

Ballet Dance Key Terms

Term	Definition
arabesque	One leg extended behind the body.
assemblé	A jump that takes off from one foot and lands on two feet.
attitude	A position where you stand on one leg and lift the other with the knee bent.
dégagé	Like a tendu, but the foot 'disengages with the floor'.
grand battement	A big throw of the leg, front, side or back. A big beat.
coordination	Being able to time and judge muscle contractions and release.
dynamics	The interaction of force and time. The degree of energy or intensity you put into a movement or piece.
extension, flexion, rotation	Straightening out a muscle and limb.
jeté	This is a French term meaning to leap, to transfer weight from one foot to the other foot. If performed on the spot it is a petit jeté or small spring step.
pirouette	A turn on one leg.
plié	Controlled knee bend in set position with feet turned out, to build control in the legs and centre.
relevé	A rise on the balls of the feet.
retiré	An action where one leg is raised to the side, with the knee bent so the toe is pointed next to the supporting knee. The retiré is the position used for performing a pirouette.
sauté	To jump, usually two feet to two feet.
sissonne	A jump that takes off from two feet and lands on one foot.
temps levé	A jump that takes off from one foot and lands on the same foot, a hop
tendu	The leg and foot are outstretched, but the foot maintains contact with the floor.
turn out	Where the femur is rotated outwards in the hip socket. For healthful turnout, this should come from the hips and be maintained by the glutes. Turnout should not come from the knees, as this may cause strain and injury.