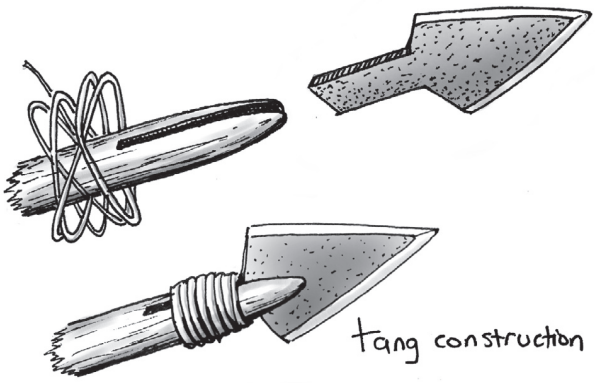
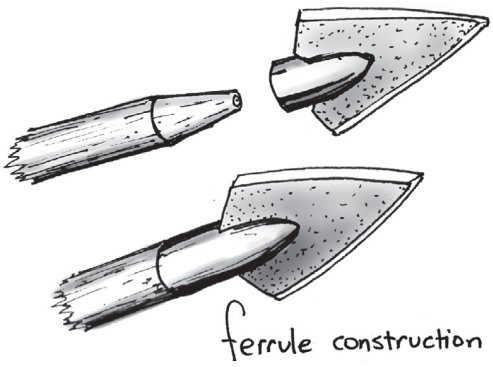
ARROWHEAD

The arrowhead is also called a *point* or *pyle*. In more primitive days, they were held to the shaft with a *tang*. This is an extended tab at the back of the arrowhead that slides into a slot in the shaft, and is tied in place. Today, most arrowheads are of the *ferrule* type, where a tube is attached to or hollowed out of the back of the arrowhead, and the shaft is inserted into the tube and held with ferrule cement. It may be interesting to note that the most advanced arrowheads are returning to the ancient tang technique, but with a twist: they have threads on the tang that screw into an insert in the front of the shaft, allowing for a quick-change in the field.





There are several types of arrowheads listed in the following pages, some with many subtle variations. Since the main purpose of the arrowhead is to focus the energy of the arrow to a point and to ease penetration of the target, arrowhead design generally varies as approriate to the target. Manufactured arrowheads come in standard weight increments, such as 100 grain[1], 125 grain, 150 grain, etc. This allows you to get similar flight characteristics from different types of arrowheads by matching the weight. The following pages show some examples of different arrowheads you might encounter.

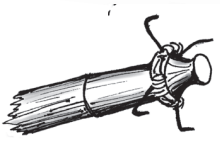
1. A "grain" is a medieval measure, based on the weight of a grain of wheat. You still see it occasionally in reference to medicine, precious metals, and projectiles. There are 437.5 grains in one ounce.

target point: Made from thin stamped metal, this arrowhead is typical on institutional-grade arrows, and is intended only to be shot into target butts.

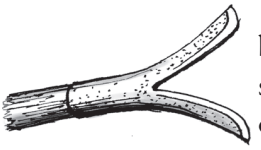
field point: Cast from steel, it is heavier and more durable than the target point. This multi-use point has better penetration and can also be used for field archery, stump shooting, and small game hunting.

blunts (several types): Typically used for stump shooting or tricks like shooting cans, they can be made from steel or rubber. Their "safe" look can be deceiving, especially to younger archers. They are quite capable of putting out an eye or tooth, so care must still be used.

improvised point: Resourceful archers put all sorts of things at the business end of their arrows. This example is a .38 handgun shell used as a practice blunt[2].



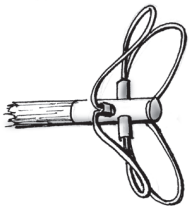
Judo™ point: A proprietary, modified blunt designed for small game hunting. Spring arms prevent the arrow from passing all the way through critters and getting lost in the underbrush beyond. What they're REALLY handy for is stump shooting, though. The spring arms catch in grass and pine needles, so rather than sliding under the grass and being lost, arrows tend to pop upright and are easier to find.



bird points: These are ancient arrowheads intended to shoot birds in flight. The "V" or crescent[3] catches part of the bird, such as a wing or neck, and pulls it in to the center where it can be cut, rather than deflecting it away. There is scholarly uncertainty here, as well: some historical accounts refer to this as a rope-cutter, for slicing rigging during naval battles.

