

Footwork

Advance

The 'advance' is the basic forward movement. The **front foot** moves first, beginning by lifting the toes. Straighten the leg at the knee, pushing the heel out in front. Land on the heel, and then bring the back foot up to en garde stance. Also, the term advance is used in general for any movement forward by either step, cross, or ballestra.

Advance-Lunge

An advance followed immediately by a lunge. The extension can occur before or during the advance, but always before the lunge. A good long-distance attack, especially in combination with Handwork. An Advance, followed by a lunge might have a tempo of 1-2---3, but an advance-lunge should have a tempo of 1--2-3.

Appel

Stamping the front foot to the ground, to produce a sound to distract or startle the opponent. This may be made during an advance, or directly from an en garde position. It may precede a lunge, or be used merely as a distraction. An appel is also sometimes called a 'half-Advance'. This action may also be used to halt a bout.

Ballestra Lunge

A different type of attack to the lunge, the Ballestra lunge involves feint lunging then actually lunging the second time. This attack throws your opponent off balance if used correctly. However, poor execution often results in the attacking fencer losing the point. 'Ballestra' is the French term for a cross-bow bolt.

Flèche

Flèche means 'arrow' in French. An attack whose main force comes from a push from the front leg and can end in a running attack. This action is currently not allowed during sabre bouts. The attacker brings their back leg forward, pushing with their front leg. The legs cross while the back leg is still off the ground. The touch should be made before the back leg is brought down. The attacker then quickly passes the other fencer. In épée, a quick pass is essential, since the defending fencer is allowed one attack after the pass, so long as the defender does not turn around.

fanuk ^

A participating athlete

Flunge

A modified version of the Flèche. The difference is that the back leg is not brought in front of the front leg during the action, as that would constitute a crossover which are not permitted in sabre bouts.

Cross Over

An advance or retreat by crossing one leg over the other; see also Pass Forward (passe' avant) and Pass Backwards (passe arriere).

Forward Recovery

A recovery from a lunge, performed by pulling the rear leg up into en garde, rather than pulling the front leg and body backwards. Can be used to gain ground on the opponent more secretly than a standard advance, and when used sparingly can surprise the opponent by changing the expected distance between fencers.

In Quartata

An attack made with a quarter turn to the inside, concealing the front but exposing the back. This attempts to move some of the target out of harm's way during an attack or a counter-attack. This attack is often used if the opponent flèches off the strip to your inside and misses, as you are allowed a single counter-attack after an opponent leaves the strip.

Lunge

The most basic and common attacking movement in modern fencing. This description adheres basically to the French school of fencing, and describes the legwork involved. The actions of the hand/arm/blade are considered separately from this discussion. From en garde, push the front heel out by extending the front leg from the knee. Do not bend the front ankle, or lift up on the ball of the front foot. This means that the front foot must move forward prior to the body weight shifting forward. As the front leg extends, energetically push erect body forward with the rear leg. Rear arm extends during forward motion as a counter-balance. Land on the front heel and glide down into final position, with front shin perpendicular to the ground, and both heels on the floor. During this action, the torso should remain relatively erect, and not be thrown forward. Often, the back foot can be pulled along behind during an energetic lunge. It is important, and a fundamental characteristic of the lunge, to fully extend the back leg, obtaining full power from this spring-like extension.

[Aldo Nadi](#), of the Italian school of fencing, wrote an extensive description of how the lunge should be executed.

Passata-sotto

An evasive action which is initiated by dropping a hand to the floor and lowering the body under the opponent's oncoming blade. Often accompanied by a straightening of the sword arm to attempt a hit on the opposing combatant.

Pass Backwards

also Passe Arriere. A backwards footwork action. The front foot moves behind the rear foot on the body's outside. Landing on the ball of the front foot, the rear foot moves backwards to the 'en garde' stance.

Pass Forward

also Passe Avant. A forwards footwork action. The rear foot moves in front of forward foot on the body's inside. From the crossed position, the front foot moves forward into the 'en garde' stance.

Recovery

A return to en garde stance from any other position, generally by pulling backwards into en garde. Recovery from a lunge occurs by reversing the motions in a lunge, and recovering the extended arm last of all. A forward recovery involves moving the rear foot forward to return to en garde. For a center recovery, both feet move towards the center simultaneously.

