



Musical terms and directions for performance

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Grade 2, Grade 3 and Grade 4

Words showing strength of tone:

<i>Pianissimo</i> (<i>pp</i>)	Very soft
<i>Mezzo piano</i> (<i>mp</i>)	Moderately soft
<i>Piano</i> (<i>p</i>)	Soft
<i>Mezza voce</i> (<i>mv</i>)	Medium tone
<i>Mezzo forte</i> (<i>mf</i>)	Moderately loud
<i>Forte</i> (<i>f</i>)	Loud
<i>Fortissimo</i> (<i>ff</i>)	Very loud
<i>Crescendo</i> or 	Gradually becoming louder
<i>Decrescendo</i> } or 	Gradually becoming softer
<i>Diminuendo</i> }	
<i>Sforzando</i> (<i>sf</i>) }	Accented
<i>Forzando</i> (<i>fz</i>) }	
<i>Rinforzando</i> (<i>rf</i>)	Strengthening the tone

Words showing speed:

<i>Grave</i>	Extremely slow, solemn
<i>Lento</i>	Slow
<i>Largo</i>	Broad
<i>Larghetto</i>	Rather broad
<i>Adagio</i>	Slow, leisurely
<i>Andante</i>	Going at an easy pace
<i>Andantino</i>	At a moderate pace, but not so slow as <i>Andante</i>
<i>Moderato</i>	Moderate speed
<i>Allegretto</i>	Rather fast
<i>Allegro</i>	Fast
<i>Vivace</i>	Lively
<i>Presto</i>	Very quick
<i>Prestissimo</i>	Very quick indeed, as fast as possible

The following other words relating to speed are also often met with:

<i>Accelerando</i> (<i>accel.</i>)	Getting gradually faster
<i>Rallentando</i> (<i>rall.</i>)	Getting gradually slower
<i>Calando</i>	Softer and slower
<i>Ritardando</i> (<i>ritard., rit.</i>)	Retarding the speed
<i>Ritenuto</i> (<i>riten.</i>)	Held back
<i>A tempo</i>	In time
<i>Ad libitum</i> (<i>ad lib.</i>) or <i>A piacere</i>	At the performer's pleasure
<i>Meno mosso</i>	Slower at once
<i>Più mosso</i>	Quicker at once

The signs > and ^ above notes are called Accents, and are used to mark strongly accented notes.

Grade 3 and Grade 4

Terms relating to tone:

<i>Mancando</i>	Failing or waning tone
<i>Smorzando</i> }	Dying away
<i>Morendo</i> }	
<i>Più forte</i>	More loudly
<i>Più piano</i>	More softly
<i>Meno forte</i>	Less loudly
<i>Meno piano</i>	Less softly
<i>Perdendosi</i>	Losing itself by getting softer and slower

Terms relating to speed:

<i>Largamente</i>	Broadly, massively
<i>Adagietto</i>	Rather leisurely
<i>Tempo ordinario</i>	Ordinary speed
<i>Tempo comodo</i>	Convenient, i.e. comfortable speed
<i>Vivacissimo</i>	Extremely lively
<i>Tosto</i>	Quick; rapid
<i>Celere</i>	Quick; nimble

<i>Veloce</i>	Swiftly
<i>Stringendo (string.)</i>	Pressing onwards, hurrying the speed
<i>Stretto</i>	
<i>Affrettando</i>	
<i>Tempo Giusto</i>	In strict, or exact time
<i>Doppio Tempo,</i> <i>or Doppio Movimento</i>	In double time, i.e. twice as fast as the preceding movement
<i>L'istesso tempo</i>	In the same time as the preceding movement. This term is used when the time signature is changed, but the <i>beats</i> are still to be of the same length as before.
<i>Tempo Primo</i>	At the same speed as at first
<i>Più lento</i>	More slowly

Grade 4

Italian words indicating expression, etc:

