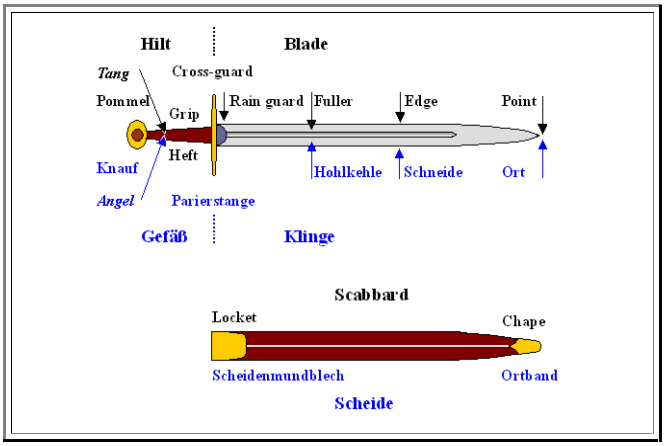
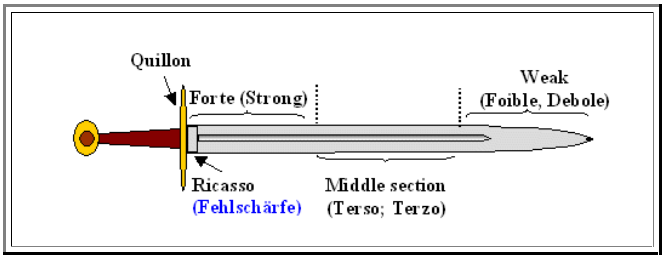
Sword Parts

Basics

In the figure below the most important sword parts are given in English and German.



Of course there is a lot more as soon as you get down to details. Here are some:



The pictures speak for themselves. More detailed explanantions come up in the following table.

The terms are partially weird or misleading since the usual meaning of some terms (particularly in German) is rather different from what they mean here. Following is an attempt at the etymology of some terms. Obvious terms like *crossguard* are not included.

English Term	**Etymology**
Hilt	Proto-Germanic (included old English): helt (hjalt, helza) = handle of sword, oar, ...
Blade	Old English blæd = a leaf. In (modern) German: Blatt = leaf. Includes leaf-like parts of spades, oars, spears, ...
Pommel	From old French early (12th century). Pomel = rounded knob. Goes back to Latin: pomum = apple, connecting to round things. In Middle-English (ca.1100 - ca.1500) poetry it sometimes means a woman's breast.
Tang	From Old Norse (Viking language) tangi = spit of land, pointed metal tool, perhaps related to tunga = tongue
Grip	Old English gripe = grasp, clutch; grippan = to grip, seize, obtain.
Quillons (other word for crossguard)	A quillon (singular) is either half of the extended crossguard of a sword or dagger. The term is from Middle French in the late 16th century and is a derivative of quille = bowling pin, ultimately from Old High German kegil = club, stake

Fuller	Not so clear. full, ful, fullr, fol, fulls in old languages (modern German: voll, means simply full. To full = tread or beat cloth to cleanse or thicken it comes from Old French (late 14th century), going back to Latin fullare = to clean cloth (by treading on it). That's why it is is also the root to foul and foiling. A fuller later also meant a half-round hammer used for grooving and spreading iron or a tool or part of a die for reducing the sectional area of a piece of work.
Edge	From Old English ecg = corner, edge, point; but it could also just mean "sword". Ecgplega = edge play or ecghete = edge hate, a poetic term for "battle". Modern German Ecke = corner.
Point	From Latin pungere = prick, pierce became point in Old French and passed to English around ca.1300. "Puncta" in Medieval Latin, (ca.700 - ca.1500) meant "sharp tip". In modern German Punkt = point, dot, full stop.
Forte	The lower third of the blade of a sword, nearest the hilt. It is the strongest part of a blade and is the part used when parrying.
Foible, Debole Weak part	The upper third of the blade, ending in the point. Despite its name, it is the business end of the sword most used to attack.
Terso, Terzo Middle Section or	The middle part of the blade, between the forte and the foible
Ricasso	Unsharpened length of blade between the cross guard and the edge. It allows the wielder to place their index finger or a whole hand above the crossguard. The "German "Fehlschärfe" translates literally to "missing sharpness".
Scabbard	From Anglo-French (the French written in England from the Norman Conquest (1066) through the Middle Ages; the administrative and legal language of England) escauberc = sheath, vagina. (13 c.). Going back to Frankish (West Germanic language of the Franks, inhabitants of northern Gaul 5 c.-6 c.) skar = blade" + berg = protect. In modern German: verbergen = to conceal, disguise, secrete.
Locket	From Old French. loquet = latch. Meaning "ornamental case with hinged cover" (containing a lock of hair, miniature portrait, etc.) first recorded 1670s.
Chape	From Latin cappa = cap, hood, cloak. In modern German Kappe = cap. Related to (French) chaperon = protector (of virgins)

German Term	**Etymologie**
Gefäß	A straight translation would be "vessel" but that goes in the wrong direction. It is related to "fassen" = to hold, to encase. A "Faß" (engl. vat) holds something. *Die Stelle and der man das Schwert fasst oder gefasst hat.*
Klinge	Middle High German. Klingen = to ring, clink, jingle; from the sound of fighting. Klingen ?= hell tönen, erschallen; nach dem hellen Klang des auf Helm und Panzer treffenden Schwertes benannt
Knauf	Old German knouf = Knoten (knot). Related to German Knopf = button
Angel	??? The regular meaning is "fishing rod", Sometimes also called Erl
Heft	Proto-Germanic heften, heftian, hæftan = stapling, tacking, stiching. Etwas (mit Reißzwecken, Nägeln, Nadeln) befestigen, anbringen, (mit Fäden, Drahtklammern) zusammenfügen.

Hilze	Also Gehilze, Griffhilze; from "Holz" = wood. In particular simple wooden grip "stuck" on the tang; as in simple tools.
Hohlkehle	Combination of Proto-Germanic (8th c.) hol = hollow, concave, and Old-German (8th c.) kela = channel, flute, groove, throat.
Schneide	Proto-Germanic (8th/9th c.) snidan; sniden, snida = to cut with a sharp implement.
Ort	The regular meaning is "place", even "town = Ortschaft". From Old German ort = point, tip. In modern German orten = to locate, to pin down.
Scheide	Proto-Germanic skeðia, schede, scede, sceide, nchede = sheath. After the 16th century it also means vagina, taking over the Latin meaning of "vagina" = sheath.
Scheidemundblech	Combination of "Scheide" (see above) and Proto-Germanic (8th c.), munt, amund, mont, mond = mouth plus old German bleh = thin metal sheet; related to modern "bleich" = pale, and originally meaning "gleaming, bright, glittering", since mostly gold was hammered into thin sheets.
Ortband	Combination of Ort (see above) and old German bant = tie, tape or band. Relates to binding.