



# COMPLETE LIST OF THEORY FOREIGN TERMS

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For Grades 1 -5 of the ABRSM Music Theory Exams.

## GRADE 1

### ITALIAN TERMS

A tempo - in time

Accelerando (accel) - gradually getting quicker

Adagio - slow

Allegretto - fairly quick (but not as quick as allegro)

Allegro - quick (literally cheerful)

Allegro moderato - moderately quick

Andante - at a medium 'walking' speed

Cantabile - in a singing style

Crescendo (cresc) - gradually getting louder

Da capo (DC) - repeat from the beginning

Dal segno (DS) - repeat from the sign "S"

Decrescendo (decresc) - gradually getting quieter

Diminuendo (dim)- gradually getting quieter

Fine - the end

Forte (f) - loud

Fortissimo (ff) - very loud

Legato - smoothly

Lento - slow

Mezzo - half

Mezzo forte (mf) - moderately loud (literally half loud)

Mezzo piano (mp) - moderately quiet (literally half quiet)

Moderato - moderately

Pianissimo (pp) - very quiet

Piano (p) - quiet

Poco - a little

Rallentando (rall) - gradually getting slower

Ritardando (rit) (ritard) - gradually getting slower

Ritenuto (rit) (riten) - held back

Staccato (stacc) – Short and detached

Tempo - speed, time

## GRADE 2

### ITALIAN TERMS

A - at, to, by, for, in, in the style of

Al, alla - to the, in the manner of (alla marcia - in the style of a march)

Allargando - broadening (getting a little slower and probably a little louder)

Allegro - assai very quick

Andantino - slightly faster than andante (but may also mean slightly slower)

Assai - very (allegro assai - very quick)

Con, col - with

Dolce - sweet, soft

E, ed - and

Espressivo (or espress or espr) - expressive

Fp (= fortepiano) - loud, then immediately soft

Giocoso - playful, merry

Grave - very slow, solemn

Grazioso - graceful

Larghetto - rather slow (but not as slow as largo)

Largo - slow, stately

Ma - but

Maestoso - majestic

Meno - less

Molto - very, much

Mosso, - moto movement (meno mosso: slower; con moto: with movement)

Non - not

Più - more

Presto - fast (faster than allegro)

Senza - without

Sforzando, sforzato (sf, sfz) - forced, accented

Simile (or sim) - in the same way

Sostenuto - sustained

Tenuto - held

Troppo - too much (non troppo: not too much)

Vivace, vivo - lively, quick

## GRADE 3

### ITALIAN TERMS

Ad libitum, ad lib - at choice, ie a passage may be played freely

Adagietto - rather slow, but faster than adagio

Agitato - agitated

Alla breve - with a minim (half note) beat - equivalent to 2/2

Amore - love

Amoroso - loving

Anima - soul, spirit (con anima - can mean "with feeling" or "spirited")

Animando - becoming more lively

Animato - animated, lively

Ben - well

Brio - vigour (con brio - with vigour, lively)

Comodo - convenient (tempo comodo - at a comfortable speed)

Deciso - with determination

Delicato - delicate

Energico - energetic

Forza - force

Largamente - broadly

Leggiero - light, nimble

Marcato, marc - emphatic, accented

Marziale - in a military style

Mesto - sad

Pesante - heavy

Prima, primo - first

Risoluto - bold, strong

Ritmico - rhythmically

Rubato, tempo rubato - with some freedom of time

Scherzando, scherzoso - playful, joking

Seconda, secondo - second

Semplice - simple, plain

Sempre - always

Stringendo - gradually getting faster

Subito - suddenly

Tanto - so much

Tranquillo - calm

Triste, tristamente - sad, sorrowful

Volta - time (prima volta - first time; seconda volta - second time)

## GRADE 4

### ITALIAN TERMS

Affettuoso - tenderly  
Affrettando - hurrying  
Amabile - amiable, pleasant  
Appassionato - with passion  
Calando - getting softer, dying away (and usually slowing down)  
Cantando - singing  
Come - as, similar to (come prima, as before; come sopra, as above)  
Facile - easy  
Fuoco - fire  
Giusto - proper, exact (tempo giusto: in strict time)  
L'istesso - the same (l'istesso tempo: at the same speed)  
Morendo - dying away  
Niente - nothing  
Nobilmente - nobly  
Perdendosi - dying away  
Possibile - possible (presto possibile: as fast as possible)  
Quasi - as if, resembling  
Sonoro - resonant, with rich tone  
Sopra - above  
Sotto - below (sotto voce: in an undertone)  
Veloce - swift  
Voce - voice

### FRENCH TERMS

A - to, at  
Animé - animated, lively  
Assez - enough, sufficiently  
Avec - with  
Cédez - yield, relax the speed  
Douce - sweet  
En dehors - prominent (a direction to make a melody stand out)  
Et - and  
Légèrement - light  
Lent - slow  
Mais - but  
Modéré - at a moderate speed  
Moins - less  
Non - not  
Peu - little  
Plus - more  
Presser - hurry (en pressant: hurrying on)  
Ralentir - slow down  
Retenu - held back (en retenant: holding back, slowing a little)  
Sans - without  
Très - very  
Un, une - one  
Vif - lively  
Vite - quick

## GRADE 5

### ITALIAN TERMS

Alla misura - in strict time

Attacca - go straight on to the next section

Dolente - sad, mournful

Dolore - grief

Doloroso - sorrowful

Doppio movimento - twice as fast

Estinto - as soft as possible, lifeless

Incalzando - getting quicker

Lacrimoso - sad

Loco - at the normal pitch (used to cancel an 8va direction)

Lunga - long

Lunga pausa - long pause

Lusingando - coaxing, sweet and persuasive

Misura - measure (alla misura: in strict time; senza misura: in free time)

Ossia - or, alternatively

Piacevole - pleasant

Piangevole - plaintive, in the style of a lament

Pochettino, poch - rather little

Rinforzando, rf, rfz - reinforcing

Segue - go straight on

Senza misura - in free time

Smorzando, smorz - dying away in tone and speed

Teneramente, tenerezza - tenderly, tenderness

Tosto - swift, rapid (but often used in the same sense as “troppo”)

Volante - flying, fast

### GERMAN TERMS

Aber - but

Ausdruck - expression

bewegt - with movement, agitated

breit - broad, expansive

Ein - a, one

Einfach - simple

Etwas - somewhat, rather

Fröhlich - cheerful, joyful

Immer - always

Langsam - slow

Lebhaft - lively

Mässig - at a moderate speed

Mit - with

Nicht - not

Ohne - without

Ruhig - peaceful

Schnell - fast

Sehr - very

Süss - sweet

Traurig - sad

Und - and

Voll - full

Wenig - little

Wieder - again

Zart - tender, delicate

Zu - to, too