<i>Agitato</i>	In an agitated manner
<i>Animato</i>	Animated
<i>Appassionato</i>	Impassioned
<i>Cantabile; Cantando</i>	In a singing style
<i>Capriccioso</i>	Fanciful; capricious
<i>Con anima</i>	With soul, i.e. life
<i>Con brio</i>	With vivacity, brilliance
<i>Con espressione</i>	With expression
<i>Con energia</i>	With energy or force
<i>Con fuoco</i>	With fire
<i>Con grazia</i>	With grace
<i>Con moto</i>	With motion, i.e. rather fast
<i>Con spirito</i>	With spirit
<i>Con tenerezza</i>	With tenderness
<i>Deciso</i>	Decided, i.e. with firmness
<i>Delicato</i>	Delicately; refined
<i>Dolce</i>	Sweetly, gently
<i>Energico</i>	In an energetic manner
<i>Espressivo</i>	Expressively
<i>Forza</i>	Force or emphasis
<i>Furioso</i>	Impetuously; with fury
<i>Giusto</i>	Right; exact; strict
<i>Grandioso</i>	Grandly
<i>Grazioso</i>	Gracefully; daintily
<i>Legato</i>	Smoothly and connectedly
<i>Leggiero</i>	Lightly
<i>Maestoso</i>	Majestic
<i>Marcato</i>	Marked
<i>Martellato</i>	With great force; hammered
<i>Mesto</i>	In a pensive, sad manner
<i>Mosso</i>	Moved, i.e. fast
<i>Pesante</i>	Heavily; in a ponderous manner
<i>Piacevole</i>	In a pleasing manner
<i>Pomposo</i>	Pompously
<i>Risoluto</i>	In a resolute manner
<i>Rubato</i>	Robbed (flexible in time); see <i>tempo rubato</i>
<i>Scherzando; Scherzoso</i>	In a sprightly, playful manner
<i>Semplice</i>	Simply
<i>Serioso</i>	Seriously
<i>Sonore</i>	Sonorous
<i>Sostenuto</i>	Sustained
<i>Sotto voce</i>	In a subdued manner; in an undertone
<i>Tempo rubato</i>	Robbed time; the slight alterations by acceleration or retardation which a performer makes for the purpose of expression
<i>Teneramente; Con tenerezza</i>	Tenderly
<i>Tranquillo</i>	Tranquilly
<i>Vivo; Con vivacita</i>	With vivacity

Grade 4
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Italian Adjectives, Prepositions, etc., used before other words:

<i>A</i>	At; for; with; to; by; in
<i>Al, All', Alla</i>	In the style of; to the
<i>Assai</i>	Very, fairly
<i>Bene or Ben</i>	Well
<i>Con</i>	With
<i>Da</i>	From
<i>Dal</i>	From the; <i>Dal segno</i> , from the sign
<i>Di</i>	Of the
<i>Il or La</i>	The
<i>Ma</i>	But
<i>Meno</i>	Less
<i>Mezzo</i>	Half
<i>Molto or Di molto</i>	Much; very much
<i>Non</i>	Not
<i>O</i>	Either; or
<i>Più</i>	More
<i>Pochettino</i>	Very little
<i>Poco or Un poco</i>	A little
<i>Quasi</i>	Almost; as it were; as if
<i>Sempre</i>	Always
<i>Senza</i>	Without
<i>Sul'; Sull'; Sulla</i>	On the
<i>Tanto</i>	As much
<i>Troppo</i>	Too; too much
<i>Un or Una</i>	A; an; one

The above words are often found in conjunction with the other words already listed. Examples of these compound terms are:

<i>Allegro animato</i>	Quick; animated
<i>Allegro commodo</i>	A convenient <i>Allegro</i> —comfortably fast
<i>Allegro con anima</i>	Quick, with life (spirit)
<i>Allegro con fuoco</i>	Quick, with fire
<i>Allegro moderato</i>	Moderately quick
<i>Allegro molto</i>	Very quick
<i>Allegro non tanto</i>	Not so quick
<i>Allegro non troppo</i>	Not too quick
<i>Allegro vivace</i>	Lively and brisk
<i>Poco a poco cresc.</i>	Getting louder little by little
<i>Andante con moto</i>	A trifle faster than <i>Andante</i> alone
<i>Andante quasi Allegretto</i>	Faster than <i>Andante</i> , almost as if <i>Allegretto</i>
<i>Ben marcato</i>	Well marked
<i>Meno allegro</i>	Less quick
<i>Sempre più crescendo</i>	Continually increasing in tone
<i>Presto assai</i>	Very quick

