

Beads, sequins and diamantes/rhinestones – a basic guide



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DISCLAIMER: Please note this is my very own guideline, there are so many guides and tips, use which one you feel works for you.

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This blog is all about beads, sequins and diamantes that are used in crafting and not jewellery making. I used beads, sequins and diamantes as decorative items for my home and wedding decorations, DIY crafts, applique, dress-up outfits.

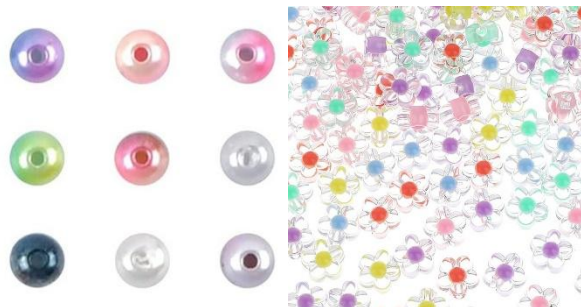
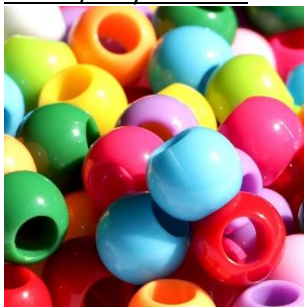
Beads nowadays come in a variety of materials, shapes, sizes and colours. The hole in the bead can be in the centre, top of the bead and even sideways and you can have a small hole or a large hole. The beads that I use the most on my projects and décor are made from plastic, acrylic/synthetic, metal, wooden and sometimes shell and glass. Other beads that are available are made from stone, bone ceramic, gemstone. The varying materials will affect the colour and shine, weight, strength and durability and should be used for the specific projects.

There is a large variety of wonderfully shaped beads and they will vary according to materials – the most common shapes being round, oval, barrel, teardrop and decorative beads – floral, hearts, butterflies, stars. Other shapes to mention are coin, tube, saucer, button and a few more.

Beads have multiple uses and can be used on nearly all mediums – glass, fabric, wood, metal, we just mention a few of the uses.

Materials

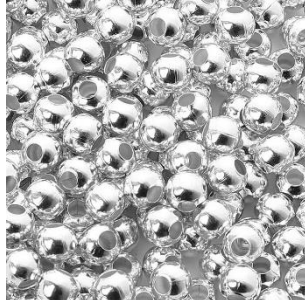
Plastic/Acrylic Beads



These beads are probably the most commonly used bead whether it is for crafting or for jewellery making. They are cost effective and can buy in bulk. They are known as acrylic or plastic beads. Some online shops will state they are made from acrylic and others plastic. Some online shops will state 'Acrylic/Plastic' beads. Basically, they are made from synthetic man-made materials. You will find them in a huge range of colours – from pastels, bold and shiny pearls, transparent or opaque, are lightweight and waterproof.

Uses – these can be used on any DIY project, excluding oven mitts and any other heat using accessories, create tassels, add to bunting, decorate clothing or dress up outfits

Metal Beads



Metal beads are made from zinc, stainless steel, iron, plated metals and even precious metals like gold and silver. This makes them durable and hard wearing. The weight will vary depending on the metal or if they are plated.

Some of the beads are shiny, others are dull and others have intricate patterns carved into the bead, giving them an antique finish/look.

You will find them in a variety of shapes – round, faceted, barrel and coin. They come in a variety of sizes from 2 mm to 16 mm

Uses - macrame plant hangers, Christmas décor, Vintage table decorations

Wooden Beads



Wooden beads are made from a variety of woods, such as olive, sandalwood, bamboo, apple, pear, and many more. The beauty of natural wooden beads is the variation of the grain and wood colouring and so no two beads are the same. Some wooden beads have been painted and others have designs on them.

They are lightweight, durable and come in a variety of sizes and come in a variety of shapes and sizes and they are not waterproof. If they get wet, they will split.

Uses – Wooden bead garlands, dream catchers, plant hangers, lamp shades

Other materials used for beads – stone, ceramic, polymer, clay, glass, and gemstone.

