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| **TERM** | **DEFINITION** |
| **Absorbent** | Absorbency in opal relates to the absorption of water or liquid of an opal when immersed. Some opal known as hydrophane, when immersed in water will change very little whereas others may increase weight more than 30% of the dry weight of the stone. |
| **Category** | There are eight categories of opal in the classification. The category of an opal is determined according to gemmological factors including whether the Opal is natural, homogeneous, precious, absorbent, treated or composite. |
| **Classification** | Classification is the categorization of opal according to specific factors into Category, Type and Variety, using defined Nomenclature. |
| **Common** | Is Opal without play of colour, but may have an attractive body colour, chatoyancy, dendritic pattern or fluorescence, making it a desirable gemstone. |
| **Composite** | Composite Opal is any class of natural opal which has been manually attached to any material. This includes but is not limited to products such as doublets, triplets, mosaics, inlay and plastic embedded opal. |
| **Cutting and polishing** | The process of sawing, grinding and polishing a stone from rough. |
| **Face** | Presentation face of a stone |
| **Host Rock** | A body of rock serving as a host for opal which is naturally attached. This type has varieties commonly known by the type of host rock on which it forms. |
| **Homogeneous** | Composed of similar parts or elements; of the same composition or structure throughout; uniform. Opposite of heterogeneous.  Homogeneous opal is traditionally referred to as solid opal. |
| **Hydrophane** | Is opal in its natural state apart from cutting and polishing, it is absorbent, with or without play of colour, it could be homogeneous or heterogeneous. This opal is absorbent in varying degrees and can change appearance and weight. |
| **Imitation** | Is manufactured to simulate opal, or it may be a naturally occurring material which resembles opal. |
| **Impervious** | Opal that does not change weight or appearance when immersed in water or other liquids. |
| **Matrix** | Opal presented in one piece where the opal is intimately diffused as infillings of veins, pores or holes or between grains of the host rock. The type of opal is known by the type of host rock on which it forms. Opal in Host Rock. |
| **Natural** | Opal which has not been made or treated in any way by humankind. |
| **Nomenclature** | The devising or choosing of names for things, especially in a science or other discipline. The terms used and names given in the classification of opal. |
| **Opal** | Opal is an hydrated amorphous form of silica (SiO. 2· nH2O). |
| **Play Of Colour** | Play of colour in opal is caused by the diffraction of white light into the colours of the spectrum, this play of colour identifies the opal as Precious opal. |
| **Precious** | Precious Opal is opal with play of colour which has been caused by the diffraction of white light into the colours of the spectrum. |
| **Simulant** | A manufactured material made to resemble opal, or a natural material whose characteristics resemble opal. |
| **Synthetic** | A man-made material with essentially the same chemical composition, crystal structure and optical and physical properties as the natural gem opal material. |
| **Treated** | Opal that has been treated in some way including, but not limited to dying, painting, coating, impregnation, filling, stabilization, or enhancement process of any kind.  Cutting and Polishing is not considered a treatment. |