (AKA “spots”): inlays or markings adjacent to the table cushions (on the top surface of the table rails) used as target or reference points. There are three diamonds equally spaced between each pocket.

Diamond System: a multiple-rail kick and bank shot method that uses the diamonds as aiming targets.

dime: \$1000 (see also: C-note, fin, nickel, Sawbuck).

dirty pool: unsportsmanlike conduct or play.

donut: a shutout, where your opponents wins zero games in a match.

dog a shot: miss a shot as a result of a “choke.”

dominant eye: An eye (left or right) that helps provide stronger visual perception for things like aiming.

double: snooker or British term for a “bank shot.”

double dip: beat a player twice (e.g., in a tournament).

double elimination: a tournament in which a player must lose twice to be eliminated.

double hit: an illegal shot where the cue hits the cue ball twice during a stroke (e.g., when the cue ball bounces back from a nearby object ball during the stroke).

double kiss: double hit of the cue ball and object ball during a bank shot of an object ball frozen or close to a rail.

double shimmed: pockets with two sets of shims in the pockets to make them tighter (i.e., smaller pocket opening) and tougher.

double the rail: use reverse English at a shallow angle to a rail to cause the CB to return to the same rail after hitting the adjacent rail.

drag draw: a drag shot where the CB only has a small amount of backspin remaining at OB impact, resulting in only a small amount of draw.

drag follow: a drag shot where the CB has developed roll before OB impact, resulting in a follow shot.

drag shot: shot where bottom spin is used to slow the CB on the way to the object ball, resulting in to desired amount of draw, stun, or follow at the OB. Because the CB is moving faster (before slowing), table roll-off will be less of an issue.

draw: bottom spin (backspin) put on the cue ball by a draw shot.

draw shot: a shot in which the cue ball is struck below center to impart bottom spin to the cue ball, causing the cue ball to pull back from the object ball, after impact, farther than it would otherwise.

drill: a designed shot or routine used for practice.

duck: slang term for a ball sitting close to a pocket that is virtually impossible to miss (i.e., a “sitting duck”); or to play safe.

duck behind a ball: play a safety by snookering your opponent.

ducking: playing a safety.

dump: to purposely lose a game or match to help another player or as part of a scam.

Dutch double: male/female team that alternates shots.

effective end-mass: same as “end mass.”

effective pivot point: the cue “pivot point” that provides BHE/FHE compensation for both squirt and swerve. The effective pivot length can be different for every shot based on shot speed and distance, table conditions, and cue elevation.

effective pocket center (AKA “target center”): the target line to a pocket that has the same margin of error on both sides. For a straight-on shot, the effective pocket center goes through the center of the pocket opening.

effective pocket size (AKA “target size”): the total margin of error left and right of the pocket center that still results in pocketing a ball.

effective squirt: the net effect of squirt and swerve (i.e., the cue ball deflection off the aiming line at object ball impact).

effective tip offset: the distance between the center of the cue ball and a line through the contact point on the cue ball that is parallel to the direction of cue ball motion. This is different than the actual “tip offset” due to squirt and/or swoop.

eight-ball: see “8-ball.”

EIT: English-induced throw (same as “spin-induced throw”).

elevated bridge: a hand V-bridge where the heel (base) of the hand is lifted off the table to raise the cue (e.g., to clear an obstacle ball close to the cue ball).

elevated cue: when the butt of the cue is held higher than the tip (as with most shots). The higher the butt is raised, the more the cue is elevated (e.g., with a jump or massé shot).

end mass: the amount of mass in the tip end of the cue shaft that contributes to squirt. A low-squirt cue has a small effective end-mass. For a stiffer shaft, more length (measured from the tip) will contribute to the effective end-mass.

end rail: a short rail between two corner pockets.

English: term usually used to refer to sidespin applied to the cue ball, but can also be used to refer to any type of spin applied to the cue ball (e.g., with draw and follow shots).

English Billiards: game played with three balls on a table with pockets. Points are awarded for various types of carom shots.

English-induced throw: same as “spin-induced throw.”

English transfer: the imparting of a small amount of spin from the cue ball to the object ball, in the opposite direction of the cue ball spin (e.g., left spin on the cue ball results in transfer of a small amount of right spin to the object ball).

Equal Offense: variation of straight pool which can be played solo (e.g., for practice) or against an opponent. Each person gets a certain number of innings (e.g., 10) at the table, starting with a new rack each inning. After the break, the player gets ball in hand with the goal of running as many balls as possible, usually up to a limit (e.g., 20). The total score is the sum of the scores for each inning.

extension: a device used to add length to the butt of a cue for shots requiring longer reach; or a request for extra time in a match with a shot clock.

eye pattern: how you move your eyes before and during a shot (e.g., consistently look at CB during the forward warm-up strokes, and at the OB during the backstrokes).

facing: see “pocket walls.”

fat: when a ball is undercut, it is hit too “fat.”

feather shot: a very thin cut shot.

felt: the cloth that covers the table surface.

ferrule: the sleeve, usually plastic, on the end of the cue shaft to which the cue tip is attached (with adhesive).