Below are images of the Type/Shapes of beads

Seed Beads



Uses – multiple uses – key chains, bridal bouquets, buttonholes, flower centre, applique, beaded jar covers.

Pony beads



Uses – bunting, create tassels, corners of tablecloths, bracelets

Spacer Beads



Uses - fill spaces or add height in your designs, texture and for decoration. Wonderful for plant hangers, DIY projects, applique

Themed/Novelty Beads



Uses – add additional décor to curtains, wall hangings, tablecloths, dress up outfits, bags, add to kiddies treats (make your own bracelet), table confetti

Faceted Beads



Uses – perfect for your wedding décor, hang them from chandeliers – they pick up all the light -, key rings, ornaments

Round



Oval



Rice



Barrel



Teardrop



Stick



Petal



Tube



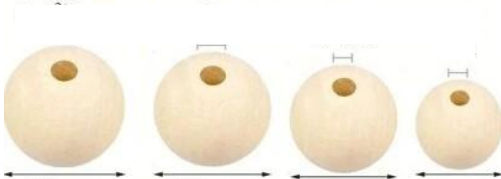
Button



You will also find large holed beads and small holed beads, the holes are from top to bottom/side to side in the middle or in the centre – petal or at the top – teardrop.

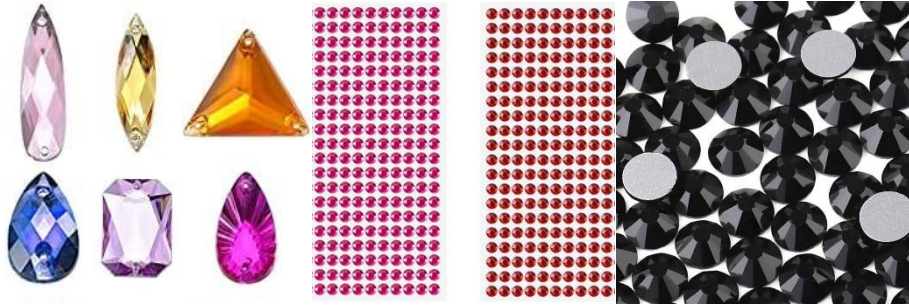


Bead sizing are always mentioned in the description/details and it will tell you the hole diameter and the size of the bead from side to side. If it is a tube shape it will give the length.



Beads are not just used for crafts and jewellery, they are used for educational purpose – counting, mental wellbeing, musical instruments and for religious purposes.

Diamantes/Rhinestones



Rhinestones, diamantes, gems, crystals are all the same thing in the crafting world. They are multifaceted and therefore reflect light and giving off lots of sparkles and different glittery colours. Materials – acrylic, glass and the more fabulous ones – Swarovski.

You will find in a variety of shapes – teardrops, round, floral, hearts and more; colours – multi-coloured, single colours, metallic and neon and sizes. You also have a choice of hand stitching the rhinestones or using the self adhesive rhinestone or using the hotfix – the back of the rhinestones, needs heat to be able to glue it on to your project.

Uses – bags, paintings, art projects, wedding bouquet, table settings, on your nails

I do not use Rhinestones/diamantes/crystals a lot, so this is very basic information. There is so much more out there for you to discover.

Sequins



Sequins are made from reflective materials such as plastic, metal, or glass. The plastic sequins are the ones that are generally used for crafting and are the most popular and cost effective. They can be found in very small sizes – 2 mm diameter to 20 mm diameter. You can find sequins in large variety of shapes - Round - Flat, Slightly cupped – edges curved upwards slightly; square, oval, teardrop, themed – flowers, butterflies; fish, feathers or seasonal – Christmas, Easter.

