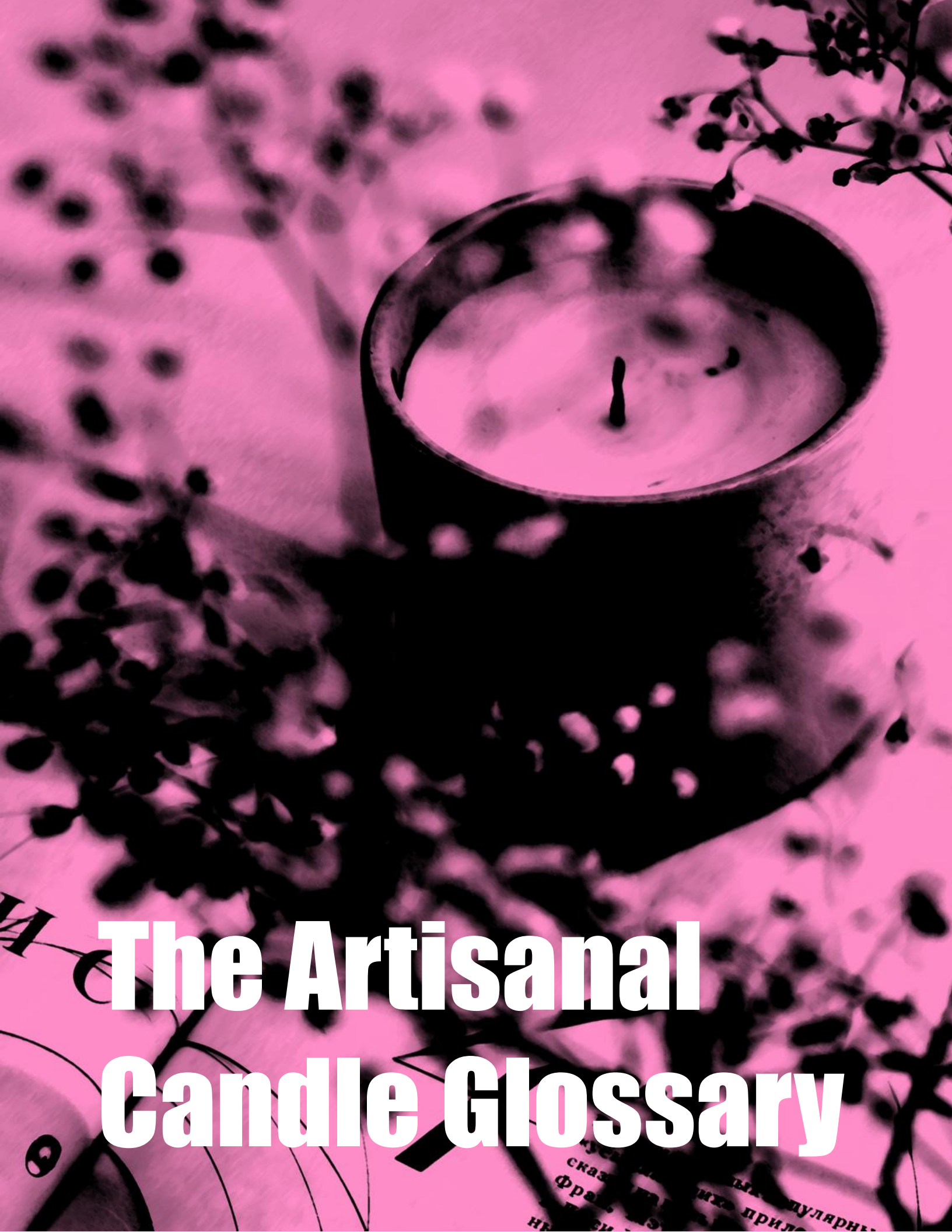

The Artisanal Candle Glossary

A Word About the Guide

Welcome to the *Little Thank U Boutique* Candle Making Glossary - a handpicked guide to the language of candle crafting, created with care for makers of all levels. At *Little Thank U Boutique*, we believe that candle making is more than a hobby; it's a way to bring light, warmth, and gratitude into everyday life.