FHE: front-hand English.

fin: \$5 (see also: C-note, dime, nickel, Sawbuck).

finish: “follow through” and “freeze”

fish: a player who is not very good and is willing to wager with people of better skill.

flat-spot: the extremely small circular contact patch that forms between two balls when they collide, and compress slightly, at the point of contact.

flat-spot squeeze: same as “ball-compression deflection-angle.”

fluke: a lucky shot with an unplanned positive outcome.

follow: topspin put on the cue ball by a follow shot.

follow shot: a shot in which the cue ball is struck above center to impart topspin to the cue ball, causing the cue ball to roll forward, after impact, more than it would otherwise.

follow-through: the movement of the cue through the cue ball position during the end of your stroke in the direction of the aiming line, after making contact with the cue ball.

foot rail: the short rail at the far end of the table where the balls are racked.

foot spot: the point on the table surface over which the lead ball of a rack is centered. It lies at the intersection of imaginary lines passing through the second diamonds on the long rails and the center diamonds on the short rails.

force follow: maximum topspin follow shot hit with speed.

fouetté shot (pronounced “fwet-TAY”): a shot that uses tip offset (i.e., English) and cue deflection to avoid a double-hit when there is a small gap between the cue ball and object ball. A fast, full stroke is used so the cue deflects away while the cue ball clears.

foul: a violation of the rules of the game.

frame: a player’s turn at the table, or an entire game.

front-hand English (FHE): same as back-hand English (BHE), except the front (bridge) hand is moved to pivot the stick. FHE is more appropriate for low-squirt cues, where the amount of squirt and required pivoting can be small. BHE would require too large of a bridge length.

frozen ball: a ball in contact with (touching) another ball or a cushion.

freeze: the practice of staying down and not moving anything after following through on a shot.

freewheel: to play freely, instinctively, and at a fast and consistent pace, not over-thinking or second-guessing oneself.

full-ball hit: a direct hit with no cut angle.

full hit: same as “thick hit.”

fundamentals: the basic or essentials skills (e.g., good stance, grip, bridge, and stroke) required to be a good player.

game: unit of play, from break to a win or loss, that makes up a match.

game ball: ball required to win a particular game (e.g., the 8-ball in the game of eight-ball).

gap: small distance between two balls or between a ball and rail.

GB: ghost ball.

gearing outside English: the amount of outside English that results in no sliding between the cue ball and object ball during contact. Instead, during contact, the CB rolls on the OB like two meshing gears. The result is no throw.

get an angle: same as “leave an angle.”

get back in line: go from being “out of line” to back “in line.”

ghost: your opponent in “playing the ghost” drills.

ghost ball: imaginary aiming target where the cue ball needs to impact the object ball so the line through their centers (the impact line) is in the direction of the desired object ball path.

give the X: When playing 9-ball, if you “give” your opponent the X-ball (e.g., the 7-ball), then the opponent wins by pocketing the X-ball (e.g., the 7-ball) or the 9-ball. This is a form of “weight.”

give the X and out: When playing 9-ball, if you “give” your opponent the X-ball (e.g., the 7-ball), then the opponent wins by pocketing the X-ball or any higher-number ball (e.g., the 7-ball, 8-ball, or 9-ball). This is a form of “weight.”

go off: to lose lots of money.

goalie: a player that never scores, but does whatever he or she can to prevent others from scoring.

GOE: gearing outside English.

golf: pool game or drill where the goal is to pocket a single object ball in each pocket with the fewest number of “strokes.” The cue ball is placed on the head spot and the object ball is placed on the foot spot before each “hole.” Three rounds to each of the six pockets in order (e.g., clockwise starting at the bottom-left corner pocket) comprise a full “18-hole” game.

good hit: a legal shot where the cue ball hits the object ball first.

green: the table cloth; or money.

grip: the clutch of the right hand (for a right-handed player) on the butt of the cue, used to support and impart force to the cue during a stroke.

group: set of seven balls (stripes or solids) one must pocket first in a game of eight-ball.

grinder: a deliberate, straightforward, uncreative, but dedicated player.

gutter: same as "rail groove."

half-ball hit: a shot where the cue ball aiming line passes through the edge of the object ball. It results in a cut angle of 30°.

hand bridge: the sliding support created with your hand to guide the cue.

handicap: modified rules or scoring designed to allow players of different skill levels to compete more equally in a league or tournament.

hanger: an object ball sitting in the jaws of a pocket.

head rail: the short rail at the end of the table from where you break.

head spot: the spot (sometimes marked) in the middle of the head string.

head string: the imaginary line at the head of the table, behind which you must break.

heart: will to win, and ability to overcome pressure.

heart of the pocket: dead center of the pocket.

high balls: same as stripes.

high run: the highest number of consecutive balls made by a player in a game of straight pool.

high-speed video (HSV): video clip shot with a special high-frame-rate video camera that can be played back in super slow motion.

hill: term used to indicate that a player is one game away from winning a match.

hill-hill: when both players in a match only need to win one game to win the match.

hold-up English: same as "reverse English."

hold shot: cut shot where you use SIT and/or draw to limit cue ball motion.

hooked: same as "snookered."

horizontal plane: the imaginary plane parallel to the table surface passing through the cue ball. Adjusting the cue position left and right of the cue ball center, in the horizontal plane, creates side English.

house cue: a cue (often of poor quality and in bad condition) available for play at a bar or pool hall.

house pro: designated top player (usually a professional) who gives lessons and/or runs tournaments at a pool hall.

house rules: set of rules at a particular establishment by which you are expected to play.

HSV: see "high-speed video."

hug the rail: when a ball rolls along a rail cushion.

hustle: con an opponent into to gambling on a losing proposition.

hustler: a pool player who deceives potential suckers into gambling and losing money (i.e., one who hustles). The deception usually involves concealing one's true ability.