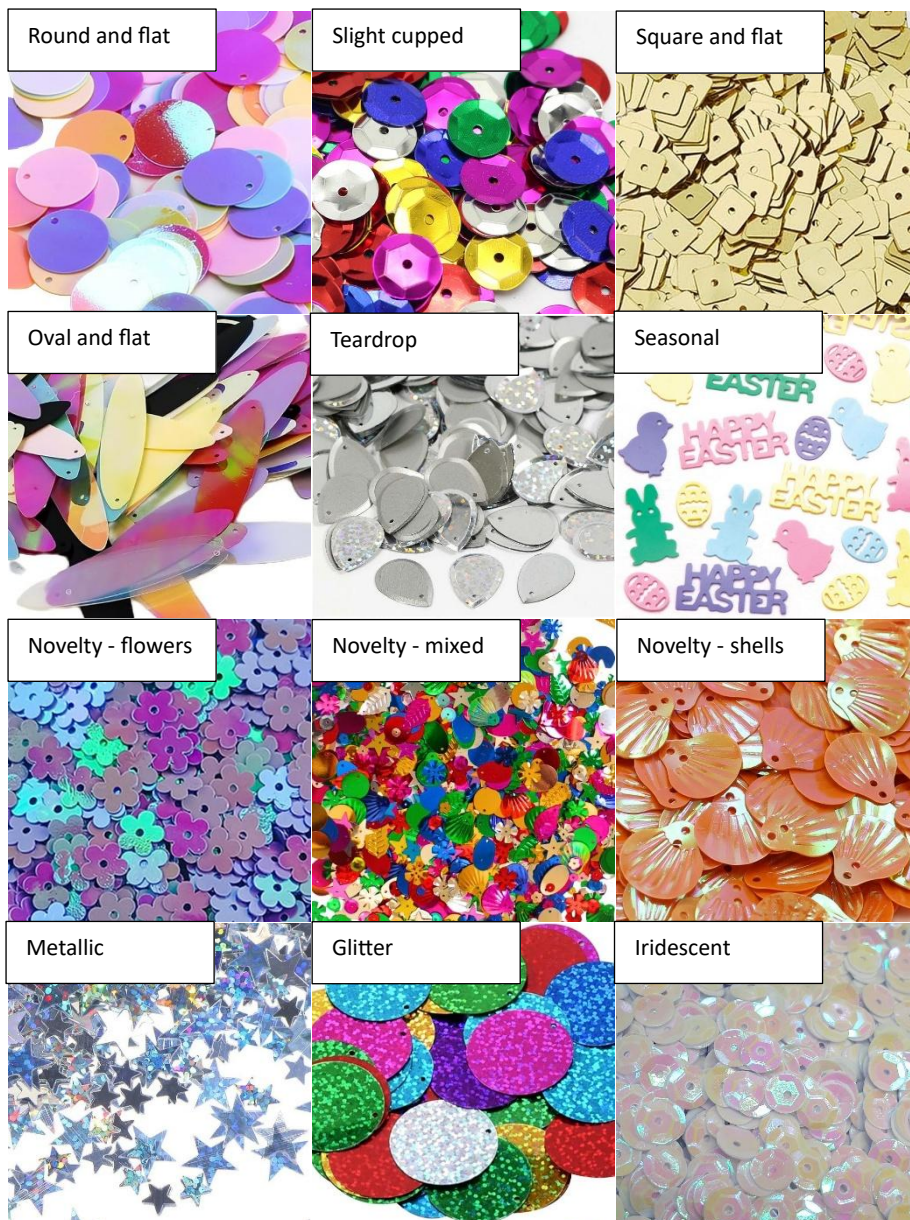
The small stitching hole can be found either in the centre of the sequin or the top, you can also find large sequins with large holes.

Sequins can be purchased on a strand or loose.

The colours – vibrant or pastel and oh my so many wonderful shiny colours – glossy, metallic, opaque, iridescent, hologram and transparent.

The main difference between a flat sequin and a curved one is that the curved one catches the light more and therefore sparkles and shimmers more.

Uses – arts and crafts, school projects, party decorations, DIY projects for the home and special occasions, wedding decorations, sewing, scrapbooking, embroidery, applique, holiday and season crafts – I could go on and on.



Visit - <https://rosamaycrafts.com/category/sewing-tutorials/> - for guides on sewing supplies.



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