2. Howard Hill used these for rabbit hunting.
3. Ascham mentions heads shaped "like the new moon" used for shooting at the necks of birds. He doesn't seem concerned that arrows rotate in flight, making this a chancy proposition at best.

karimata: Literally translated as "hunting fork", this Japanese point was used for both hunting and war[4]. Occasionally a *karimata* and *kaburaya* appear on the same arrow (see *whistling arrowhead*).

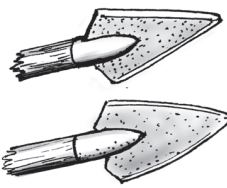


Snaro™ point: This is another proprietary design, composed of a blunt head with loops of rigid wire attached, spread out to ensnare a bird in flight. They are available in several sizes.

chisel point: No longer in use, this ancient design was for hunting larger animals. The large, sharp edge causes extensive bleeding.

cornstalk point: A field point with a long, thin steel spike at the end for traditional Cherokee cornstalk shoots (see the section on Activities).

bodkin: A medieval design intended for war. The sharp point helps it penetrate armor, but the pyramid shape makes it strong enough to not crumple as a broadhead might. Often, they were waxed before the battle to aid in penetration.

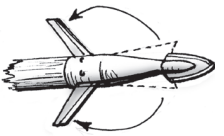


broadhead: The primary head for hunting larger game, broadheads have a sharp point and thin, razor-sharp edges to cause extensive bleeding in animals. Ancient broadheads were chipped from stone, whereas modern ones are usually high-carbon steel. They break or dull quickly if shot into target butts (not to mention damaging the butt), and are generally dangerous for young archers to even handle due to their extreme sharpness.

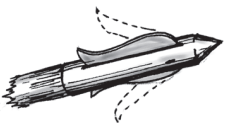
broadhead, 3 blade: A variation on the broadhead, designed to cause yet more bleeding. One disadvantage over the flat broadhead is that it might get hung up on the ribcage instead of penetrating vital organs.

4. Thanks to Ukiko Maxwell for translations and research.

broadhead, barbed: A broadhead with rearward-facing points, to prevent arrow removal and increase bleeding. They were used in ancient times for both hunting and warfare. Today, they are banned in most states.

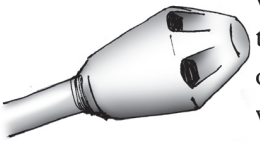


broadhead, mechanical: Invented in the 1980s, this broadhead has a mechanical system that causes the razor edges to swing out upon impact. Theoretically, this allows for truer flight and reduced deflection by branches. Conventional wisdom indicates that this slight advantage is not worth the added complexity and chance for malfunction.



fishing barb: Much like a field point, but with a retractable barb. The barb is necessary when bow fishing, as the arrow's job is to connect the fishing line to the fish, not to kill it (because it would then be pretty hard to retrieve from the water). The arrow pierces the fish, then holds fast as the archer reels in his catch.

flaming arrowhead: These are generally homemade, using a modified field point or broadhead. The shaft is longer also, to protect the archer's bowhand from being scorched while drawing and aiming. These are NOT for use by kids!



whistling arrowhead: Historical texts from China and the East mention these. Crafted skillfully from metal or wood, they were used for signalling or psychological warfare. The Japanese whistling arrowhead is called a *kaburaya*, which translates loosely to "turnip-arrow," in reference to its turnip-like shape. In a ceremony called *yabusame*, archers shoot *kaburaya* at targets while riding a galloping horse.

In addition to the metal arrowheads shown above, arrowheads can be made of other materials such as rubber and glass. Primitive people used bone, stone, shells, animal quills, or the spines of exotic fish. In a pinch, fire hardened wood will even serve.