Redoublement

From a lunge, a swift surprise attack made by performing a short forward recovery and an immediate second lunge. In terms of Right-of-way, a new action that follows an attack that missed or was parried. A redoublement takes place in a fencing tempo subsequent to that of the initial attack or riposte.

Retreat

The basic backwards movement. Rear foot reaches backwards and is firmly planted, then front leg pushes body weight backwards smoothly into en garde stance.

Blade Work

Absence of blade

The situation in a bout when the opposing blades are not touching; opposite of engagement.

Arret a bon temps

see Stop Hit.

Attack

The initial offensive action made by extending the sword arm and continuously threatening the valid target of the opponent.

Attack au Fer

An attack on the opponent's blade, e.g. beat, expulsion, pressure.

Beat

A simple preparatory motion. A sharp controlled blow to the middle or 'weak' of the opponents blade, with the objective of provoking a reaction or creating an opening. The action should knock the opponent's blade aside or out of line. Your foible should contact the opponent's foible.

Bind

also Lie, Liement; An action in which one fencer forces the opponent's blade into the diagonally opposite line, (that is, from high line to low line on the opposite side, or vice versa) by taking it with the guard and forte of his own blade. See also Transfer.

Change of Engagement

An engagement of the opponent's blade in the opposite line. Changes of engagement are sometimes performed to place one fencers blade on the side of his/her opponent's blade that he feels has an advantage, or could be just to fool with the opponent. Often, a bout with a left-handed fencer versus a right-handed will see both of them jockey for position with changes of engagements.

Compound Attack

Also composed attack. An attack or riposte incorporating one or more feints to the opposite line that the action finishes in. A compound attack does not necessarily lose right of way during its execution; it just comprises more than one indirect action. Compound attacks are usually used to draw multiple reactions from an opponent, or against an opponent who uses complex parries. A counter-attack into a compound attack must hit a clear tempo ahead of the compound attack to be valid.

Compound-Riposte

A riposte made with one or more feints. A riposte may incorporate disengages, beats, and so on, as long as it is a continuous attack.

Conversation

The back-and-forth play of the blades in a fencing bout, composed of phrases (phrases d'armes) punctuated by gaps of no blade action.

Coulé

Also graze, glisé, or glissade. An attack or feint that slides along the opponent's blade. In performing a sliding action along the opponent's blade, it is generally the goal to establish leverage by moving forte against foible, or forte to forte.

Counter-attack

An attack made against, or into, an attack initiated by the opponent. In foil and sabre, a counter-attack does not have the right-of-way against the opponent's initiated attack. Counter-attacking is a common tactic in épée, where one may gain a touch by hitting first, and avoiding the opponent's

attack. Counter attacks, especially in épée, are often accompanied by an action on the blade (beat, opposition, prise-de-fer, transfer).

Counter-Beat

Also Change-Beat. A beat that is preceded by a circle under the opponent's blade. This can provoke a reaction with a beat from an unexpected quarter.

Counter-Riposte

A second, third, or further riposte in a fencing 'phrase' or encounter. A counter-riposte is the offensive action following the parry of any riposte.

Counter-time

an attack that responds to the opponent's counter-attack, typically a riposte following the parry of the counter-attack.

Coup d'arrêt

see Stop-Hit.

Coupé

also Cut-Over. Another indirect attack, being an attack or deception that passes around the opponent's tip. Following a feint, the blade is pulled up and over the opponent's parrying blade. Use of the fingers and wrist ONLY is permitted, since moving the blade backwards at any time during this move invalidates the established right-of-way. Done in proper time, and with proper distance, the point may never be moved backwards, and the cut-over retain right-of-way during its entire execution.

Croisé

also Cross, semi-bind; an action in which one fencer forces the opponent's blade into the high or low line on the same side, by taking it with the guard and forte of his own blade. See also Transfer.

Cut

An attack made with a chopping motion of the blade, landing with the edge or point. Cuts, that is, attempts to hit with the edge, are only valid in sabre.

Derobement

An avoidance of an attempt to take the blade. A derobement is a reaction to the opponent's attempt to entrap, beat, press or take the blade, in a circular, lateral, vertical or diagonal motion.

Direct

an attack or riposte that finishes in the same line in which it was formed, with no feints out of that line. Most attacks that hit are done with straight attacks.