This glossary is thoughtfully organized by theme rather than alphabetical order, making it easier to explore and understand how different elements of candle making connect. From materials and fragrance to tools, techniques, and candle behaviour, each section is designed to guide you naturally through the craft. Within these themes, you'll find the essential terms, materials, tools, and techniques used in the art of candle making. From the different types of wax and wicks to fragrance blending, colouring, and decorative finishes, understanding these terms will empower you to create candles that are not only beautiful but meaningful.

Whether you're a beginner experimenting with your first pour or an experienced crafter refining your signature style, this glossary will serve as your trusted companion - helping you navigate the craft with confidence, creativity, and a touch of joy. Let it inspire you to explore new techniques, experiment with scents, and craft candles that brighten both your space and your heart.

At *Little Thank U Boutique*, every candle tells a story. And with this glossary in hand, you'll speak the language of candle making with the confidence of a seasoned artisan.

Materials & Ingredients

The heart of every candle begins with what goes into it. Understanding your materials allows you to create candles that are not only beautiful, but intentional and long-lasting.

Additive
A substance mixed into wax to improve performance or modify characteristics such as hardness, scent retention, or burn quality. Common additives include vybar, stearic acid, and UV inhibitors.

Dye
A colouring agent specifically formulated for candle wax. Dyes come in liquid, block, or chip form and are used to achieve consistent and vibrant colours.

Essential Oil
A natural oil extracted from plants, flowers, or herbs. While valued for their natural aroma, not all essential oils perform well in candles due to heat sensitivity.

Fragrance Oil / Scent Oil
A specially formulated oil designed for candle making, made from synthetic and/or natural components to ensure a strong and stable scent when burned.

Synthetic Oil
A lab-created fragrance oil designed to replicate natural scents or create entirely unique blends.

Paraffin Wax
A petroleum-derived wax widely used for its strong scent throw and versatility across candle types.

Soy Wax
A plant-based wax made from soybean oil, known for its clean burn and natural appeal, though it may develop cosmetic variations like frosting.

Palm Wax
A natural wax derived from palm oil that often forms beautiful crystalline patterns as it cools.

Gel Candle
A transparent, gel-like candle made from mineral oil and polymer resin, often used for decorative designs.

Stearic Acid
An additive used to harden wax, increase opacity, and extend burn time - especially useful in pillar candles.

Vybar
A modern additive that enhances fragrance retention, improves colour distribution, and creates a smoother finish.

UV Stabilizer
An additive that helps prevent candles from fading or discolouring when exposed to sunlight.

Where Scent Comes to Life:

Fragrance & Scent Performance

Scent is what transforms a candle into an experience. These terms help you understand how fragrance lives, breathes, and fills a space.

Cold Throw
The fragrance a candle releases when unlit, often your first impression of the scent.

Hot Throw
The fragrance released while the candle is burning. A strong hot throw reflects a well-balanced candle.

Scent Throw
A general term describing how well a candle disperses fragrance, both cold and hot.

Scent Load
The maximum amount of fragrance oil a wax can hold without affecting performance. Too much can impact how the candle burns.

Double Scenting
Adding approximately 1 ounce of fragrance oil per pound of wax for a moderately strong scent.

Triple Scent
A higher fragrance load (about 1.5 ounces per pound), used for a more intense scent when supported by the wax.

Cure
The resting period after pouring that allows the wax and fragrance to fully bind. Proper curing enhances scent throw and performance and ranges from 2 – 14 days.

The Heart of the Flame:

Wicks & Wick Components

The wick is the quiet engine of your candle: small but powerful, guiding how your candle burns and shines.

Wick
The central component that draws melted wax upward to fuel the flame. Choosing the right wick is essential for a clean, even burn.

Core
The inner structure of certain wicks, made from materials like cotton, paper, or zinc for added stability.

Coreless Wick
A wick without a central core material, made entirely of braided or twisted fibers. Coreless wicks

provide a clean, steady burn and are often used in container candles where a metal or paper core isn't needed.

Primed Wick
A wick that has been pre-coated with wax to improve its burn performance. Priming helps the wick light easily, burn evenly, and maintain a steady flame, making it ready for use in container or freestanding candles.

Wick Tab
A small metal base that anchors the wick to the bottom of a candle container.

Neck
The vertical part of a wick tab that connects the base to the wick.

Wick Clip Assembly
A pre-cut wick with a tab already attached, offering convenience and consistency.

Wick Bar
A tool used to keep the wick centered while the candle sets.

