

● Glossary of Tempo Markings used in Classical Music

In classical music the most common tempo markings are in [Italian](#), though sometimes [French](#) or [German](#) are also used.

Tempo Markings - Italian	Definition	Beats per minute (bpm)
grave	very slow and solemn	40 bpm or slower (a 1950 metronome suggests 44 bpm)
larghissimo	extremely slow	40 bpm or slower (some sources suggest 20bpm or slower)
lentissimo	extremely slow, but not as slow as larghissimo	
adagissimo	extremely slow, but slower than largo	
largo	broad, very slow and dignified	42-66 bpm (some sources suggest 40-60bpm) (a nineteenth-century Maelzel metronome suggests 40 bpm) (a 1950 metronome suggests 46 bpm) (a modern electronic metronome suggests 50 bpm)
larghetto	less slow than largo	60-66 bpm (a 1950 metronome suggests 50 bpm) (a modern electronic metronome suggests 60 bpm)
largamente	broadly	some sources suggest 10bpm
adagio	slow, but not as slow as largo	58-97 bpm (some sources suggest 66-76 bpm while others suggest 48-66 bpm) (a nineteenth-century Maelzel metronome suggests 60 bpm) (a 1950 metronome suggests 54 bpm) (a modern electronic metronome suggests 70 bpm)
adagietto	slow, but less slow than adagio	70-80 bpm
lento	slow	52-108 bpm (some sources suggest 40-60) (a nineteenth-century Maelzel metronome suggests 52 bpm) (a 1950 metronome suggests 52 bpm)
lentamente	slowly	
andantino	a little slower than andante but sometimes a little faster than adagio	(a 1950 metronome suggests 66 bpm)
andante	moving along - walking pace	56-88 bpm (some sources suggest 76-108 bpm) (a nineteenth-century Maelzel metronome suggests 69 bpm) (a modern electronic metronome suggests 80-100 bpm)
con moto	with movement, or a certain quickness	
moderato	moderate speed	66-126 bpm (some sources suggest 108-120 or some 120-168 bpm) (a nineteenth-century Maelzel metronome suggests 84 bpm) (a 1950 metronome suggests 80 bpm) (a modern electronic metronome suggests 110 bpm)
allegretto	pretty lively	(a nineteenth-century Maelzel metronome suggests 100 bpm) (a 1950 metronome suggests 100 bpm)
vivace	quick and lively	~140 bpm (a nineteenth-century Maelzel metronome suggests 144 bpm) (a 1950 metronome suggests 126 bpm)

allegro	quick, lively and bright	84-144 bpm (some sources suggest 120-168bpm) (a nineteenth-century Maazel metronome suggests 120 bpm) (a 1950 metronome suggests 116 bpm) (a modern electronic metronome suggests 120-160 bpm)
allegramente	quicker	
presto	very quick	100-152 bpm (some sources suggest 168-208 bpm) (a nineteenth-century Maazel metronome suggests 160 bpm) (a 1950 metronome suggests 144 bpm) (a modern electronic metronome suggests 180 bpm)
allegroissimo	very quick, between presto and vivacissimo	
vivacissimo	very quick, faster than vivace	
prestissimo	very quick - as quickly as possible	more than 200bpm (a nineteenth-century Maazel metronome suggests 184-240 bpm) (a 1950 metronome suggests 184 bpm) (a modern electronic metronome suggests 200 bpm)
rapido	rapidly	
veloce	with velocity, speedily	

Italian Tempo Markings - listed alphabetically

Usually each movement or a piece will have one or two tempo markings which may also be accompanied by [modifiers](#) and [mood markings](#).

- *Adagietto* — rather slow
- *Adagio* — slow and stately (literally, "at ease")
- *Adagissimo* — very, very slow
- *Agitato* — hurried, restless
- *Allegramente* — quicker
- *Allegretto grazioso* — moderately fast and gracefully
- *Allegretto* — moderately fast (but less so than *allegro*)
- *Allegroissimo* — very fast (though slower than *presto*)
- *Allegro* — fast and bright or "march tempo"
- *Allegro appassionato* — fast and passionately
- *Allegro ma non troppo* — fast but not too much
- *Allegro moderato* — moderately quick
- *Andante* — at a walking pace
- *Andante Moderato* — a bit faster than *andante*
- *Andantino* – slightly faster than *andante*
- *Grave* — slow and solemn
- *Largamente* — very, very, very slow
- *Larghetto* — rather broadly
- *Larghissimo* — very, very slow
- *Largo* — very slow, like *lento*
- *Lentamente* — slowly
- *Lentissimo* — extremely slow, but not as slow as *larghissimo*
- *Lento* — very slow
- *Lento assai* — even more slowly than *lento*
- *Lento Moderato* — moderately slow
- *Moderato* — moderately
- *Moderato espressivo* — moderately with expression
- *Prestissimo* — extremely fast
- *Presto* — very fast
- *Rapido* — rapidly
- *veloce* — with velocity, speedily
- *Vivace* — lively and fast
- *Vivacissimo* — very quick, faster than *vivace*
- *Vivo* — lively and fast

Note: In addition to the common *allegretto*, composers freely apply Italian diminutive and superlative suffixes to various tempo indications i.e.: *adagietto*, *andantino*, *larghetto*, and *larghissimo*. By adding the *-issimo* ending the word is amplified, by adding the *-ino* ending the word is diminished, and by adding the *-etto* ending the word is endeared.