Disengage

A type of feint. Disengages are usually executed in conjunction with an extension/attack, though technically, they are just a deception around the opponent's blade. To use in an attack, feint an attack with an extension and avoid the opponent's attempt to parry or press your blade, using as small a circular motion as possible. Circle under the opponent's blade. The first extension must be a believable feint in order to draw a reaction. Be prepared to proceed forward with a straight attack if no parry response is forthcoming.

Double

an attack or riposte that describes a complete circle around the opponent's blade, and finishes in the opposite line. The full circle is done in reaction to the opponent's attempt to parry the attack or riposte with one or more parries, generally circular in nature. An attempt to perform a double' against an opponent who does NOT parry results in the attack running onto the opponent's blade, and parrying itself. A double' may be composed of simply a circular deception, which is effective against a defender's circular or semi-circular parries, or it may be a combination of a disengage and cut-over, which is effective against two lateral parries.

Engagement

During an encounter between two fencers, the point at which the fencers are close enough to join blades, or to make an effective attack. Blade contact is also referred to as an engagement, whether just standing there, during a parry, attack au fer, or prise de fer.

Envelopment

an action to seize the opponent's blade in one line and lead it (without losing contact) through a full circle to end in the same line. See also Transfer.

Extension

The simplest action of attacking. A simple offensive action, consisting of extending the weapon arm forward. The point should move in the smoothest possible line towards the target, without wavering. Excess motion can ruin the control needed for precise, consistent hits.

False attack

an attack that is intended to miss or fall short, so as to produce a reaction from the opponent.

Feint

An offensive movement resembling an attack in all but its continuance. It is an attack into one line with the intention of switching to another line before the attack is completed. A feint is intended to draw a reaction from an opponent. This is the 'intention', and the reaction is generally a parry, which can then be deceived. If a feint does NOT draw a reaction, you should be prepared to immediately abandon it, or continue with it with no deception, turning it into a real attack. Feints made without conviction will not produce the desired effect.

Flick

A cut that lands with the point, often involving some whip of the foible of the blade to strike at a concealed target. In foil and épée, flick attacks often start out without the point directly threatening the target area, and comes in with a circular action, to allow the blade to bend at the end of the attack, placing the point on target, possibly by whipping past a parry.

Glide

An attack or preparatory movement made by sliding down the opponent's blade, keeping it in constant contact.

Indirect

An attack or riposte that finishes in a line different from that in which it was formed.

Insistence

Forcing an attack through the parry, using strength.

Invitation

A line that is intentionally left open to encourage the opponent to attack.

Moulinet

In sabre, a circular cut. A moulinet is often composed of a parry, usually prime or seconde, moving thence into a circular cut. This action, while flashy and impressive, is slow, since the action pivots around the wrist and elbow, and is rarely used in modern sabre. In Historical Fencing, this is the circular motion of the fighter's blade around the opponent's blade. The hilt does not move during this maneuver.

Opposition

An action to seize the opponent's blade and control it progressively (moving along the blade) in the same line (of the opponent). An attack or counter-attack in the same line as the opponent's blade; a combined parry and riposte. This is, by definition, an offensive maneuver, since to 'progressively' control the opponent's blade you must move along its length, closing distance towards him. See also Transfer.

Point-in-Line

An established threat made with the extended arm. A point-in-line is a static threat, created by one fencer by extending the weapon and arm prior to any actions in a phrase. In foil and sabre, a Point-in-line has right of way, therefore, if the line is not withdrawn, any attack launched by the opponent does not have right of way. This can be likened to a spear poking up from the ground: If you throw yourself upon it, you have only yourself to blame. A successful attack on the blade will invalidate a point-in-line or causing the opponent to withdraw his/her arm. In épée, Point-in-line has no right of way, but is still a good idea.

Press

also Pressure. An attempt to push the opponent's blade aside or out of line from engaged blades. A press can precede a direct or indirect attack, depending on the opponent's reaction, but should be followed by an immediate threat (a full or partial extension). A press which is not followed by a threat may invite a disengage from the opponent, and an attack thereby. From an engagement, press smoothly on the opponent's foible, taking his/her blade out of line, and perhaps provoking a response. The thumb and fingers should provide the force behind this action.