Wick Pin
A rod used in molds to create space for inserting a wick after the candle has cooled.

Tools of the Trade:
Tools & Equipment

Behind every beautiful candle is a set of trusted tools that bring each creation to life.

Double Boiler
A gentle heating method using two stacked pots, preventing wax from overheating or burning.

Pouring Pitcher / Pot
A heat-safe container used to melt wax and pour it into molds or vessels. Its design helps control the flow of wax for clean, precise pours and consistent candle shapes.

Heat Gun
A handheld tool that emits hot air, used to gently smooth candle tops, fix minor surface imperfections, or create decorative finishes without melting the entire candle.

Mold
A reusable form used to shape freestanding candles like pillars and votives.

Mold Plug
A rubber stopper used to seal the hole at the bottom of a mold.

Mold Release
A coating applied inside molds to help candles release smoothly once set.

Mold Sealer / Mold Putty
A soft material used to seal gaps and prevent wax from leaking during pouring.

Water Bath
A cooling method used to speed up the setting process, though it must be used carefully to avoid imperfections.

Tart Warmer / Burner
A device used to melt scented wax without a wick, releasing fragrance into a space.

Embossing / Carving Tools
Small heat-resistant tools (such as knives, loops, stamps, or rollers) used to add texture, patterns, or decorative designs to freestanding candles. They allow makers to personalize their candles with artistic detail and creative finishes.

Clamshell
A container used for wax melts or tarts, typically divided into individual sections that can be snapped open or closed. Clamshells make it easy to portion, store, and use wax melts safely, keeping fragrance sealed until ready to enjoy.

Vessel
The container that holds the candle wax, such as a jar, tin, or decorative holder. A vessel is designed to safely contain the melted wax as the candle burns and often plays a key role in the overall look and feel of the finished candle. Choosing the right vessel is important for both safety and style, as it must be heat-resistant and suitable for candle use.

A Collection of Cozy Creations:

Candle Types & Styles

From classic shapes to decorative pieces, each candle style offers its own charm and purpose.

Container Candle
A candle poured and burned within its container, making it one of the most popular and beginner-friendly styles.

Pillar Candle
A freestanding candle designed to hold its shape as it burns.

Taper
A long, elegant candle that narrows toward the top and requires a holder.

Tealight
A small, self-contained candle often used in warmers or for short burn times.

Tin Candle
A candle poured into a metal container, offering a lightweight, durable, and travel-friendly option while safely containing the wax as it burns.

Votive Candle
A compact candle that fully liquefies when burned and must be used in a holder.

Floater (Floating Candle)
A candle designed to float on water, often used for decorative settings.

Hurricane Candle
A decorative outer shell paired with a burnable inner candle.

Tart (Wax Melt)
A wickless piece of scented wax melted in a warmer to release fragrance.

Smelly Jelly
A gel-based air freshener made from water crystals; not intended for burning.

Gel Candle
A visually striking candle made from a clear or translucent gel wax, usually mineral oil-based, allowing for decorative effects and embedded items while providing a long-lasting burn.

Wickless Candle
A candle that does not use a traditional wick to burn. Wickless candles release fragrance through heat or air, such as wax melts, tarts, gel beads, or container-style wax melts.

How Your Candle Tells Its Story:

Candle Behaviour & Performance

How a candle burns tells its story. These terms help you understand and perfect that experience.

Burn Rate
The speed at which wax is consumed, typically measured per hour.

Burn Time
The total time a candle can burn under proper conditions.

Melt Pool
The liquid wax that forms around the wick.

Full Melt Pool
When the melted wax reaches all edges of the container. Achieving a full melt pool is important for preventing tunneling and maximizing fragrance throw.

Melt Pool Depth
Refers to how deep the liquid wax becomes during burning. Ideally, a melt pool should be deep enough to fuel the wick properly without overheating the candle.

Tunneling
When a candle burns down the center, leaving unused wax along the sides.

Mushrooming
Carbon buildup at the tip of the wick, often due to an oversized wick or excess fragrance.

Drowning Out
Occurs when a wick is too small or becomes clogged and is unable to draw up melted wax efficiently. As a result, the flame weakens or extinguishes, often leaving the wick submerged in the melt pool.

Sooting
The release of black smoke or residue from a candle flame, often caused by an oversized wick, drafts, or excess fragrance oil.

