Aniline
Leather that is colored all the way through with a transparent dye. The effect is applied by immersing the leather in an aniline dye bath. Because the finish is transparent and shows the natural markings of the leather, only the best quality hides can be used.

Antiqued
Leather that is dyed with one color over another (usually darker over lighter) so as to create rich highlights and an artificial aged appearance. Also called distressed leather.

Buffed Leather
Leather from which the top surface has been removed by abrasion. Often known as suede or nubuc.

Corrected Grain
Leather that has been buffed to remove blemishes, then covered with a new, artificial grain created using embossing, pigments, and other finishes.

Crocking
Removing the crock, or excess coloring, that rubs off of a newly-dyed hide.

Crust
Leather which has been tanned (treated to become nonperishable) but not colored or otherwise finished.

Distressed
Another term for antiqued leather.

Drum Dyeing
The process of coloring leather by tumbling it in a rotating drum immersed in dye. A very effective method allowing maximum dye penetration.

Embossed Leather
Leather that has been "stamped" with a design or artificial texture under very high pressure. Used, for example, to create imitation alligator hide.
Finish
Any enhancing effect applied to leather after it has been tanned. Examples are dyeing, embossing, buffing, antiquing, waxing, waterproofing, and so on.

Full Grain Leather
Leather which has not been altered beyond hair removal. Full grain leather is the most genuine type of leather, as it retains all of the original texture and markings of the original hide.

Glazed Leather
Aniline-dyed leather which has been polished to a high luster by passing through glass or steel rollers under great pressure.

Glove Leather
Lambskin or other very soft leather typically used for gloves.

Grain
A word used to describe the natural characteristics of an unprocessed hide, such as its pores, wrinkles, markings, and texture.

Hand
A word used to describe the feel (i.e. softness or fullness) of leather, typically upholstery leather.

Nap
Describes the soft, "fuzzy" effect achieved in leather by buffing or brushing.

Nappa Leather
Traditionally a full-grain leather made from unsplit kid-, lamb- or sheep-skin by tanning with salts of chromium or aluminium sulfate. It is noted for softness and is often used in high-end furniture and accessories. It is not recommended for automotive use.

Nappa Leather Automotive
A term borrowed from the original definition to describe smooth grain finished leather. Most luxury automotive companies use the term Nappa to describe their high quality pigmented bovine leather. Today, most all Nappa automotive makers use 'Follicle' embossing plates to mimic the original skin texture. Nappa for Automotive is very uniform in grain, and therefore maximum yields are accomplished when cutting.
Natural Grain
A leather that displays its original grain.

Nubuc
A leather whose surface has been buffed and brushed to create a soft, velvety effect. Differs from suede in that while suede is created from the flesh (inner) side of a hide, nubuc is created using the grain (outer) side, giving it added strength and durability.

Oil Tanned
Leather that is tanned using oils to create a very soft, pliable finish.

Patina
The luster that develops in a quality piece of leather with age and use.

Perforated
Leather in which a pattern of small holes is stamped using a die.

Pigmented Leather
Leather that has been coated with a flat surface color on top of or instead of the usual dye finish. Leather is usually pigmented to add durability and hide natural blemishes.

Plating
The process of pressing leather under a heated plate. Often used in upholstery leather to mask imperfections.

Pull-up
Describes the behavior of leather that has been treated with oils, waxes, and dyes in such a way that when the leather is pulled or stretched (i.e. on upholstery), the finish becomes lighter in the stretched areas. Considered a mark of high quality.

Semi-Aniline
Aniline leather to which a matching pigment layer is added to even out the color and add protection.

Side Leather
Leather made from one half, or "side", of a full hide. Typically refers to leather whose top grain (outermost layer) has been left intact.
Split Leather
Leather made from the lower (inner or flesh side) layers of a hide that have been split away from the upper, or grain, layers. Split leather is more fragile than side leather or full-grain leather, and is typically used in the form of suede.

Suede
Split leather that has been buffed and brushed to create a fuzzy surface feel.

Top Grain
Leather whose top (outermost) layers have been left intact, in contrast to split leather.

Two-tone
An effect created by applying layers of similar or contrasting dyes to a piece of leather in order to create a mottled or aged appearance. Antiqued leather is an example of two-tone leather.

Upholstery Leather
Leather created from a whole hide and intended for use in furniture, automobiles, airplanes, and other upholstery applications.

Vegetable Tanning
A method of hide tanning which utilizes materials from organic materials such as bark instead of the traditional chemicals. Vegetable tanned leather has greater body and firmness than traditionally-tanned leather.

Weight
A term which describes the heaviness or thickness of leather. Typically given in ounces per square foot or millimeters (thickness).

Whole Hide
Refers to leather created using a full hide, as opposed to a side, and typically intended for use as upholstery leather.