

Gun Nomenclature Writing Tips

The below instructions may clash with popular usage, but they represent correct and proper diction in the field of firearms technology.

How to Correctly Describe Most Guns

If you do not know the details of the gun(s), use the generic terms 'long gun' and 'handgun,' as in:

"The shooter carried a long gun and several handguns."

Handguns



Long guns



If you know the exact model of the gun(s), use both the brand and model, as in:

"The shooter carried a Boomington XK-20 shotgun." or *"The shooter carried a Silver Baron, a revolver sold by Block."*

If more detail is desired, choose the correct term from below to describe the gun's action type and/or magazine system:

Action Types

- semi-automatic
- pump-action
- lever-action
- fully automatic
- bolt-action
- revolver

Magazine Types

- detachable magazine
- tube magazine
- internal magazine
- revolver cylinder

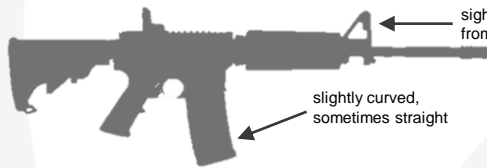
How to Correctly Describe an AR-15 or AK-47 Platform Rifle

'AR-15' and 'AK-47' are special cases because both terms have become genericized; each refers to a range of similar guns made by many manufacturers, not one specific model. Trademark concerns compound this issue, so the preferred nomenclature is 'AR-15/AK-47 platform rifle.'

If you only know that it was some type of AR-15 or AK-47 platform rifle: *"The shooter carried an AR-15 platform rifle."*

If you know the exact brand and model: *"The shooter carried a BD-223, an AR-15 platform rifle sold by Beefchester Arms."*

AR-15 Platform Rifle



sight tower distant from tip of barrel

slightly curved, sometimes straight

Identification Guidelines

These are only general identification tips. Both rifles are highly customizable, and their appearance can vary significantly.

sight tower near tip of barrel

pronounced curve

AK-47 Platform Rifle



Term Corrections

'Clips' are an archaic technology rarely seen today. In almost all cases, the correct term is **'magazine.'**

'Silencer' is an inaccurate term that has fallen into disuse. The correct term is **'suppressor.'**

'High-capacity magazine' is an inexpert term with varying definitions. Instead, simply state the magazine's capacity.

'Fully automatic' guns are rare; **'semi-automatic'** is usually the correct term. Or, simply say 'rapid-firing' or 'high rate of fire.'

Despite their popularity, avoid the terms 'machine gun,' 'assault weapon,' and 'assault rifle.' These are legal and technical terms that are rarely applicable. In most cases, the correct phrasing is **'a semi-automatic gun that uses detachable magazines.'**

Terms to Avoid

Avoid the term 'armor-piercing ammunition' when discussing rifles, as almost all commercial rifle ammunition is capable of piercing body armor. With respect to handguns and shotguns, however, armor-piercing ammunition is rare and noteworthy.

Avoid discussing gun accessories (pistol grips, triggers, scopes, etc.) and ammunition details (9mm, 12 gauge, .223, etc.), as these characteristics rarely have any relevance and are especially difficult to use correctly.

Avoid using slang or lingo (street sweeper, Saturday Night Special, ghost gun, etc.), as these terms are typically out of touch and/or region-specific, and often damage credibility.

If it becomes obvious that they know more than you, they will stop listening.



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