Crocodiling
A textured, patterned surface that resembles reptile or “crocodile skin.” It usually appears while the candle is burning and is often caused by factors like wick size, fragrance load, or how the wax is reacting to heat.

Flame Flicker
A wavering or unsteady flame, which can be caused by air movement, wick size, or impurities in the wax.

Hang-Up
When wax remains along the sides of a container during burning instead of fully melting into the pool. Minor hang-up can often resolve itself after multiple burns.

Wick Up / Wick Down
The process of adjusting wick size within the same wick series to improve candle performance. “Wicking up” means choosing a larger wick to create a bigger melt pool, while “wicking down” means selecting a smaller wick to reduce flame size, soot, or overheating.

Wick Curl
The natural bending of a wick tip during burning, which can help reduce carbon buildup and promote a cleaner burn in certain wick types.

Afterglow
The soft glow that remains on a wick briefly after the flame is extinguished.

Memory Burn (First Burn)
The initial burn of a candle, which establishes the maximum diameter of the melt pool for future burns. Allowing the wax to fully melt to the edges during this first burn helps prevent tunneling and promotes an even, consistent burn throughout the candle’s life.

The Beauty in Every Detail:

Wax Behaviour & Appearance

Every candle has its own personality - these natural variations are part of the charm of handmade creations.

Frosting
A white, crystalline effect common in soy wax. It is natural and does not affect performance.

Mottling
A marbled or textured pattern that can form in certain waxes, sometimes used for decorative effect.

Wet Spots
Areas where wax pulls slightly away from the container, creating a patchy look. This is purely cosmetic.

Opaque
A solid appearance that does not allow light to pass through.

Discolouration
Changes in wax colour over time, often due to fragrance oils, UV exposure, or improper storage.

Pour, Set, & Perfect:

Pouring & Finishing Techniques

The final touches are where craftsmanship truly shines, turning a simple pour into a polished creation.

Single Pour Wax
A wax designed to cool evenly without requiring a second pour.

Repour / Second Pour
Adding more wax after the initial pour to correct sinkholes or uneven tops.

Layered Pouring
Pouring multiple layers of differently coloured or scented wax, allowing each layer to partially or fully set before adding the next. Often used for decorative or multi-scented candles.

Temperature Control Pouring
Adjusting the wax pouring temperature to influence the final appearance. Higher temperatures can create smoother tops, while lower temperatures may create more textured finishes.

Overpour / Top-Off
Adding a thin final layer of wax to improve the appearance of the candle's surface after it has set.

Cold Pouring (Intentional Texture)
A pouring technique where wax is poured at a lower-than-usual temperature. This affects how the wax sets and can naturally create textures like rough tops, mottling, or even slight rippling. The texture is more of a result of how the wax cools.

Surface Texturing
A finishing technique used to intentionally create or enhance texture on the surface of a candle. This can be achieved through tools, timing, or controlled cooling methods (including, but not limited to cold pouring) to produce decorative effects like swirls, peaks, or unique patterns.

Marbling / Swirling
Gently blending colours within the wax to create a marbled or swirled effect, often done just before the wax fully sets.

Overdipping
Dipping a finished candle into a different wax for added colour, add shine, texture or create a unique outer finish.

Embedding
Placing decorative elements (such as wax shapes) into the candle during pouring for a customized look. These must always be candle-safe.

Relief Holes
Poking small holes into cooling wax to release trapped air before performing a second pour. This helps prevent sinkholes and uneven surfaces.

Top Smoothing (Heat Gun Finish)
Using a heat gun to gently melt the top layer of a cooled candle to smooth out imperfections like cracks, sinkholes, or rough surfaces.

Polishing / Final Finish
Cleaning and perfecting the outside of the candle container by removing smudges, trimming the wick, and ensuring a clean, professional presentation.

Preheating Containers
Warming jars or vessels before pouring wax to help reduce wet spots and improve adhesion.

Wick Centering & Setting
Ensuring the wick remains straight and centered during pouring and cooling for an even burn.

Crafting with Care:
Temperature & Safety

Creating candles safely is just as important as creating them beautifully.

Flashpoint
The temperature at which a substance (like fragrance oil) can ignite when exposed to a flame or spark. Always ensure your wax is below the fragrance oil's flashpoint when adding scent.