Preparation

Any action that precedes the actual launch of an attack. Preparation usually consists of actions against the opponent's blade to take it out of line, or to provoke a reaction. In foil and sabre, any action that occurs during a phrase or conversation that precedes the establishment of right-of-way on the part of a fencer, often accompanied with a movement forward. In calling the actions in a foil or sabre bout, a referee may indicate preparation on the part of one fencer, meaning the fencer was moving forward without establishing right-of-way, and was vulnerable to an attack made during this time.

Presentation

Offering one's blade for engagement by the opponent.

Prise de Fer

(French : Literally take the steel); also "Taking the Blade"; an engagement of the blades that attempts to control the opponent's weapon. See also beat, press, expulsion, bind, croisé, envelopment, opposition, transfer.

Remise

An immediate, direct replacement of an attack that missed, was short, or was parried, without withdrawing the arm. A remise is a direct continuation, meaning that no deceptions or changes of line occur with the continuation (replacement) of the attack. This may be done with a simple further extension of the arm, or may be accompanied with additional forward footwork (e.g. a redoublement). In foil and sabre, a remise does not have right of way over a direct riposte.

Reprise

An indirect renewal of an attack that missed, was short, or was parried. Formerly, this was defined as an attack after a return to en-garde, or a withdrawal of the arm after a failed attack. Currently, a reprise is defined as a continued attack that uses an indirect action to reach the target. This indirect action may consist of a change of line, opposition, a withdrawal of the arm, or other action that does not immediately threaten the target. In foil and sabre, a reprise does not have right of way over a direct riposte.

Riposte

An attack with right-of-way following a valid parry. A simple (or direct) riposte goes straight from the parry position to the target. A riposte may attack in any line. Consider its equivalent in a conversation.

Salute

A blade action performed before a bout or lesson. Indicates respect and good sportsmanship. A handshake is usually exchanged after a bout.

Simple

An attack or riposte that involves no feints.

Stop Cut

also Stop Thrust, Stop-in-Time. A counter-attack that attempts to take advantage of an uncertain attack. A properly performed Stop Hit allows a fencer to counter-attack into an oncoming attack, hit his opponent, and then still parry the oncoming attack (allowing a possible valid riposte as well). It may try to break the continuance of an attack by 'stopping' into it. However, it is still a Counter-attack, and does not have Right-of-Way against a continuous attack.

Thrust

An attack made by moving the sword parallel to its length and landing with the point.

Opposition

engagement in one line, and continuing the control with that same line. Also, moving the blade laterally, controlling with the same side of the blade, and the same line of the opponent's. e.g., quarte to sixte, septime to octave, and vice-versa.

Trompement

The action of hitting an opponent at the end of a feint, after a successful deception.

Whip-over

In sabre, a touch that results from the foible of the blade whipping over the opponent's guard or blade when parried. Whip-overs are usually not counted, and formerly were a way of saying that even though the blade hit, it was parried prior to body contact, and was not valid. However, with the advent of electric sabre, whip-overs are being allowed more often. The FIE has resolved this by introducing a new standard of stiffness for sabre blades (put into effect in 1999).

Parry-related terms

Counter-Parry

also circular parry. A parry that moves in a circle to end up in the same position in which it started. A counter-parry usually traps an attack coming in a different line, but in the same high/low

line. Thus, Parry Counter-Six (circular outside hide) is effective against attacks in the Four line (inside high).

Line

The main direction of an attack (e.g., high/low, inside/outside), often equated to the parry that must be made to deflect the attack; see also point in line.

Lines

The means of referring to a position or area on a fencer's body. The idea behind 'lines' is that the torso, as facing the viewer in 'en garde' is bisected both laterally and vertically. There are then four quadrants of the body. The quadrants which are above the lateral line are referred to as 'high line,' those below as 'low line.' The quadrants on the chest side of the vertical division are 'inside line' and the other two are 'outside line.' The upper chest side quadrant is then referred to as 'inside high line.'

Each quadrant has two parry positions which guard it. (Moving to this parry position is what protects that quadrant, not necessarily the static position of the parry.)

Line	Primary	Secondary
Outside High	Parry Sixte (6)	Parry Tierce (3)
Inside High	Parry Quarte (4)	Parry Prime (1)
Outside Low	Parry Octave (8)	Parry Seconde (2)
Inside Low	Parry Septime (7)	Parry Quinte (5)

The lines are generally designated by the primary parries which cover the quadrant (Outside High is the 'Six Line' for foil and épée, the Inside Low is the 'Seven Line'....) Most openings or attacks are made to a specified line, and you refer to a deception or change of target as 'changing lines.'