IE: inside English.

iggy: an ignorant gambler.

inlay: decorative inset in the butt of the cue.

impact height: the height of the part of the rail cushion that contacts a rebounding ball.

impact line: the imaginary line through the cue ball and object ball centers at impact (i.e., the line through the centers of the ghost-ball and object ball). The object ball moves along this line after impact (unless there is throw).

impact point: the point of contact between the cue ball and object ball during impact.

in jail: see "jail."

in line: not "out of line."

in stroke: in the zone, or in good form, playing successfully with little apparent effort.

in-and-safe: a special safety shot in the game of 8-ball, where you declare "safety" before the shot, and you return control of the table to your opponent after your shot, even if you legally pocket one of your object balls. The purpose is to leave the cue ball in a difficult position for your opponent.

in the zone: playing a peak level with little apparent effort and no or few mistakes.

inning: a player's turn at the table, which ends with a miss, foul, or win.

inside cut: term used to describe a bank shot where the cue ball hits the object ball on the side toward the bank direction, relative to the aiming line. The cue ball imparts natural (running) cut-induced English to the object ball.

inside English: English created by hitting the cue ball on the side towards the direction of the shot (i.e. on the "inside" of the cue ball). For example, when the cue ball strikes an object ball on the left side, creating a cut shot to the right, right sidespin would be called "inside English."

insurance ball: An easily pocketed ball (e.g., a ball in the jaws of a pocket) that you leave untouched until you need it to get out of trouble (e.g., when you create poor position after a shot).

intentional foul: a deliberate foul used to give you a strategic advantage.

IPT: International Pool Tour.

jab stroke: a short punch-like stroke.

jack up: elevate the butt end of the cue.

jacked up: slang phrase used to refer to an elevated cue.

jail: "in jail" is the same as "snookered."

jaws: the inside walls of a pocket.

jellyroll: a very favorable roll of the cue ball (e.g., when it "rolls off" or takes an extra fraction of a roll at the end of travel) to create perfect position for the next shot. Also, payment to somebody who helps you win money (e.g., in a gambling set-up, or in arranging a match).

joint: the mechanical connection (usually threaded) between the butt and shaft ends of a two-piece cue.

juice: slang for lots of speed or spin (e.g., I really "juiced" that one up with spin).

jump cue: shorter, lighter cue with a hard tip designed to make jump shots easier.

jump shot (legal): a shot in which the cue ball is bounced off the table surface, with a downward stroke, to jump over an obstacle ball.

jump shot (illegal): an illegal shot in which the cue ball is lifted off the table surface to jump over an obstacle ball by hitting the cue ball well below center.

jump stick: a special cue, usually shorter and lighter, designed specifically for shooting jump shots.

jumping up: the opposite of "staying down."

key ball: the ball before the final or critical ball of the game, used to get position on the final or critical shot.

key shot: a shot that moves balls or creates good position for clearing the remainder of the balls.

kick: cue ball rebound off a cushion. It is also a snooker or British term used to describe cling.

kick shot: a shot in which the cue ball bounces off one or more rails before contacting the object ball.

kill shot: a shot where you use draw or reverse English to limit the cue ball's motion after object ball or rail contact. (see also: "hold shot")

kiss (AKA carom): contact between balls.

kiss-back shot: a shot using a "double kiss" to bounce the cue ball straight back from an object ball close or frozen to a rail, leaving the object ball close to its original positions (e.g., for a safety).

kiss shot: same as a "carom shot" or "billiard shot."

kitchen: slang term for the area behind the head string from where the cue ball is shot during a break.

knuckle: the tip of a rail cushion bordering a pocket opening.

lady's aide: same as "mechanical bridge."

lag for break: a skill shot used to determine which player will break. Each player must shoot a ball from behind the head string and return it as close as possible to the head rail after bouncing off the foot rail.

league rules: the set of rules governing play for a specific league, usually based on the World Standardized Rules.

leave: the position of the balls after a player's shot. A "good" leave is one in which the ball positions for the next shot are desirable.

leave an angle: control cue ball position after a shot so there is a cut angle on the next target object ball, creating more opportunities for controlling cue ball position for the follow-on shot.

left English: clockwise sidespin imparted to the cue ball by striking it to the left of center.

left spin: same as "left English."

legal shot: shot in which the cue ball strikes a legal object ball first and either an object ball is pocketed or some ball hits a rail after contact with the object ball.

lemon: a weaker player conned into believing that he or she might be better than a gambling opponent (i.e., a player that is not as good as they think they are).

life line: an opportunity given (usually by accident) to an opponent who is down.

line of action: same as the "impact line."

line of aim: same as "aiming line."

line of centers: the imaginary line through the centers of the ghost-ball target and the object ball (i.e., the "impact line").

lip: the edge of the pocket hole.

little balls: same as "solids."