Melt Point
The temperature at which wax changes from solid to liquid. Different waxes have different melt points, which affect how they are handled and poured.

Pour Temperature
The ideal temperature at which wax should be poured into a container or mold. Pouring too hot or too cool can affect the candle's appearance and performance.

Heating Temperature

The temperature at which wax is heated to fully melt before adding fragrance or dye. This step ensures proper blending and consistency.

Fragrance Load Temperature
The recommended temperature range for adding fragrance oil to wax to ensure proper binding and scent retention.

Cooling Temperature
The temperature at which a candle begins to solidify. Controlled cooling helps prevent imperfections like sinkholes or cracking.

Overheating
When wax is heated beyond its recommended temperature, which can degrade fragrance, discolour wax, and pose a safety risk.

Thermal Shock
A sudden temperature change that can cause containers (especially glass) to crack or shatter. This can happen if hot wax is poured into a cold vessel.

Little Learning Moments:

Common Issues & Imperfections

Even imperfections are part of the learning process and are often, part of the beauty of handmade work.

Chatter Marks / Jump Lines / Stuttering
Lines or rings caused by pouring wax too cool or into a cold container.

Sink Hole
A cavity that forms as wax cools and contracts, often fixed with a second pour.

Cracking
Surface cracks that form as wax cools too quickly or experiences temperature fluctuations.

Air Bubbles
Trapped air pockets in the wax, often caused by pouring too quickly or at incorrect temperatures.

Sweating
Small beads of oil forming on the surface of the candle, usually caused by excess fragrance oil or temperature changes.

Rough / Bumpy Tops
An irregular or textured surface that forms after the candle cools and sets. This is typically caused by cooling conditions, pour temperature, or the natural behaviour of certain waxes (especially soy).

Uneven Burn
A candle that does not burn consistently across the surface, often due to wick placement, drafts, or an uneven surface.

Blooming (Oil Separation)
When fragrance or essential oils rise to the surface, leaving a cloudy or oily layer. Can happen if wax and oils aren't blended at the correct temperature.

Guided with Care & Confidence:

Safety Testing & Documentation

Knowledge and safety go hand-in-hand when working with candle-making materials.

Heat-Resistant Vessel
A container specifically designed to withstand high temperatures without cracking or breaking during burning.

Safe Container Testing
The process of testing a candle vessel to ensure it can safely handle heat during a full burn cycle without damage.

Diameter
The width of a candle or container, essential for choosing the correct wick size.

Wick Testing (Safety Testing)
Testing different wick sizes and types to ensure a candle burns safely - without excessive flame, soot, or overheating.

Cure Time (Safety Aspect)
Allowing a candle to properly cure not only improves scent but also helps ensure a more stable and even burn.

Maximum Fill Line
A marked level in a container indicating how much wax should be added to prevent overflow when the candle is burning.

Burn Test
A controlled test where a candle is burned over time to evaluate performance, safety, melt pool, and wick behaviour.

Candle Burn Test Sheet
A record used to track how a candle performs during testing. Makers note details like wick size, wax type, fragrance load, burn time, melt pool formation, soot, and any imperfections. Burn test sheets are essential for refining recipes, troubleshooting issues, and ensuring consistent, high-quality candles every time.

Candle Warning Labels
Safety labels applied to finished candles that provide important usage instructions and precautions. These labels typically include guidance such as trimming the wick, keeping the candle away from flammable materials, avoiding drafts, and never leaving a burning candle unattended. Warning labels

play an important role in responsible candle making by encouraging safe use and safeguarding both the maker and the customer.

Fire Safety Practices
General safety guidelines such as never leaving a candle unattended, keeping it away from drafts, and trimming the wick before each burn.

MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet)
Official documents that provide safety, handling, and ingredient information for candle-making materials.

Keep the Flame Going

As you reach the end of this glossary, we hope it leaves you feeling inspired, confident, and ready to create with intention. Candle making is a journey - one that blends creativity, patience, and a love for the little details that make each piece unique.

At *Little Thank U Boutique*, we believe every candle is more than just wax and wick. It's a moment, a memory, a small way to bring comfort and light into your space or someone else's day.

Keep experimenting, keep learning, and most importantly, enjoy the process. With each pour, you're not just making candles, you're creating something meaningful.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.