

# Musical Terms Study Guide

1. **A cappella** – Without accompaniment
2. **Accelerando** - Increase of speed in music
3. **Accent** - Stress of one tone over others, making it stand out; often it is the first beat of a measure
4. **Adagio** - Slow, leisurely
5. **Allegretto** - Moderately fast, lively. Faster than andante, slower than allegro
6. **Allegro** - Lively, brisk, rapid
7. **Andante** - Moderately slow, a walking speed
8. **Brio** – Vigor, with spirit
9. **Cadence** - Closing of a phrase or section of music
10. **Caesura** – a symbol // indicating a sudden stop in the music, also called a grand pause.
11. **Chord** - Three or more tones combined and sounded simultaneously
12. **Crescendo** - Gradually growing louder
13. **Da Capo** - From the beginning. A direction to repeat the entire composition from the beginning to the place where the word "fine" appears, or to the end.
14. **Diminuendo** - Gradually growing softer
15. **Dolce** - Sweetly, softly
16. **Dynamics** - Varying intensities of sound throughout a given musical composition. (Piano, Mezzo Piano, Forte, etc.)
17. **Etude** – A study piece that emphasizes a specific technique
18. **Fermata** - A pause, stop, or interruption as that before the cadenza of a concerto.
19. **Fine** - The end of a musical piece
20. **Forte** - Loud, strong
21. **Fortissimo** - Very loud
22. **Grave** - Heavy, slow, ponderous in movement
23. **Largo** - Large, broad, slow and stately
24. **Legato** - Smooth and connected
25. **Lento** – Slow
26. **Marcato** – Accented or stressed. Indicated by the symbol ^ above a note.
27. **Maestoso** - Majestic
28. **Meno** - Less
29. **Mezzo forte** - Moderately loud
30. **Mezzo piano** - Moderately soft
31. **Moderato** – Moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow
32. **Molto** - Much
33. **Ostinato** - A repeated melodic/rhythmic fragment or idea
34. **Piano** - Soft, softly
35. **Pianissimo** - Very soft
36. **Piu'** - More
37. **Presto** - Fast, rapid
38. **Phrase** - A small section of a composition comprising a musical thought
39. **Ritardando** - Gradually growing slower
40. **Rubato** – To perform with a free, flexible tempo at the discretion of the performer
41. **Scale** - A graduated series of tones arranged in a specified order
42. **Sforzando** – A sudden, strong accent indicated by the abbreviation: **sfz**
43. **Slur** - A curved line drawn over two or more notes of different pitches, indicating that they are to be executed in a smoothly connected manner without a break.
44. **Sostenuto** - Sustained

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- 45. **Staccato** - Separate. Sounded in a short, detached manner
- 46. **Syncopation** - The rhythmic result produced when a regularly accented beat is displaced onto an unaccented beat.
- 47. **Tempo** - The rate of speed at which a musical composition is performed
- 48. **Theme** - A short musical passage that states an idea. It often provides the basis for variations, development, etc.
- 49. **Timbre** - The quality of a musical tone that distinguishes voices and instruments.
- 50. **Tutti** – All, as in “all play”
- 51. **Vivace** - Spirited, bright, rapid, equaling or exceeding allegro