LOA: "line of aim."

lock: same as "nuts."

long: when a ball rolls too far, or when a shot misses beyond the target.

long rail: same as "side rail."

low balls: same as "solids."

lengthen the angle: use slow speed roll or running English to increase the rebound angle of a bank or kick shot, so the ball goes "longer" than normal.

low-deflection cue: a cue that causes very little squirt (i.e., "low cue-ball-deflection cue).

low-squirt cue: same as "low-deflection cue."

makable region: the area within which you can leave the cue ball after the current shot to be able to pocket the next target ball.

margin of error: a measure of how much angle or position error you can have in your shot, while still pocketing the object ball.

mark: a hustler's victim.

massé cue (pronounced mah-SAY): shorter, heavier, and stiffer cue some people use for massé shots.

massé shot: a shot where an elevated and firm stroke is used with extreme bottom-side English to significantly curve the path of the cue ball (e.g., around an obstacle ball).

massé, after-collision: see "after-collision massé."

massé spin: spin about an axis in the direction of a ball's motion (e.g., like the body-roll of an airplane or an Eskimo-roll of a kayak). This type of spin causes the ball's path to curve (e.g., with a massé shot).

match: set of games (e.g., against an opponent in a tournament).

mechanical bridge (AKA "crutch," "rake," or simply "bridge"): a special stick with an end attachment that helps guide the cue, in place of a hand bridge. A mechanical bridge is used when the cue ball cannot be reached comfortably with a hand bridge.

miscue: a stroke in which the cue tip does not establish good contact with the cue ball, resulting in poor transmission of force and an unpredictable cue ball path.

miss: failure to pocket the intended ball.

miss on the pro side: Novice players often hit cut shots too full and hit bank shots too short. When you hit a cut shot too thin or bank a ball long (which many would bank short), you are said to have missed on the "pro" side because a professional player tries to compensate for effects a novice player might not know about. See also: "pro side of the pocket."

money ball: a ball, which when legally pocketed, results in victory.

money game: a game played for money.

money shot: a key shot in a game that, if pocketed, will usually result in a victory.

money table: table at a pool hall reserved for serious gamblers and usually kept in good condition.

Mosconi Cup: annual international pool competition between selected teams of pros from Europe and the United States.

mushroomed tip: a cue tip smashed out on the sides.

nameplate: label on the center of the foot rail indicating the manufacturer of the table.

nap: cloth fibers and fuzz that rise above the playing surface and have directional properties.

napped cloth: an old-style, thick, and fuzzy table cloth that often has directional properties.

natural: a shot easy to execute with a normal stroke, requiring no English.

natural angle: the cue ball direction predicted by the 30° rule; also, bank shot requiring no cut angle (i.e., it is “lined up” perfectly).

natural English: same as “running English.”

natural outside English: same as “gearing outside English.”

natural pivot length: the distance from the cue ball to the bridge that will result in squirt canceling the cue pivot angle (e.g., when using back-hand English). If your bridge is at the natural pivot point of the cue and you are lined up for a center ball hit, the cue ball will still go straight even if you pivot the cue to apply English (intentionally or unintentionally).

natural pivot point: same as “pivot point.”

natural position: “shape” that results from a slow, natural-roll shot with no English.

natural roll: same as “normal roll.”

near point: the pocket rail cushion point closest to the object ball.

near rail: the rail cushion adjacent to a pocket along which the object ball is approaching.

nickel: \$500 (see also: C-note, dime, fin, Sawbuck).

nip draw: short, jabbed draw stroke used to avoid a double-hit of the cue ball when the object ball is close.

nip stroke: a stroke with little or no follow through.

nine-ball: see “9-ball.”

nit: person who wants too much of a handicap, or complains about the fairness of a wager. A nit is usually a better “talker” than a “player.”

NOE: natural outside English.

normal roll: topspin resulting from natural rolling motion of a ball where there is no sliding between the ball and the table cloth.

normal roll impact height (AKA “center of percussion”): the height at which you can strike the cue ball so it rolls without slipping (i.e., it has normal roll) immediately. This height is at 7/10 of the cue ball’s diameter above the table surface.

normal video (NV): video clip shot with a digital video camera played back at regular speed.

NPL: natural pivot length.

NPR: non-pool related, used to label online discussion forums on pool websites covering non-pool topics.

nuts: game or situation where you have no chance of losing.

NV: see “normal video.”

OB: object ball.

object ball: the ball to be legally struck by the cue ball, or the ball to be pocketed.

object ball angle error: the angle between the actual object ball impact line (path) and the desired target line direction.

object ball swerve: very slight change in OB angle caused by masse spin transferred from the CB in a draw or follow shot.

object balls: the balls other than the cue ball.

OE: outside English.

off the wall: a “house cue.”

offset: same as “pocket center offset.”

on the fifty yard-line: a phrase used to indicate that the cue ball is in an awkward position, where it is equally difficult to pocket the object ball in either a corner or side (or other corner) pocket (i.e., the cue ball isn't in good position for either pocket).

on the hill: when you need to win only one more game to win a match.

on the snap: making the winning ball on the break shot.

on the wire: already scored or awarded as a handicap (e.g., by sliding beads on the “wire”).

on tilt: being upset and maybe using bad judgment due to a previous loss.

one-hole: slang for “one-pocket.”

one-pocket: a pool game where each player has a designated pocket in which he or she must pocket more than half of the balls to win.

one-stroking: stroking the cue only once, without warm-up strokes, often because of nerves or over-confidence.

open bridge: a hand bridge that has no finger over the top of the cue. The cue glides on a v-shape formed by the thumb and the base of the index finger.

open table: the condition in 8-ball (e.g., after the break), where no player has pocketed a called shot yet and “stripes” and “solids” are not yet assigned.

open the angle: same as “lengthen the angle.”

orange crush: a gambling handicap where you give your opponent the break and the 5-and-out (see “give the X and out”) in every game.

out: there is no doubt you will run the remaining balls (as in: “you are out”); also, a good option out of a safety (as in: “you have an out”).

out of line: poor CB location resulting from poor position play on the previous shot.

out of stroke: when a player is off their game, not playing very well.

outside cut: term used to describe a bank shot where the cue ball hits the object ball on the side away from the bank direction, relative to the aiming line. The cue ball imparts reverse cut-induced English to the object ball.