Mal-parry

A parry that fails to prevent the attack from landing. A mal-parry is a nice way of saying that a parry didn't work, and has no validity.

Neuvieme

Parry #9; blade behind the back, pointing down; alternatively, similar to elevated sixte. Originally used in sabre, to defend the back against a passing or overtaking opponent. Covers the outside line on the back.

Octave

Parry #8; blade down and to the outside, wrist supinated. The point is lower than the hand. Covers the outside low line.

Parry

A simple defensive action designed to deflect an attack, performed with the forte of the blade. A parry is usually only wide enough to allow the attacker's blade to just miss; any additional motion is wasteful. A well-executed parry should take the foible of the attacker's blade with the forte and/or guard of the defender's. This provides the greatest control over the opponent's blade.

Parries generally cover one of the 'lines' of the body. The simplest parries move the blade in a straight line. Other parries move the blade in a circular, semi-circular, or diagonal manner. There are eight basic parries, and many derivatives of these eight. (see Prime, Seconde, Tierce, Quarte, Quinte, Sixte, Septime, Octave, Neuvieme). See also Lines.

In foil, the opponent's blade should not only be deflected away from the target, but away from off-target areas as well. An attack that is deflected off the valid target but onto invalid target still retains right-of-way. In sabre, the opponent's blade need only be deflected away from valid target, since off-target touches do not stop the phrase. Sabre parries must be particularly clean and clear to avoid the possibility of whip-over touches. In épée, a good parry is simply any one that gains enough time for the riposte; opposition parries and prise-de-fer are commonly used, since they do not release the opponent's blade to allow a remise.

Beat Parry

deflecting the incoming attack with a sharp striking motion.

Opposition Parry

deflecting the incoming attack without ever losing contact with the blade from the initial engagement.

Yielding Parry

deflecting the incoming attack by maintaining contact with the blade and changing the point of contact between the blades, moving from a position of poor leverage to one using the forte for strong leverage.

Semi-Circular Parry

A parry that moves from a high line to a low line, or vice versa. The parry can also cross the body. The parry must be made in a semi-circle to provide the enveloping movement needed to trap the attacking blade.

Prime

Parry #1; blade down and to the inside, wrist pronated. The point is lower than the hand. Covers the inside line, generally the inside high line (though it can be used to cover the inside low line).

Pronation

The position of the hand when the palm is facing down. See supination.

Quarte

Parry #4; blade up and to the inside, wrist supinated. The point is higher than the hand. Covers the inside high line.

Quinte

Parry #5; blade up and to the inside, wrist pronated. The point is higher than the hand. This parry, more than any other, is subject to different interpretations in different schools (in foil and épée). In foil and épée, this parry generally covers the inside low line, since the pronated wrist can push further down than the supinated wrist (in Quarte). If the point and hand are lifted, this parry can also cover the inside high line with a sweeping action upwards, carrying the opponents point over the outside shoulder. In sabre, the blade is held above the head to protect from head cuts.

Seconde

Parry #2; blade down and to the outside, wrist pronated. The point is lower than the hand. The hand is lower than in the Prime position. Covers the outside low line.

Septime

Parry #7; blade down and to the inside, wrist supinated. The point is lower than the hand. Covers the inside low line.

Sixte

Parry #6; blade up and to the outside, wrist supinated. The point is higher than the hand. Covers the outside high line. This is generally the parry taught as the basic en garde position in foil and épée.

Supination

The position of the hand when the palm is facing up. See Pronation.

Tierce

Parry #3; blade up and to the outside, wrist pronated. The point is higher than the hand. Covers the outside high line. This is the basic en garde position in sabre.

[\[edit\]](#) Non-Olympic weapons and styles

Backsword

A type of heavy sabre, generally single-edged with a 'false edge' down the top third of the back of the blade. Typified by a basket hilt. In use from the 18th to 20th centuries.

Broadsword

A military sword and fencing weapon popular in the 18th-19th centuries, similar to a heavy sabre. Beginning only in the late 20th century, this term came to be inappropriately applied to almost any straight-bladed, double-edged, single-handed cutting sword, especially of the Medieval and Renaissance eras.

Florentine

This refers to an alternative Renaissance style in which the swordsman would fight with a Rapier in each hand. This is also known as Case Rapiers, referring to the practice of carrying the two rapiers in a wooden case rather than in scabbards.

Great Sword

also Two-handed Sword. A large cutting sword, generally double-edged, intended for use with both hands. Great Swords could be as tall as the swordsman, and were often used as front-line offensive weapons in late 17th Century warfare. Manuals detailing the use of two-handed swords are among the earliest extant, dating back to the 14th Century.

Rapier

A long, double-edged thrusting sword popular in the 16th-17th centuries. Rapiers began as swords which were designed to use the point, in addition to heavy cuts. Some consider the 'estoc' a precursor to the rapier. As the styles of combat changed, and heavy armor was lightened, the rapier became more focused on the use of the point, and less on heavy cutting strokes. Hilts were designed to allow the forefinger to wrap around a quillion and provide better control. Hilts became elaborate weaves of wire, culminating in a 'basket-hilt', the forerunner of the modern épée cup guard.

Smallsword

Also court sword. A light dueling sword popular in the 18th century. These were, as often as not, a fashion accessory as much as a gentleman's weapon, and were decorated as such.

[\[edit\]](#) Olympic weapons and their parts

Épée

A fencing weapon with triangular cross-section blade and a large bell guard; also a light dueling sword of similar design, popular in the mid-19th century, which was also called an 'Épée de Terrain.'

Foible

The top third of the blade. This section of the blade is weaker in terms of leverage, and is used for beats, presses, and other motions where speed is needed and leverage is not crucial.

Foil

A fencing weapon with rectangular cross-section blade and a small bell guard. More generally, any sword that has been buttoned or had its point turned back to render it less dangerous for practice.

Forte

The bottom third of the blade, so named for the strength in leverage that it provides. Always perform your parries with the forte. Hitting the opponent with the forte is not recommended.

French Grip

A traditional hilt with a slightly curved grip and a large pommel.

Guard

also Bell and Bell Guard. A Cup-shaped metal (steel or aluminum) weapon part which protects the hand. Foils use small concentrically mounted bell guards, épées use larger offset-mounted bell guards, and sabres have a knuckle guard that wraps around the hilt to protect from cuts to the hand.

Hilt

Everything that you hold. The handle of a sword, consisting of guard, grip, and pommel. Italian grip weapons will also have quillions and a ricasso as a part of the hilt.

Italian Grip

A traditional hilt with finger rings and crossbar. Used only in foil and épée. The Italian grip provides more 'grip' than the French grip, but less than a 'pistol-grip'. The finger rings and crossbar are descendants of the swords that used quillions.

Maraging

A special steel alloy used for making blades rated for international competition. Usually stronger and more durable than conventional carbon-steel blades, but more importantly, it tends to break less frequently than carbon-steel blades. This is due to the fact that propagation of micro-cracks in the blade is approximately 10 times slower in maraging steel than in carbon-steel. It is a fencing urban myth that a maraging steel blade is designed to break flat; the breakage patterns are identical. Both maraging and non-maraging blades break with the same degree of jaggedness. The sole reason for requiring a maraging steel blade (or a non-maraging one that has the same longevity under FIE testing) is that less blade breaks equals less potential for follow-on injury.^[*citation needed*]

Pistol Grip

A modern, orthopedic grip, often shaped vaguely like a small pistol (generally with more protrusions than a real pistol's grip). Varieties are known by names such as Belgian, German, Russian, and Visconti. Orthopedic grips were introduced to aid a fencer who has lost some fingers and was unable to use a traditional grip.

Point

In foil and épée, the point is the only part of the blade with which to score points. The point may also be used in sabre.

Pommel

From the old French word for 'apple'. This fastener affixes the grip and guard to the tang of the blade. It has female threading, but the threaded hole does not go all the way through as is the

case with a nut. It is screwed on to the distal end of the tang, locking guard, grip and electric connector is position by compression and friction. The pommel traditionally acts as a counterweight on non-orthopedic grips of foils and épées, and on all sabres. In electric sabre, it is covered with plastic as to not interfere with the detection of valid hits by allowing stray currents. Orthopedic (pistol-grip) weapons use only a pommel nut, usually fitting inside a cylindrical hole in the grip.

