Bowling Glossary

Term	Definition
Alley, or Bowling Lane	Playing surface on which the ball is rolled and where the pins are located. Also known as a lane. In its plural form, can mean a bowling center.
Anchor	Last bowler in a team's lineup.
Approach	Area behind the foul line on which the bowler takes his/her steps prior to delivering the ball. Known, too, as the runway. Also, the entire delivery process, from push away to release.
Back End	The two-part, rearmost part of a lane – the hook area and the pin deck.
Back swing	Path of the arm behind the body during the next to last step in the delivery.
Backup	A ball that curves left to right for a right-hander and right to left for a left-hander.
Ball Rack	Equipment used to store house balls.
Ball Return	Usually an under-the-lane track on which the ball is returned to the bowler from the pit. Also where the ball rests before and after all shots.
Blind	Score given to a team when a member is absent. Although based on the missing player's past performances, the score given is usually lower than the average for that bowler, thus penalizing him for the absence.
Boards	Strips of wood that make up a lane.
Bowling Area	The area behind the lane where bowlers wait to bowl. This is sometimes referred to as the settee area.
Bowling Center	A bowling establishment.
Bridge	Distance between finger holes on the ball.
Concourse	Area behind the lane where spectators sit.
Control Desk	The bowling center area where you make the arrangements and receive the equipment needed to bowl.
Convert	When you successfully make your spare.
Count	Number of pins knocked down on the first ball.
Curve	A ball that is rolled toward the outside of the lane and then curves back toward the center of the lane.
Delivery	Rolling of the ball.
Double	Two consecutive strikes.
Error	Failure to convert a spare. Also called a blow, miss or open.
Fill	Number of pins knocked down by the first ball after a spare. So called because those pins finish the scoring for the previous frame.
Foul	Touching or going beyond the foul line when delivering the ball.
Foul Line	A black line on the alley which separates the approach from the lane.
Frame	One-tenth of a game. Each large box on a score sheet indicates a frame. A player's turn during a game. A game consists of 10 frames.

Term	Definition
Gutter Ball	A ball rolled in the gutter.
Gutter or Channel	Drop off area on each side of the lane. Also called the channel.
Handicap	Pins added to a bowler's score to equalize competition. The lower a bowler's average, the higher the handicap so that he/she will have a better opportunity to defeat a bowler with a higher average.
Headpin	The number one pin.
Hook	A ball that breaks sharply to the left for a right-hander, to the right for a left-hander.
House Ball	A ball that is owned by the bowling center and can be used by anyone.
Lane	Name usually associated with the 60-foot wooden surface extending from the foul line to the end of the pin deck.
Lead Off	First bowler in a team's lineup.
Leave	Pins that remain standing after the first ball delivery.
Lift	Upward motion applied to the ball by the fingers at the point of release.
Line	A game of 10 frames, one full game. Also refers to the path a ball travels.
Lofting	Tossing the ball far out beyond the foul line. Normally caused by a late release.
Mark	A strike or a spare.
Miss	When no pins are knocked down on a single shot.
Open	A frame without a strike or a spare, pins are left standing after two shots.
Perfect Game	A 300 score. Strikes in all 10 frames. Twelve consecutive strikes.
Pin	Object which the bowler is trying to knock down.
Pin Bowler	A bowler who aims visually at the pin when delivering the ball.
Pin Deck	Area where the pins are placed.
Pit	Area below the far end of the lane into which the pins fall.
Pocket	Between the 1 and 2 pins for left-handers; between the 1 and 3 pins for right-handers. The ideal place for the ball to hit the pins in an effort to obtain a strike.
Push away	Moving the ball into motion, out and down during the first step of the delivery.
Return	Track or rails on which the ball rolls back to a player.
Sanctioned	Any bowling competition conducted in accordance with the rules set down by your national or international bowling federation.
Scratch	A bowler's actual score. Non-handicap bowling.
Series	Usually three games or more in a league or tournament.
Settee	Also referred to as bowling area.
Soft Pocket Hit	The action a ball makes as it enters the pin triangle when its rotation has reduced because the ball is too slow.
Span	The distance between the thumbhole and the finger holes on a ball.

Term	Definition
Split	A spare leave in which the headpin is down and the remaining pins have another pin down immediately ahead of or between them so that the gap is greater than the width of the ball.
Spot	Target on the lane at which a bowler aims.
Spot Bowler	A bowler who uses the finders or spots as their primary target. Opposite of pin bowler.
Steps	Number of steps bowler takes when delivering the ball.
Strike	Knocking down all 10 pins with the first shot of a frame. Indicated on the score sheet with an (X).
Target Arrows	A series of seven triangular darts (spots) placed in front of the foul line out on the lane. Used as sighting targets to help a player align the starting position on the approach with the ball path to the pocket.
Turkey	Three consecutive strikes.