outside English: English created by hitting the cue ball on the side away from the direction of the shot (i.e. on the “outside” of the cue ball). For example, when the cue ball strikes an object ball on the left side, creating a cut shot to the right, left sidespin would be called “outside English.”

over cut: hitting the object ball with too large of a cut angle, hitting the ball too thinly.

over-spin: topspin more than the natural roll amount, causing the cue ball to accelerate forward.

pack: a large group of balls close together and/or touching.

park the cue ball: have the cue ball stop near the center of the table after a break shot.

pause: the period of time when the cue is held motionless between the final back swing and final forward swing of a stroke, used to prevent a rushed or jerky transition.

pattern play: strategically playing the balls in a certain order based on position and groupings.

pearl: cue ball.

percentage English: a measure for specifying how much English is being used. It is relative to the maximum allowed amount of English. At tip offsets larger than this limit (about the half ball radius point), a miscue results. 100% English is at the miscue limit, 50% is half that amount of tip offset, etc.

PhD: Pool Hall Degree.

phenolic tip: hard, synthetic cue tip used on jump cues.

pigeon: a “fish” that continues to play and lose to an opponent of known “speed.”

pill pool: a 15-ball game played with three or more players. Each player draws a small bead (“pill”) numbered 1 through 15 from a bottle. The drawn numbers are kept secret. If you pocket your numbered ball before an opponent does, you win. As with 9-ball, the lowest numbered ball must be hit first and you remain at the table as long as you pocket balls.

pinch shot: a soft draw shot to try to “hold” the CB when there is a small cut angle.

piqué shot (pronounced pee-KAY): a highly elevated draw shot (i.e., a massé shot with no English).

pit: small dent or depression in the cloth caused by a ball being driven down into the table.

pivot length: same as “natural pivot length.”

pivot point: the point on the cue where, if you bridge there and use back-hand or front-hand English, squirt will be cancelled by the stick pivoting motion. See “natural pivot length.”

Plan B: a backup plan used if your original plan fails.

plant: snooker or British term for a frozen carom shot.

player: a person with good skills and a good game.

playing the ghost: phrase used to describe rating drills where your opponent is a “ghost” that doesn’t miss. As soon as you miss, the rack is over. Your score for the rack is based on how many balls you make before you miss. Multiple racks of 9-ball, with ball-in-hand after each break, is a common format to use.

Plus 2 System: a Diamond System for aiming multiple-rail kick shots where a short rail is hit first.

pocket: opening in the corners and sides of a pool table serving as targets for the object balls.

pocket a ball: cause an object ball to go into a pocket.

pocket billiards: same as “pool.”

pocket center offset (AKA “offset”): the distance between the effective pocket center and the actual pocket center.

pocket centerline: the imaginary line through the center of the pocket in the straight-in direction.

pocket mouth: the opening between the cushion points of a pocket.

pocket shelf: the drop-off into the pocket cut out of the table slate.

pocket shim: see “shim.”

pocket speed: the slowest you can hit a shot and still pocket an object ball. The object ball is given just enough speed to reach and drop into the pocket.

pocket walls (AKA “jaws”): the angled facings bordering a pocket opening.

point: same as “knuckle”; or, the value for a successful shot, contributing to a score; or, the same as “prong.”

pool (AKA “pocket billiards”): billiard games that use a table with pockets.

pool gods: mythical forces that control the outcomes of shot, games, or matches.

position (AKA “shape”): the placement of the balls (especially the cue ball) relative to the next planned shot.

position play: using controlled cue ball speed and English to achieve good cue ball position for subsequent shots.

pot: snooker or British term used to refer to pocketing a ball.

power break: a break shot, hit with a lot of force, resulting in active scatter of the racked balls.

power draw: a draw shot where significant ball speed and spin are required (e.g., when the CB and OB are separated a long distance, and you want to draw the CB back a long distance).

power follow: same as “force follow.”

powder: talc or other fine particle substance used to reduce friction between a hand bridge and the cue.

pro: professional pool player.

pro side of the pocket: the side of the pocket to miss (by under-cutting or over-cutting the shot); so if you do miss, you leave the ball in a favorable position for you (or an unfavorable position for your opponent). See also: “miss on the pro side.”

problem ball: a ball that is difficult or impossible to pocket unless it or some other ball is moved first.

prong: decorative, pointy triangle of wood in the butt of a cue.

proposition: offer of a wager on an unusual or difficult shot that a “mark” might think is unlikely to be made.

push-out shot: a special shot allowed after the break in 9-ball where you can hit the cue ball anywhere on the table and your opponent has the option to shoot the next shot or have you shoot instead.

push shot: a shot in which the cue tip remains in contact with the cue ball longer than is appropriate for a normal stroke and legal shot.