Quillion

also Quillon, Cross-guard. A bar that composes all or part of the guard of a sword. The quillions (usually two) extend from the hilt of the sword, perpendicular to the line of the blade, on the same plane as the edge(s) of the blade. In simple medieval swords, the quillions usually form the entire guard. In later, more complex hilts, rings and other protective structures were extended in front of the quillions. One or two fingers can be wrapped around the quillions, providing better control of the weapon. In modern fencing weapons, the Italian grip is the only one that retains quillions.

Ricasso

An unsharpened portion of the blade in front of the quillions. In complex rapier and smallsword hilts, the ricasso is behind the guard, or the forward portion of the hilt.

Sabre

A fencing weapon with a flat blade and knuckle guard, used with cutting or thrusting actions; a military sword popular in the 18th to 20th centuries; any cutting sword used by cavalry. The modern fencing sabre is descended from the dueling sabre of Italy and Germany, which was straight and thin with sharp edges, but had a blunt end.

Three Prong

A type of épée body wire/connector; also an old-fashioned tip that would snag clothing, to make it easier to detect hits in the pre-electric era.

Two Prong

A type of body-wire/connector, used in foil and sabre.

[\[edit\]](#) Bouting

Assaut

A friendly combat between two fencers, where score may or may not be kept, and is generally not a part of any competition. Formerly, public exhibitions (spectator events) were often conducted as assaults, rather than as round-robin or direct-elimination events, especially with a few fencers. (See also Bout).

Bout

An assault at which the score is kept. Usually refers to a match between two fencers in a competition. This is the term used in the US to generally denote any combat between fencers, replacing the terms 'match' and 'assault'.

Corps-à-corps

(French "body-to-body") The action of two fencers coming into physical contact with one another with any portion of their bodies or hilts. This is illegal in foil and sabre bouts, and is cause for the Referee (Director) to halt the fencing action. In épée, it does not violate the spirit of the game, but contact may not be accompanied with any brutality or forcefulness (intentional or not).

Double

A double touch. in épée, two attacks that arrive within 40-50 ms of each other. This time margin is handled by the scoring machines, which lock out any touches after the time limit. Double touches are not allowed in foil and sabre.

Dry (USA) / Steam (UK)

Fencing without electric scoring aids. 'Dry' weapons have plastic or rubber buttons on the tips.

Match

The aggregate of bouts between two fencing teams.

Salute

A gesture of respect and civility performed with the weapon. Performed at the start and end of a bout (match, assault, etc), and also at the start and end of a lesson. At the start of a bout, it is traditional, and expected, to salute the adversary, the referee of the bout, any additional judges for the bout, and then, optionally, others (the timekeeper, scorekeeper, etc). The FIE rules now state that failure to salute an opponent and shake his/her hand at the end of a bout is an offense punishable by removing a touch, and therefore, possibly, the bout.

Salut des armes

A sort of a choreographed demonstration of arms, consisting of sets of fencers saluting, attacking, parrying, drilling and performing set routines in chorus.

[\[edit\]](#) **Officiating and rules enforcement**

Avertissement

(French) A warning; used to indicate a minor rule infraction by one of the fencers. See Yellow Card

Black Card

A severe penalty. A black card is used to indicate the most serious offences in a fencing competition. The offending fencer is expelled immediately from the event or tournament,

regardless of whether he or she had any prior warnings. A black card can also be used to expel a third party disrupting the match.

Jury

The 4 officials, or judges, who watch for hits in a dry fencing bout. The judges watch for hits on the fencer opposite their end of the strip. A judge acknowledges a hit by raising his or her hand, attracting the attention of the referee (or president of the jury). A judge cannot interpret the right-of-way (foil and sabre), only vote on the touches as described by the referee. In electronically scored foil bouts, hand-judges can be used to watch for a fencer who may be covering valid target area with the unarmed hand.

Red Card

Used to indicate repeated minor rule infractions or a major rule infraction by one of the fencers; results in a point being given to the other fencer, and often the annulment of any touch which would have been made by the offending fencer.

Referee

also director, president. The mediator of the fencing bout.

Yellow Card

also avertissement, warning. Used to indicate a minor rule infraction by one of the fencers.

Fencing objects, other than weapon parts

Body Cord

The insulated wire that runs under a fencer's jacket, connecting the Electrical Competition weapon to the reel, and thence to the scoring machine. The body cord also connects to the lamé causing it to become conductive.

