

# BACKstage

## Technical Theatre for High Schools

### Scenic and Construction Terminology

**Backing Flat:** A flat designed to conceal/hide backstage areas  
Synonym: Masking Flat

**Bolt Grade:** Description of hardness/durability. Indicated by raised hash marks on the head of the bolt

**Book:** Two flats hinged together in order to be self-supporting when folded on the hinge  
Synonym: Book Flat, Two-fold

**Box Set:** A set that utilizes three walls to enclose the stage area.

**Broadway Style Flat:** A flat built on board face.

**Butt Joint:** A joint constructed with board edges at 90 degrees

**Carpenter:** A stagehand who builds sets. The master carpenter oversees a crew of carpenters.  
Synonym: Stage Carpenter, Stage Carp

**Carriage Bolt:** A bolt with a round head, used chiefly for fixing wooden panels to masonry or to one another

**Caster:** A small wheel used on scenery and scenic equipment for ease of shifting/moving

**Chop Saw:** A chop saw is a power tool that used to make straight cuts in wood. It may have features that allow it to cut angles  
Synonym: Miter Saw

**Circular Saw:** A power saw with a rapidly rotating toothed disk

**Clamp:** a brace, band, or clasp used for strengthening or holding things together

**Corner Block:** A piece of 1/4" plywood cut in the shape of a triangle, used to connect the stile to the rail on a flat  
Synonym: Triangle, Corner

**Compression Leg:** Leg type where the weight of platform bears directly onto the leg in compression, rather than by the bolts and creating shear

**Cross Bracing:** A system utilized to reinforce building structures in which diagonal supports intersect.

**Deck:** stage flooring, permanent or portable

**Dimensional Lumber:** Wood lumber that is cut to pre-defined, standard sizes. Dimensional lumber sizes refer to depth and width, not length

**Drill:** Power tool with a rotating cutting tip, used for making holes or for inserting crews  
Synonym: Screw Gun

**Dutchman:** Thin strips of cloth used to mask cracks between flats

**False Proscenium:** A constructed proscenium that fits inside the permanent proscenium  
Synonym: Portal

**Framing Square:** A large, L-shaped carpenter's square graduated with scales typically for use in cutting off and notching (as rafters or stair joists)

**Front Elevation:** A scale drawing that gives the front view of the set

**Ground Plan:** A scale diagram that shows where the scenery is placed on the stage floor  
Synonym: Plan View, Floor Plan

**Ground Row:** A short piece of scenery, usually self-supporting, placed in front of the backdrop or cyc to mask stage equipment, cyc lights or the bottom of a drop  
Synonym: Cutout

**Hammer:** A tool with a heavy metal head mounted at right angles at the end of a handle, used for breaking things and driving nails

**Hex Bolt:** A bolt with a six-sided head

**Hollywood Style Flat:** A flat built on board edge.

**Jack:** A triangular-shaped brace used to support scenery

**Jigsaw:** A saw with a fine blade enabling it to cut curved lines in a sheet of wood, metal, or plastic

**Kerf:** A slit made by cutting with a saw. Material removed by a saw blade

**Keystone:** A 1/4" piece of plywood used to connect the stile to the toggle bar of a flat

**Lag Screw:** A heavy wood screw having a square or hexagonal head  
Synonym: Lag Bolt

**Masonoite®** engineered hardboard which is made of steam-cooked and pressure-molded wood fibers

Miter: An angled cut made across the face, or width, of a board

Nut: A small flat piece of metal or other material, typically square or hexagonal, with a threaded hole through it for screwing on to a bolt

Nut Driver: A tool for tightening nuts and bolts

Oriented Strand Board: A strong, thick board often used for platform decking  
Synonym: OSB

Panel Saw: A type of saw that cuts sheets into sized parts by feeding the lumber through the saw. Panel saws can be vertical or horizontal

Periaktoi: A three- sided set piece typically on casters.

Platform: Stage decking, usually raised and non-moving.

Plywood: Type of strong thin wooden board consisting of two or more layers glued and pressed together with the direction of the grain alternating, and usually sold in sheets of four by eight feet. Graded based on quality.

Pneumatic Tool: a type of power tool, driven by compressed air supplied by an air compressor

Portal: A doorway, gate, or other entrance

Rail: The top and bottom of a flat

Rake: A stage constructed as a downward slope.

Rear Elevation: A scale drawing of the back of a set.

Reveal: scenic materials or technique used to create visual depth and thickness in a scenic element such as in an arch, door, window, wall

Router: A power tool with a shaped cutter, used in carpentry for making grooves for joints, decorative moldings, etc.

Sander: A power tool used for smoothing a surface with sandpaper or other abrasive material

Screw: A short, slender, sharp-pointed metal pin with a raised helical thread running around it and a slotted head, used to join things together by being rotated so that it pierces wood or other material

Shift: Moving set pieces or scenery on stage

Simple Leg: A leg cut to the desired height minus the thickness of the platform lid. All weight is carried is carried by the bolts.

Skin: The surface covering of a flat

Speed Square: A triangular shaped carpenter's marking square

Stop Block: Wooden or metal stop used by carpenters to ensure accuracy when making repetitive saw cuts

Synonym: Jig

Stile: The sides of a flat

Table Saw: A circular saw mounted under a table or bench so that the blade projects up through a slot

Toenail: Inserting a screw or nail at any angle other than 90 degrees.

Toggle: The middle braces connecting the stiles of a flat

Turntable: A portion of a stage that turns on a center axis.  
Synonym: Revolve

Unit Set: A set that can serve as several different settings by changing only one or two set pieces, or by adding different set dressing

Wagon: A stage platform that moves

Wagon Brake: Device that prevents a wagon from moving

Washer: A small flat ring made of metal, rubber, or plastic fixed under a nut or the head of a bolt to spread the pressure when tightened or between two joining surfaces as a spacer or seal

#### Nominal/Actual Lumber Sizes

1 x 3	$\frac{3}{4}$ " x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
1 x 4	$\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
1 x 6	$\frac{3}{4}$ " x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
2 x 2	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
2 x 4	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
2 x 6	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ "