

Glossary of French terms used in ballet



Grade One

Adage	Slow controlled movements of grace, line & balance
Allegro	Light, brisk movement
Battement	To beat
Bras bas	Arms low
Bras croise	Arms crossed
Changements	Changes
Chassé	To slide. Direct translation is to chase.
De côté	To the side
Dégagé	To disengage, or take away
Demi	Half
Derrière	Behind
Devant	In front
En arrière	Backwards
En avant	Forwards
En couronne	Crown (in the shape of a crown)
En croix	In the shape of a cross
Grand	Big, or large
Jeté	To throw
Petit	Small
Plié	To bend. Direct translation is to fold
Port de bras	Carriage of the arms
Posé	To step onto a straight leg
Posé temps levé	Step & hop
Retiré	To draw up
Sauté	To jump
Temps levé	Time raised
Tendue	To stretch

Grade Two *ALL THE ABOVE PLUS:*

À terre	On the ground
Assemblé	To assemble or bring together
Balance	Rocking step
Demi-détourné	Half a turn
Dessous	Under
Dessus	Over
Échappé	To escape
En dedans	Inwards towards the body, from back to front
En dehors	Outwards from the body, from front to back
En l'air	In the air
Glissade	Gliding step
Pas de Basque	Step of the Basque people
Pas de chat	Step of a cat
Relevé	Raised up. A quick snatch
Ronds de jambe	Rounds of the leg
Soubresaut	Sudden leap or bound
Soutenu	To sustain

Grade Three *ALL THE ABOVE PLUS:*

Coupé	To cut
Croise	A crossed line
Développé	To unfold and hold
Enchaînement	Combination of steps
En face	Facing front
Frappé	To knock, or to strike
Ouverte	Open (an open line)
Pas de bourrée	A travelling step
Sissonne	Scissor action.

Grade Four ALL THE ABOVE PLUS:

Ballonné	To bounce
Battu	Beaten
Contretemps	Against time
En tournant	Turning
Épaulement	The use of the shoulders
Fermé	Closed
Fondu	To melt
Sur le cou de pied	On the neck of the foot; i.e. the ankle
Temp lié	A linking step (<i>literally - time linked</i>)

Grade Five ALL THE ABOVE PLUS:

À deux bras	With two arms
Fouetté	To whip
Pirouette	To whirl

Grade Six ALL THE ABOVE PLUS:

Couru	Running
Double	Doubled
Écarté	Sliced
En cloche	Like a bell
Entrechat	Interweaving
Raccourci	Shortened or sharp

TIME SIGNATURES

Waltz	3/4	Mazurka	3/4
Polka	2/4	Gallop	2/4
March	4/4	Gavotte	4/4
Minuet	3/4	Tarantella	6/8