Lamé

The electrically conductive jacket worn by Foil and Sabre fencers. In foil, the lamé extends on the torso from the shoulders to the groin area. It also covers the back. In sabre, the lamé covers both arms, the torso from the shoulders to the waist, and the back. Sabreurs also wear a conductive glove cover, called a manchette on their weapon hand. The lamé is connected to the body cord with an alligator clip causing it to be conductive.

Manchette

A special glove cover worn by sabre fencers, on their weapon hand. Covered by a type of brocaded fabric with inwoven metal threads that serve as a conductive surface that aides in the practice of electric fencing, the manchette is worn on the hand and wrist. The manchette is conducting up to but not exceeding the wrist area. It is worn in conjunction with a lamé.

Strip (Piste)

The fencing area, roughly 14 meters by 2 meters. The last two meters on each end is hash-marked, to warn a fencer before he/she backs off the end of the strip. Retreating off the end of the strip with both feet gets a touch against. Going off the side of the strip with one foot halts the fencing action. Going off the side with both feet gets a penalty of the loss of one meter. After each touch, fencers begin again at the center of the strip, 4 meters apart.

Plastron

Also Underarm Protector. A partial garment worn under the jacket for padding or for safety. Usually Consists of a sleeve and a chest/abdomen covering, which provides additional padding and protection. An 'underarm' plastron is seamless under the weapon arm, providing no weak seams for a broken blade to rip through. An 'over-plastron' is worn to provide additional padding.

General

Counter-Attack

An attack into an established attack (that already has right-of-way). In foil and sabre, a counter-attack does NOT have the right-of-way, and will not gain a touch if the opposing fencer's attack lands. Breaking the arm in the middle of a perfectly good attack can turn your attack into a counter-attack without right-of-way.

Displacement

Moving the target to avoid an attack; dodging.

In-fighting

Fencing at closed distance, where the distance between the two fencers is such that the weapon must be withdrawn before the point can threaten or hit the target.

Opposition

An attack that is made fully in contact with the opponent's blade. The purpose is to control the opponent's blade from the starting point (usually a parry) throughout the attack. This is often used as a counter-offensive technique, especially in épée, but can be a problem if a disengagement is made by the opponent. Also Lateral Transfer.

Passé

An attack that passes the target without hitting.

Point-in-Line

An extended arm and blade that threatens the opponent, which is established before any other valid attack from the opponent. For instance, from outside of engagement distance, a fencer

performs an extension, establishing right-of-way. Until this extension is broken, it maintains right-of-way. Any direct attack made against it (without a beat, or other similar action) will be considered a counter-attack.

Preparation

The initial phase of an attack, before right-of-way is established.

Priority

In sabre, the now-superseded rules that decide which fencer will be awarded the touch in the event that they both attack simultaneously; also used synonymously with right-of-way. In the 1995 revision of the rules for all weapons, priority is also awarded when time expires with a tied score. The priority is determined by the flip of a coin at the start of the last minute, and the winner of the toss wins the bout if the score is tied when time expires.

Redoublement

A new action that follows an attack that missed or was parried. This is distinguished from a remise, reprise, or riposte by being a NEW action. See also redoublement under Footwork.

Remise

An immediate, direct replacement of an attack that missed, was short, or was parried, without withdrawing the arm. This is a continuation of an attack, and does not have priority (in foil and sabre) over a direct riposte.

Reprise

An indirect renewal of an attack that missed or was parried. This is a continuation of an attack, and does not have priority (in foil and sabre) over a direct riposte.

Right-of-Way

The rules for awarding the point in the event of a double touch in foil or sabre. The concept involved in being the first to establish a valid threat to an opponent's target area. Extending is the usual means to establishing this threat. Breaking the extended arm during an attack means relinquishing right-of-way. An opponent can take right-of-way by parrying the opponents blade.

Riposte

An attack made immediately after a parry of the opponent's attack.

Salle

(French: "room") A fencing hall or club.

Second-Intention

In general, a term used to imply that the first action initiated is NOT the one intended to score. The fencer may initiate a move, anticipating (or intending to draw) a certain response from the

opponent, against which a second action is planned. For example, Lunge Attack (anticipating that it will be parried), Parry the riposte, and Redouble with a Counter-Riposte.