

Glossary of Mining Terms

- ADIT:** a horizontal entry into a mine with one opening to the surface, commonly and erroneously called a tunnel. (A tunnel is open at both ends.)
- ALLUVIUM:** unconsolidated sedimentary deposit, e.g. stream bed of sand and gravel.
- ANTICLINE:** a convex fold in sedimentary beds of rock (opposite: syncline).
- APEX:** top of a vein or lode.
- ASSAY:** a test to determine the quantity of mineral in a given sample. May be by a miniature smelting process in the laboratory, called a fire assay; or by use of chemicals, called a chemical or wet assay.
- BACK:** the roof of a horizontal opening such as an adit, drift or crosscut.
- BONANZA:** a rich body of ore.
- BEDROCK:** uppermost layer or segment (portion) of rock in place.
- BREAST:** the end, heading or working face of an adit, drift or crosscut.
- CHIMNEY:** a vertical ore body, tubelike in shape.
- CHUTE:** (ore) chute for transferring broken rock in a mine; usually from a stope to a haulage passage.
- COBBING:** hand sorting of ore.
- COLLAR:** top of a shaft or winze; the timbers or concrete at the upper end.
- COLOR:** a particle of free gold.
- CONCENTRATOR:** a device for separating and concentrating mineral from rock by mechanical means.
- CONTACT:** the meeting of two geologic formations.
- CONTACT VEIN:** a vein along the contact.
- COUNTRY ROCK:** rock surrounding a vein or lode, extending throughout the area.
- CRIBBING:** a wall of light timbering between heavy supports at either vertical or horizontal mine working.
- CROSSCUT:** a horizontal opening such as an adit driven across the vein or ore body.
- CUT:** an open working driven into a hillside to expose underlying rock.
- DIKE:** a vertical or near vertical fissure filled with volcanic rock.
- DIP:** the vertical angle a vein or sedimentary bed makes with a horizontal plane.
- DRIFT:** a horizontal opening (such as an adit) driven along the vein.
- FACE:** the last working end of an adit, drift, crosscut or cut (same as breast).
- FAULT:** A dislocation along a crack in the earth's surface (may be horizontal, vertical or a combination of both); a failure along a line of stress; usually associated with earthquakes, but movement may be slow.
- FISSURE:** a crack in the earth's surface; if filled with vein material becomes a fissure vein.
- FLOAT:** a piece of ore detached from a vein or lode, lying loose, not in place.
- FLOOR:** the lower surface of a mine working, i.e. the floor of a drift.
- FLUME:** a device for conveying water.
- FOOT WALL:** the lower side of an inclined vein in country rock.
- GANGUE:** the matrix of the ore composed of worthless material.
- GLORY HOLE:** a large funnel-shaped excavation extending to the surface, the material being drawn from the bottom through a tunnel.
- GRIZZLY:** a grating, usually made up of mine rails, over an ore bin for the purpose of diverting large rocks or boulders.

- GRUB STAKE:** financing a prospector to share in his findings.
- HANGING WALL:** the upper wall of an inclined or dipping vein.
- HEADING:** same as breast or face of a working.
- HORSE:** a mass of country rock found in an ore deposit.
- INCLINE:** a sloping shaft, drift, crosscut or tunnel.
- LEAD:** same as lode. (pronounced "lead")
- LEDGE:** same as lode.
- LEVEL:** one of a series of drifts or crosscuts, one above the other, in a mine.
- LODE:** a mineral deposit in place, including veins.
- LODE LINE:** presumed course of the vein or lode at the surface.
- MATRIX:** the worthless material in an ore deposit surrounding the valuable minerals.
- METALLURGY:** the art of separating minerals from the gangue in ores; also combining metals to form alloys.
- MINE:** an excavation for the purpose of extracting mineral.
- MINERAL:** an inorganic substance contained in the earth.
- MUCK:** broken rock in a mine.
- OPEN CUT:** a drift or crosscut that does not enter cover.
- OPEN PIT:** a large excavation beginning at the surface.
- ORE:** a mineral deposit that can be mined at a profit; includes the mineral itself and the gangue.
- OUTCROP:** that portion of a mineral deposit appearing at the surface.
- PLACER:** a mineral deposit of unconsolidated particles.
- QUARRY:** similar to an open pit, usually applied to building stone.
- RAISE:** a vertical or inclined shaft driven upward from an underground working.
- REEF:** Australian word for lode.
- ROOF:** the ceiling of a working, as the back of a drift.
- ROYALTY:** a percentage of the earnings or product paid an owner.
- SHAFT:** a vertical or inclined opening sunk from the surface to gain access or to explore an orebody.
- SHIFT:** a period of working time.
- SKIP:** an ore bucket used to hoist ore and muck in a shaft.
- SLUICE:** a trough with riffles for separating placer gold.
- SMELTING:** the reduction of metals from the ore in a furnace.
- STOPE:** usually a room where the ore is mined.
- STRIKE:** the horizontal direction of a vein.
- STULL:** a timber in a mine, usually a post.
- SUMP:** a low place in a mine for collecting water, such as the bottom of a shaft.
- TAILINGS:** the waste rock from a mine or mill.
- TUNNEL:** technically, a horizontal passageway open at both ends, but in mining used to designate any horizontal passageway driven for the development or discovery of an orebody.
- VEIN:** a fissure or crack in surrounding rock filled with mineral.
- WINZE:** a vertical or incline opening sunk from an underground mine working; an underground shaft.