Italian words conveying general directions to the performer:

Bis (Italian and Latin) Twice. Short passages, such as a single bar or two bars which are to be played or sung twice, have the Latin word *Bis* (i.e. twice) written over or under a slur:



<i>Come</i>	Like; as; how
<i>Come prima</i>	As at first
<i>Come sopra</i>	As above
<i>Da Capo</i>	From the beginning. When the term <i>Da Capo</i> or <i>D.C.</i> occurs at any part of a piece, it signifies that the music is to be repeated from the beginning.

Grade 4
... continued

Da Capo al fine
Da Capo al Segno
Da Capo senza ripetizione
Dal Segno
Fine

From the beginning to the word *Fine*
From the beginning to the sign S
From the beginning, without repetition
From the sign S

The end. A pause when placed over a double bar in the middle of a piece means that the piece is to end there, after a *Da Capo*. The word *Fine* is frequently used for this purpose instead of the pause:



Pedal or ped. (English)

In organ music this word is used to indicate the notes to be played by the organist's feet. In piano music it indicates that the *right* pedal is to be pressed down with the foot, and kept in that position until the * (or a change of harmony) occurs, when the pedal should be raised. The words *Senza sordini* are generally understood in piano music to mean 'without dampers' (i.e. with a free use of the right pedal); and *Con sordini* to mean 'with dampers' (i.e. without the right pedal). In modern music the words *Una Corda* indicate the use of the left pedal; and the words *Tre Corde* show where it should be raised. The student must not confuse the two words *mutes* and *dampers*. A mute is any contrivance for merely decreasing the average intensity of a sound; a damper is a piece of mechanism which stops the vibration of the sound-producing apparatus, and so causes actual silence.

Poco a poco
Repeat marks

Little by little

Dots when written *before* a double bar indicate that the music is to be repeated from the previous double bar, or from the beginning of the piece:



Dots when placed *after* a double bar indicate that the music to the following double bar is to be repeated:



R.H. and L.H.

Repeat marks are only used for long passages intended for repetition. For short passages of a bar or so, the word *Bis* is used. These letters indicate the use of the Right Hand or Left Hand in piano music:

<i>Mano Destra (It.)</i>	M.D. = R.H.
<i>Mano Sinistra (It.)</i>	M.S. = L.H.
<i>Main Droite (Fr.)</i>	M.D. = R.H.
<i>Main Gauche (Fr.)</i>	M.G. = L.H.

Segno
Simile
Tenuto (Ten.)
Volta

A sign. *Al Segno* means 'to the sign'. *Dal Segno* 'from the sign'.
In the same manner

Held or sustained

Turn; time. The signs *1ma volta* (1st time) and *2da volta* (2nd time), or simply the figures 1 and 2, are often used in conjunction with repeats; the bar or bars marked 1 are then to be omitted at the repetition, and the bar or bars marked 2 played instead:



Volti Subito (V.S.)

Turn over quickly to the next page

Supplementary list of Italian Terms

This list is for reference only and knowledge of these terms is not explicitly required for Grade Examinations in the Theory of Music.

