



Ballet Terms

Adagio

Adagio is a series of fluid and focused exercises that are performed slowly in order to improve dancers' balance, strength and lines.

Allégro

Allégro means fast, brisk and energetic movements and is associated with jumps.

Arabesque

An arabesque is when the dancer stands on one leg with the other leg extended behind the body. The arms can be held in a variety of positions. Regardless, the goal of the arabesque is to create as smooth seamless a line as possible with the body.

Barre

The dancer holds onto the barre for support, and a sequence of barre exercises is part of every ballet class.

Battement Tendu

This when the leg and foot are fluidly swept across the floor from one position to another. Typically, a "battement tendu" starts from first or fifth position, the leg is extended in the motion, and then it returns to the starting position. The leg should be straight and fully extended so that the foot only brushes the ground during the movement.

Changements

When a dancer begins in fifth position, jumps up in place and then switches the position of their feet while in the air so that they land in fifth position with the opposite foot now in front.

En Pointe

"En pointe" is when you dance on the very tips of your toes. Pointe shoes, typically made of satin, are used to achieve this. Students begin dancing en pointe only after they have advanced to a higher skill level, Learntodance.com noted. However, on their way to

dancing en pointe, students will practice moves and positions in demi-pointe, which is when a dancer stands on the balls of their feet.

Pirouette

A pirouette is a 360 degree spin made on one foot that is en pointe or demi-pointe, and is frequently begun from fourth position.

Plié

Plié means “bent” or “bending,” and is when one or both knees are bent while legs and feet remain turned out, and are done in first, second, fourth and fifth positions. There are two main types of pliés:

Demi: This is a small bend of the knees while heels are on the floor which creates a diamond shape.

Grand: A large bend of the knees during which heels are raised off the ground in a motion that mimics a “frog stretch.”

Port de bras

Movement of your arms and upper body.

Ronde de Jambe

Ronde de jambe means “round of the leg.” It is when the dancer rests on one leg and makes a circular movement with the other leg. It may be done “à terre,” which means the circle is made while the foot is touching the ground, or “en l’air,” which means the circle is made in the air.

Sauté

Sauté means “jump,” and is frequently used in combination with other moves to signify that they should be done with a jump, Learntodance.com explained. The source gave the example of sauté arabesque, which would mean to jump in the arabesque position.