Pyramid of Progress: the term I use to describe the pool-skills-development pyramid used to illustrate the successive levels of competencies required to become a good pool player.

quick draw: cut shot draw action where the CB draws back from the tangent line as soon as possible. This is achieved with a high spin-to-speed ratio created by hitting the CB as low as possible with moderate speed.

quiet eyes: focusing on a target with still eyes for a period of time (e.g., to get a visual lock on your aim and/or tip position).

race to X: a match decided by who reaches a given number of games or points (X) first.

rack: triangle or diamond-shaped device used to position the balls prior to a break. The term can also refer to the group of balls after they have been racked.

rack of skills: the term I use to refer to the pool skills rack-of-balls illustration corresponding to the "Pyramid of Progress."

rails: the sides of the table's upper frame (usually decorative wood) that support the cushions that border the playing surface. The term "rail" is also used to refer to the cushion off which the balls rebound.

rail bridge: a hand bridge where the cue slides on the top of the rail, with fingers used to support the stick sideways.

rail impact height: the height at which the rail cushion makes contact with a rebounding ball. This height is usually slightly lower than the "normal roll impact height."

rail-induced English: sidespin imparted to a ball by a rail when the ball approaches and rebounds off the rail at an angle.

rail rebound efficiency: the ability of the rail cushion to spring back and preserve a banked ball's speed.

rail cut shot: a cut shot where the object ball is frozen to the rail cushion along which the ball is cut.

rail-first shot: a shot where the cue ball is kicked off a rail in close proximity to the object ball instead of hitting the object ball directly.

rail groove: an imaginary line that is parallel to a rail half a ball diameter away from the rail. It is sometimes visible on a worn table.

rail shot: same as "rail cut-shot."

rail throwback: the term I use to describe the reduction in bank rebound angle due to sideways compression of the rail, especially evident at high speed.

rail track: same as "rail groove."

railbird: a person who likes to watch pool matches (especially when gambling is involved).

rake: slang term for “mechanical bridge.”

rattle: the multiple rail cushion collisions that can occur against the inner walls of a pocket that can prevent an object ball from being pocketed. It occurs when the object ball glances the near rail or rail point bordering the pocket.

rebound angle (AKA “angle of reflection”): the angle at which a ball rebounds from a rail, measured from the perpendicular to the rail. A ball heading straight away from a rail has a rebound angle of zero.

referee: person in charge of enforcing the rules and making judgment calls during a match.

regulation size table: a standard 4 1/2' by 9' tournament pool table.

rest: snooker and British term for the “mechanical bridge.”

reverse English: sidespin where the cue ball slows and has a smaller rebound angle after hitting a rail (i.e., the opposite of “natural” or “running” English). The spin is in the direction opposite from the “rolling” direction along the rail during contact.

right English: counterclockwise sidespin imparted to the cue ball by striking it to the right of center.

right spin: same as “right English.”

ring game: a money or point game played with more than two players.

road player: a hustler or player who travels around playing pool for money.

roadmap: a table layout with well-placed balls, making for an easy-to-visualize and easy-to-execute run-out.

rock: the cue ball.

roll: same as “normal roll;” see also: “rolls” and “bad roll.”

roll off: change in course of a slow moving ball caused by a non-level or irregular playing surface.

roll through: a shot where the CB only has a small amount of topspin at OB impact, resulting in only a small amount of follow.

rolls: good and bad “breaks” in a game.

rotation: a game where all 15 balls must be played in numerical order.

round: a level of competition in a tournament after which some players are eliminated.

round robin: a tournament or bracket in which every player plays every other player.

RSB: rec.sport.billiard online discussion group.

run: a series of balls pocketed in succession during one turn.

run out: make the remaining balls on the table in succession to win a game.

run the rack: same as “run the table.”

run the table: to make all of the required balls and win the game before giving your opponent a turn at the table.

running English (AKA “natural English”): sidespin that causes the cue ball to speed up after bouncing off a rail, also resulting in a larger rebound angle. The spin is in the direction that results in “rolling” along the rail during contact.

safety: defensive position play shot where you leave your opponent in a difficult situation.

SAM: “Supplemental Aiming Method.” An aiming method based of several fixed points of aim, recommended by many BCA instructors.

sandbag: to unethically disguise one’s level of ability, or intentionally miss shots, to help improve one’s handicap.

Sawbuck: \$10 (see also: C-note, dime, fin, nickel).

scoop shot: an illegal jump shot executed by hitting very low on the cue ball.

Scotch doubles: team format where two players alternate turns.

scratch: pocketing the cue ball by accident during a shot.

scuffler: a not-so-successful hustler.

seed: a player’s preliminary ranking in a tournament.

sell out: a bad shot that results in loss of a game or match.

semi-pro: solid player with enough ability to compete and do well in large tournaments.

set: a collection of games; or a snooker or British term for a frozen combo shot; also, refers to the stroke-preparation position where the cue is held still, close to the cue ball, to verify aim and the desired cue-ball contact point.

shaft: the bridge end of the cue, to which the ferrule and tip are attached.

shaft stiffness: a measure of how rigid a shaft is. The stiffer it is, the more force it takes to deflect the shaft at its tip.

shape: same as “position.”

shark: an unscrupulous player that disguises his or her ability with the goal of making money from an unsuspecting gambler; or, the practice of distracting your opponent while he or she is shooting.

shim: thin slice of material added under the cloth of the walls of a pocket to make the pocket opening smaller for more challenging conditions.

shimmed pockets: pockets with the openings made smaller with shims for tougher playing conditions.

short: when a ball doesn’t roll enough, or when a shot misses on the close side of the target.

short rail: same as “end rail.”

shorten: use fast speed or reverse English to reduce the rebound angle of a bank or kick shot.

shortstop: a solid player who can be beaten only by top players.

shot: the action of hitting the cue ball into an object ball with the goal of pocketing a ball.

shot maker: a person good at making difficult shots.

shutout: to win a match without losing any games or points to your opponent.

side: Snooker or British term used for English.

side rail (AKA long rail): a long rail having a side pocket between two corner pockets.

sidespin: clockwise or counterclockwise horizontal plane rotation of a ball.

single-elimination: a tournament in which a player is eliminated after a single loss.

sink: same as "pocket" a ball.