<i>Affetto</i>	With affection	<i>Maggiore</i>	Major key
<i>Affettuoso</i>	With tender feeling	<i>Marcia</i>	A march
<i>Alla Capella</i>	In the style of unaccompanied church music	<i>Menuetto</i>	A Minuet
<i>Amabile</i>	Amiably	<i>Minore</i>	Minor key
<i>Amoroso</i>	Lovingly	<i>Moto</i>	Movement, as in <i>Andante con moto</i>
<i>Ancora</i>	Again	<i>Nei, Nel, Nell', Nella, Nelle, Nello</i>	In the
<i>Ardito</i>	With spirit and boldness	<i>Obbligato (Obb.)</i>	Indispensable; some part which cannot be omitted in performance
<i>Arioso</i>	A short melody	<i>Ostinato</i>	Continuous; persisted in
<i>Attacca</i>	Go on immediately	<i>Parlando; parlante</i>	In a speaking manner
<i>Barcarola</i>	A boat-song	<i>Patorale</i>	In a pastoral style
<i>Burlesco</i>	Comic; funny	<i>Pizzicato (pizz.)</i>	Plucked. Direction to string player to pluck the strings instead of playing them with the bow
<i>Cadenza</i>	A florid, ornamental passage, generally intended as a means of technical display	<i>Poi</i>	Then
<i>Cantilena</i>	A song-like melody	<i>Questo</i>	This
<i>Col, Colla</i>	With the	<i>Scherzo</i>	A playful piece
<i>Col arco</i>	With the bow (stringed instruments)	<i>Sciolto</i>	Free; unrestrained
<i>Colla parte; colla voce</i>	The accompanist to keep closely with the solo part, or voice	<i>Segue</i>	Then follows, i.e. go on with what comes next
<i>Come prima</i>	As at first	<i>Sentimento</i>	Sentiment
<i>Con amore</i>	Lovingly	<i>Sino</i>	Up to; as far as; until. <i>D.C. sin' al segno</i> therefore means 'from the beginning as far as the sign'.
<i>Con delicatezza</i>	With delicacy; in a refined manner	<i>Si replica</i>	To be repeated
<i>Con dolore; con duolo</i>	With grief	<i>Sordino</i>	A mute (of a stringed instrument)
<i>Con sordini</i>	With mutes. In <i>old piano</i> music this meant 'to release the right pedal'; in <i>modern piano</i> music, it sometimes means 'to use the left pedal'. In ORCHESTRAL MUSIC <i>mutes</i> are sometimes used to damp or deaden the sound of Violins, Horns, Trumpets, and Trombones. When these are required in performance, the direction <i>con sordini</i> is placed above the part so to be played; when they are to be removed the contrary direction, <i>senza sordini</i> , is given.	<i>Spianato</i>	Without pathos; smooth; even; calm
<i>Di bravura</i>	In a florid style; brilliantly	<i>Staccatissimo</i>	As short as possible
<i>Di chiaro</i>	Clearly	<i>Staccato</i>	Short
<i>Di nuovo</i>	Anew; again	<i>Strepitoso</i>	In a loud, boisterous manner
<i>Divisi</i>	Divided (largely used in orchestral music)	<i>Sul G, D or A</i>	On the G, D or A string of a violin
<i>Dolente; doloroso</i>	With grief	<i>Sul ponticello</i>	Play near the bridge (violin)
<i>Dopo</i>	After	<i>Tacet</i>	Be silent
<i>E poi</i>	And then	<i>Tedesca</i>	In a German manner
<i>Feroce</i>	Fiercely	<i>Tema</i>	A theme, generally for Variations
<i>Giocososo</i>	Jocosely; humorously	<i>Tempo di (Menuetto)</i>	In the time of (a Minuet)
<i>Giojoso</i>	Mirthful; joyous	<i>Trio</i>	The central section of a three part design where the first part normally returns after the <i>Trio</i> . The first section may well be a Minuet or a Scherzo. <i>Trio</i> may also be a piece for three instruments or voices. This was the origin of the term.
<i>Gustoso</i>	Tastefully	<i>Tutti</i>	All; every performer is to take part
<i>Impetuoso</i>	Impetuously	<i>Variazione</i>	Variations
<i>Lagrimoso</i>	Tearfully; mournfully	<i>Vigoroso</i>	Vigorously
<i>Languido</i>	Languid	<i>Volante</i>	In a light, flying manner
<i>Leggieramente</i>	Getting gradually lighter		