Modifiers

- *accentato* — accented; with emphasis
- *assai* — very (e.g. *Adagio assai*)
- *cantabile* — in singing style (lyrical and flowing)
- *con* — with (e.g. *Andante con moto*, "at a walking pace with motion")
- *l'istesso tempo* — at the same speed
- *ma non troppo* — but not too much
- *marcato* — marching tempo, marked with emphasis
- *meno* — less, as in *meno presto*
- *molto* — much, very (such as *Molto allegro*)
- *non tanto* — not so much
- *non troppo* — not too much (such as *Allegro ma non troppo*, "fast but not too much")
- *obbligato* — required, indispensable
- *più* — more, as in *più allegro*; used as a relative indication when the tempo changes
- *poco* — a little (such as *Poco allegro*)
- *poco a poco* — little by little
- *quasi* — as if (such as *Più allegro quasi presto*, "faster, as if presto")
- *semplice* — simply
- *senza* — without
- *sotto voce* — in an undertone i.e. quietly
- *tempo comodo* — at a comfortable (normal) speed
- *tempo di...* — the speed of a ... such as *Tempo di valse* (speed of a waltz), *Tempo di marcia* (speed of a march))
- *tempo giusto* — at a consistent speed, at the 'right' speed
- *tempo primo* — indicates a return to the movement's or song's original speed
- *tempo semplice* — simple, regular speed, plainly

Mood markings

Mood markings are often used in conjunction with tempo indications:

- *accarezzevole* — expressive and caressing
- *acceso* — ignited, on fire
- *affannato* or *affannoso* — anguished
- *affettuoso* or *affettuosamente* — with affect (that is, with feeling/emotion)
- *agitato* — agitated, with implied quickness
- *animato* — animated, lively
- *appassionato* — to play passionately
- *brioso* — vigorously (same as *con brio*)
- *bruscamente* — brusquely
- *con affetto* — with affect (that is, with emotion)
- *con amore* — or (in Spanish and sometimes in Italian) *con amor*: with love, tenderly
- *con bravura* — boldly
- *con brio* — lively, literally, "with brilliance"
- *con calore* — warmly
- *con dolore* — with sadness
- *con fuoco* — with fire
- *con gran espressione* — with great expression
- *con molto espressione* — with much expression
- *con moto* — with motion
- *con slancio* — with enthusiasm
- *dolce* — sweetly
- *espressivo* — expressively
- *furioso* — to play in an angry or furious manner
- *giocoso* — merrily, funny
- *lacrimoso* — tearfully, sadly
- *lamentando* or *lamentoso* — lamenting, mournfully
- *leggero* — to play lightly, or with light touch
- *lububre* — lububrious, mournful
- *luminoso* — luminously
- *maestoso* — majestic or stately (which generally indicates a solemn, slow movement)
- *misterioso* — mysterious
- *morendo* — dying
- *pesante* — heavily
- *sautillé* or *saltando* — jumpy, fast, and short
- *scherzando* or, *scherzoso* — playfully
- *soave* — smoothly, gently
- *sognando* — dreamily
- *solenne* — solemn
- *sonore* — sonorous
- *sostenuto* — sustained, sometimes with a slackening of tempo

- *spiccato* — slow sautillé, with a bouncy manner
 - *tranquillamente* — adverb of *tranquillo*, "tranquilly"
 - *tranquillo* — tranquil
 - *vivacissimamente* — adverb of *vivacissimo*, "very quickly and lively"
 - *vivacissimo* — very fast and lively
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French Tempo Markings

Common tempo markings in French are:

- *Au mouvement* — play the (first or main) tempo.
 - *Grave* — slowly and solemnly
 - *Lent* — slowly
 - *Modéré* — at a moderate tempo
 - *Moins* — less, as in *Moins vite* (less fast)
 - *Rapide* — fast
 - *Très* — very, as in *Très vif* (very lively)
 - *Vif* — lively
 - *Vite* — fast
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German Tempo Markings

Common German tempo markings are:

- *Langsam* — slowly
 - *Lebhaft* — lively (mood)
 - *Mäßig* — moderately
 - *Rasch* — quickly
 - *Schnell* — fast
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