SIS: spin-induced spin.

SIT: spin-induced throw.

sitter: same as "hanger."

six pack: six games run in a row.

skid: term used to describe the sliding motion of an object ball due to throw or cling.

skill shot: a difficult shot requiring more ability than a typical shot.

skrew: Snooker or British term used for a draw shot or bottom spin.

slate: the material (usually machined metamorphic rock slate) beneath the table cloth providing the base for the playing surface.

slip stroke: the practice of sliding the grip hand along the cue during the stroke.

slop: balls made by accident.

slop shot: a shot with no clear objective, usually hit hard in the hopes that something might go in.

slow-roll shot: a shot hit very softly, where the cue ball rolls almost immediately, regardless of cue tip offset. Table roll-off can be more of an issue with these shots.

slug rack: racked balls with gaps resulting in a terrible break.

small balls: same as "solids."

snap: same as "break."

Sneaky Pete: a high-quality cue made to look like a house cue, potentially used to hustle.

snooker: the billiards game played with 21 object balls on a special snooker table that is larger than a regulation pool table. The balls are smaller and the pockets are also smaller and shaped differently.

snookered (AKA "hooked"): the condition when the cue ball is positioned behind an obstacle ball, usually creating the need for a kick or jump shot.

snow: the cue ball.

solid: a ball numbered 1 through 7 that has no stripe.

speed: slang for a player's ability.

speed control: using the correct amount of cue ball speed to achieve good position for the next shot.

spider: a mechanical bridge with long legs for extra height.

SPF: "Set, Pause, Finish." A stroke mantra recommended by many BCA instructors. In the "set" position, the cue should be still, close to the desired contact point on the cue ball. At this point, you should be confident and comfortable with the shot you are about to execute. You should "pause" during the transition between the final back swing and the final forward stroke. Finally, you should follow through and freeze after the stroke is complete (i.e., "finish" the stroke).

SPFF: same as "SPF" with "freeze" added.

spin: ball rotation. It can refer to sidespin (AKA English), top or bottom spin, or any combination of these.

spin-induced spin (SIS): object ball spin created by spin on the cue ball (e.g., right English on the cue ball induces a small amount of left spin on the object ball).

spin-induced throw (SIT): deflection of the object ball path away from the impact line resulting from sidespin of the cue ball. It is caused by sliding friction between the cue ball and the object ball.

spin-rate factor (SRF): the spin rate of a ball expressed as a percentage of the natural roll rate of the ball.

spin transfer: the transfer of spin from the cue ball to the object ball due to friction between the ball surfaces during contact. For example, left English on the cue ball will transfer a small amount of right spin to the object ball.

split the pocket: have an object ball enter the exact center of the pocket (i.e., hit the shot perfectly).

spot: handicap given in a wagered game.

spot a ball: place an illegally sunk object ball on the foot spot. If there is no room to spot the ball directly on the foot spot without moving an obstacle ball, it is spotted as close as possible behind the foot spot on a line through the foot spot and perpendicular to the end rail.

spot shot: shot from the kitchen after a ball is spotted on the foot spot (e.g., after a scratch when playing certain games or bar rules).

spots: alternative term for "diamonds."

squat the rock: have the cue ball stop in the center of the table after a break shot.

squerve: same as "effective squirt."

squirt: same as "cue ball deflection."

SRF: spin-rate factor.

stake: money wagered on a game or match.

stake horse: same as backer.

stance: the body position and posture during a shot.

staying down: keeping your head and body still and down after a shot (i.e., resisting the urge to lift up prematurely during or after the final forward stroke).

staying in line: leaving desirable cut angles during a sequence of shots, making it easier to move the CB from one desired position to the next.

steering: term used to describe a non straight follow-through where the cue is pivoted toward the object ball or target pocket away from the aiming line. Obviously, this is a bad technique – you should follow through straight.

stick: same as “cue.”

stiffen: same as “shorten.”

stiffness: see “shaft stiffness.”

stone: same as “cue ball.”

stop shot: a shot where the cue ball stops immediately after hitting the object ball. It results from a straight-on stun shot.

stop shot at an angle: same as “stun shot.”

straight back: a bank shot off with little cut angle off a short rail into a corner pocket.

straight pool: a pool game in which any object ball can be pocketed at any time. A point is scored for each pocketed ball.

straight-in shot: a shot in which the cue ball is directly in-line with the object ball and the intended pocket (i.e., a shot where the cut angle is zero).

stripe: a ball numbered 9 through 15 that has a stripe through the number.

stroke: the cue-stick and arm motion required to execute a shot.

stroke steer: same as “steering.”

stroking plane: the imaginary vertical plane containing the cue, dominant eye, cue ball contact point, aiming line, and ghost ball target.

stuck behind the eight-ball: see “behind the eight-ball.”

stun back: same as “drag draw.”

stun shot: a shot where the cue ball has no top or bottom spin (i.e., it is sliding) when hits the object ball. A stun shot is also called a “stop shot at an angle.”

stun through: same as “roll through.”

sucker: a hustler’s victim.

sweator: a “railbird” or a person nervously watching a pool game because he or she is at risk of losing money.

swerve: curve of the cue ball’s path due to cue elevation and English.

swoop: sideways motion of the grip hand, used by some to add English during a stroke. A swoop stroke is a form of “back-hand English.”

table roll: same as “roll-off.”

table scratch: failure to hit an object ball or a rail after object ball contact, which is a foul.

tangent line: the imaginary line perpendicular to (90° away from) the impact line between the cue ball and an object ball. For a stun shot, the cue ball moves along this line after object ball impact.

