

Basic tempo markings

By adding an *-issimo* ending the word is amplified/made louder, by adding an *-ino* or *-etto* ending the word is diminished/made softer. The metronome marks are broad approximations. **Note:** Metronome markings are a guide only and depending on the time signature and the piece itself, these figures may not be appropriate in every circumstance. Also, in longer pieces such as symphony movements, the tempo marking used by the composer for the movement does not have to be adhered to strictly throughout the movement; individual interpreters may vary the tempo at times, at their discretion.

- *Larghissimo* ó very, very slow (19 BPM and under)
- *Grave* ó slow and solemn (20-40 BPM)
- *Lento* ó slowly (40-65 BPM)
- *Largo* ó broadly (45-60 BPM)
- *Larghetto* ó rather broadly (50-65 BPM)
- *Adagio* ó slow and stately (literally, "at ease") (55-65 BPM)
- *Adagietto* ó rather slow (65-69 BPM)
- *Andante moderato* ó a bit slower than andante (69-72 BPM)
- *Andante* ó at a walking pace (73-77 BPM)
- *Andantino* ó slightly faster than andante (although in some cases it can be taken to mean slightly slower than andante) (78-83 BPM)
- *Marcia moderato* ó moderately, in the manner of a march^{[4][5]} (83-85 BPM)
- *Moderato* ó moderately (86-97 BPM)
- *Allegretto* ó moderately fast (98-109 BPM)
- *Allegro* ó fast, quickly and bright (109-132 BPM)
- *Vivace* ó lively and fast (132-140 BPM) (quicker than allegro)
- *Vivacissimo* ó very fast and lively (140-150 BPM)
- *Allegro* ó very fast (150-167 BPM)
- *Presto* ó very fast (168-177 BPM)
- *Prestissimo* ó extremely fast (178 BPM and over)

Additional terms

- *A piacere* ó the performer may use his own discretion with regard to tempo and rhythm; literally "at pleasure"^[6]
- *L'istesso tempo* or *Lo stesso tempo* ó at the same speed
- *Tempo comodo* ó at a comfortable (normal) speed
- *Tempo di...* ó the speed of a ... (such as *Tempo di valse* (speed of a waltz), *Tempo di marcia* (speed of a march))
- *Tempo giusto* ó at a consistent speed, at the 'right' speed, in strict tempo
- *Tempo semplice* ó simple, regular speed, plainly

Common qualifiers

- *alla* ó in the manner or style of, as in:
 - *alla breve* ó in short style, i.e., duple time, with the [half note](#) (minim) rather than the [quarter note](#) (crotchet) as the beat; cut time; 2/2 instead of 4/4; often marked as a semicircle with a vertical line through it (see [Time signature](#))
 - *alla marcia* ó in the manner of a [march](#)^[7] (e.g., Beethoven, [op. 101](#))
- *assai* ó very much, as in *allegro assai*, quite fast^[9]

- *ben* ó well, as in *ben marcato* (well marked or accented)
- *con bravura* ó with skill^[10]
- *con brio* ó with vigor and spirit^[11]
- *con fuoco* ó with fire
- *con moto* ó with motion
- *deciso* ó decidedly, decisively
- *meno* ó less, as in *meno mosso* (less quickly)^[13]
- *misterioso* ó mysterious
- *molto* ó much, very, as in *molto allegro* (very quick) or *molto adagio* (very slow)^[14]
- *non troppo* ó not too much, e.g. *allegro non troppo* (or *allegro ma non troppo*) means "fast, but not too much"
- *non tanto* ó not so much
- *più* ó more, as in *più allegro* (more quickly); used as a relative indication when the tempo changes
- *poco* ó slightly, little, as in *Poco adagio*
- *poco a poco* ó little by little
- *primo* ó principal or early, as in *tempo primo*, the same tempo as at the beginning
- *quasi* ó almost, nearly, as if (such as *Più allegro quasi presto*, "faster, as if presto")
- *senza* ó without, as in *senza interruzione* (without interruption or pause), *senza tempo* or *senza misura* (without strict measure)^[17]
- *sostenuto* ó sustained, prolonged
- *subito* ó suddenly

Mood markings with a tempo connotation

Some markings that primarily mark a [mood](#) (or character) also have a tempo connotation:

- [Agitato](#) ó agitated, with implied quickness
- [Appassionato](#) ó to play passionately
- *Animato* ó animatedly, lively
- *Brillante* ó sparkling, glittering, as in *Allegro brillante*, *Rondo brillante*, or *Variations brillantes*; became fashionable in titles for virtuoso pieces^[18]
- *Bravura* ó broadly
- [Cantabile](#) ó in singing style (lyrical and flowing)
- *Dolce* ó sweetly
- *Energico* ó energetic, strong, forceful
- [Espressivo](#) ó expressively
- *Furioso* ó to play in an angry or furious manner
- [Giocoso](#) ó merrily, funny
- *Gioioso* ó joyfully
- *Grandioso* ó magnificently, grandly
- *Grazioso* ó gracefully
- [Lacrimoso](#) ó tearfully, sadly
- *Lamentoso* ó lamenting, mournfully
- [Leggiero](#) ó to play lightly, or with light touch
- [Maestoso](#) ó majestic or stately (which generally indicates a solemn, slow march-like movement)
- *Marcato* ó marching tempo, marked with emphasis
- *Marziale* ó in a [march](#) style, usually in simple, strongly marked rhythm and regular phrases
- *Mesto* ó sad, mournful
- *Misterioso* ó mystical, in a shady manner
- [Morendo](#) ó dying
- *Nobilmente* ó nobly (in a noble way)
- *Patetico* ó with great emotion

- *Pesante* ó heavily
- *Saltando* ó jumpy, fast, and short
- *Scherzando* ó playfully
- *Sostenuto* ó sustained, sometimes with a slackening of tempo
- *Spiccato* ó slow sautillé, with a bouncy manner
- *Tenerezza* ó tenderness
- *Tranquillamente* ó adverb of tranquillo, "calmly"
- *Trionfante* ó triumphantly
- *Vivace* ó lively and fast, over 140 BPM (which generally indicates a fast movement)

Terms for change in tempo

- *Accelerando* ó speeding up (abbreviation: *accel.*)
- *Allargando* ó growing broader; decreasing tempo, usually near the end of a piece
- *Calando* ó going slower (and usually also softer)
- *Meno mosso* ó less movement or slower
- *Mosso* ó movement, more lively, or quicker, much like *più mosso*, but not as extreme
- *Più mosso* ó more movement or faster
- *Rallentando* ó gradual slowing down (abbreviation: *rall.*)
- *Ritardando* ó slowing down gradually; also see *rallentando* and *ritenuto* (abbreviations: *rit.*, *ritard.*)
- *Ritenuto* ó slightly slower; temporarily holding back. (Note that the abbreviation for *ritenuto* can also be *rit.* Thus a more specific abbreviation is *riten.* Also sometimes *ritenuto* does not reflect a tempo change but a character change instead.)
- *Rubato* ó free adjustment of tempo for expressive purposes
- *Stretto* ó in faster tempo, often near the conclusion of a section. (Note that in [fugal](#) compositions, the term *stretto* refers to the imitation of the subject in close succession, before the subject is completed, and as such, suitable for the close of the fugue.^[19] Used in this context, the term is not necessarily related to tempo.)
- *Stringendo* ó pressing on faster (literally "tightening")