TAP: The “Association of Pool” or “Pool Amateur Tour” league and tournament organization.

Tap. Tap. Tap.: Phrase used to indicate approval or congratulations. A player’s act of tapping the butt of their cut on the floor several times non-verbally congratulates an opponent or team member for making a difficult or impressive shot.

taper: the profile of shaft’s diameter (i.e., how it changes) from the tip to the joint.

target size: same as “effective pocket size.”

target center: same as “effective pocket center.”

technical proof (TP): an analytically derivation of a principle using mathematics and physics.

thick hit: a near full-ball hit (i.e., a cut shot with a small cut angle).

thin: when a ball is over-cut, it is hit too “thin.”

thin cut: a shot requiring a large cut angle, where only a small fraction of the cue ball glances the object ball.

thin hit: same as “thin cut.”

three-cushion billiards: billiard game played on a table with three balls and no pockets. To score a point, the cue ball must contact three rails before contacting the second object ball. The first object ball can be contacted by the cue ball at any time during the shot.

throw: object ball motion away from the impact line due to relative sideways sliding motion between the cue ball and object ball caused by sidespin or a cut angle.

throw shot: a shot in which English is used to alter the path of the object ball.

ticky: a rail-first carom shot where the cue ball is deflected off a rail, a near-by object ball, and back to the rail again before heading to its final target.

tight pockets: pockets with narrower openings than normal (e.g., “shimmed pockets”).

tip offset: the distance between the center of the cue ball and a line through the contact point on the cue ball that is parallel to the cue direction at contact.

TIPOPAB: “The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards” (this book).

tip: same as “cue tip.”

tips of English: measure used to indicate how far off center the cue tip contacts the cue ball. “One tip of English” means the cue is offset one tip width (i.e., one shaft diameter) from the center.

tit or tittle: same as pocket “knuckle” or “point.”

top: above-center hit on the cue ball.

topspin: forward rotation of the cue ball resulting from an above-center hit on the cue ball (see follow shot).

tough pockets: same as “tight pockets.”

TP: see “technical proof.”

traffic: collection of obstacle balls that leave little room for the cue ball to pass.

transfer of English: same as “English transfer.”

trash: slang term used to describe balls pocketed by accident.

triangle: device used to rack all 15 balls into a triangle shape (e.g., for a game of 8-ball or straight pool).

trick shot: a set-up shot used to demonstrate creativity or skill at the table (e.g., in an exhibition), where a key to making the shot can be knowing exactly how to set up the balls.

turn: a player’s stay (“inning”) at the table, which continues as long as the player continues to legally pocket object balls; also, same as “twist.”

tushhog: a “bodyguard” for a hustler or serious gambler (to watch his back, or to go after an opponent for not paying up).

twener: same as a shot “on the fifty yard line.”

twice: same as “two-rail” (e.g., twice cross-side).

twist: use spin to alter a shot (e.g., use spin-transfer to “twist” a bank in, or use SIT to “twist” a shot in).

two-rails: bank shot hitting two opposite rails.

two times: same as “twice.”

two-way shot: a shot where you attempt to pocket a ball and, at the same time, play for a safety in case you miss the shot.

under cut: hitting the object ball with too small of a cut angle, hitting the ball too fully.

unforced error: a mistake a player would not usually make (e.g., missing an easy cut shot).

up and down: long bank shot off a short rail into a corner pocket, traveling almost the full length of the table twice.

V-bridge: same as “open bridge.”

vertical centerline: used to indicate when you aim at the vertical line passing through the center of the cue ball (i.e., with no English).

vertical plane: the imaginary plane perpendicular to the table surface passing through the cue ball. Adjusting the cue height above and below the cue ball center, in the vertical plane, creates follow (topspin) or draw (bottom spin).

vertical throw: upward or downward motion (and hop) of the cue ball and/or object ball resulting from throw and a fairly full hit with follow or draw. The effect is more dramatic with “cling.”

VNEA: Valley National Eight-ball Association pool league and tournament organization.

wall: see “pocket walls.”

warm-up strokes: back and forth motion of the cue used to prepare for the final forward stroke.

weight: a handicap one player gives another in a money game.

went off X: lost X amount during gambling (often as a “pigeon”).

whip shot: same as “fouetté shot”

whippy: describes a shaft that is slender and not very stiff.

whitey: the cue ball.

wild X: a ball allowed or pocketed without calling it.

wing balls: the two balls adjacent to the 9-ball (towards the side rails) in a 9-ball rack.

wing shot: a “trick” shot where you roll the object ball and hit it into a pocket while it is moving (“on the fly”)

wired: same as “dead.”

whitey: slang term for “cue ball.”

window: gap between two obstacle balls just large enough for the cue ball to pass.

wipe its feet: when a ball brushes against the jaws of a pocket on its way in, because it wasn't hit dead center.

wire: string hanging above a table with sliding buttons for keeping score.

wired: same as “dead.”

wood: slang for “cue.”

woof: “bark” at or challenge a player, sometimes to gamble, but often as a “nit.”

World Standardized Rules: The worldwide official rules of pocket billiards games, developed and maintained by the WPA.

WPA: World Pool-Billiards Association.

WPBA: Women's Professional Billiards Association.

wrap: a covering on part of the butt to make the grip more comfortable or effective.

WSR: World Standardized Rules.

yips: jerkiness or technique flaws, usually caused by nervous tension.