

Week 3: Dynamics

Dynamics is the fancy term to describe how loud or soft music is played. Musical terms are in Italian, so sometimes it is difficult to remember the words. However, here are some dynamic terms:

Piano – Soft

p

Forte – Loud

f

Mezzo Forte – Medium Loud

mf

Fortissimo – Very Loud

ff

Pianissimo – Very Soft

pp

Music can gradually become louder or gradually become softer. There are dynamic signs to show these changes as well.

Crescendo – Gradually Louder



Diminuendo – Gradually Softer



Primary Grades

One of the best songs to illustrate dynamics in music is “John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt.” Take two separate pieces of card stock or thicker paper and put an *f* for Forte on one and a *p* for Piano on another. As you sing the song, hold up the different signs so that your student becomes quite familiar with the symbols. Another really fun activity is for your student to find images from a magazine that illustrate soft sounds (kitten, bunny, sleeping baby) and images that make loud sounds (train, airplane, yelling sibling). In his/her music notebook your student can make two pictures, one depicting loud and one depicting soft; or one picture with two columns depicting loud and soft. Remember to say “piano” and “forte” when you locate the images and place them in the notebook.

Secondary Grades

The Italian Renaissance in Europe became the standard by which others followed. Therefore, the Italians formalized the language used in musical notation. Have your student research other standards the Italians formalized.

SAMPLE

Week 4: Tempo

Music can be played fast or slow or somewhere in between. Tempo is the word used to describe how fast or slow a piece of music is played or sung. Tempo can be measured by a metronome. Metronomes used to be wind-up machines; now with the Internet and the birth of apps, one can simply do a search to achieve a free metronome program. The higher the metronome number, the faster the speed of the music, and the lower the metronome number, the slower the speed of the music.

Four basic tempos are **Allegro**, **Andante**, **Adagio**, and **Moderato**.

- Allegro means quick and lively.
- Andante means walking pace.
- Adagio means slowly.
- Moderato means moderately and can be used in combination with the other three tempos.

Allegro



Andante



Adagio



Primary Grades

Have your student move/dance to music of different speeds. Encourage him/her to glide, walk, skip, hop, fly, or other fun movement of his/her choice. You can easily listen to contemporary music. However, below are very popular classical pieces your student will enjoy.

- Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5 in C minor* (Allegro)
- Camille Sant-Saens "The Swan" from *Carnival of the Animals* (Adagio)
- Edvard Grieg's "Morning" from *Peer Gynt* (Andante)
- Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee" from *The Tale of Tsar Sultan* (Allegro)
- Brahm's *Lullaby* (Adagio)
- Edvard Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" from *Peer Gynt* (Andante to Allegro)
- Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* (Allegro)

Secondary Grades

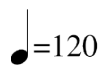
Have your student choose two selections from above and write a few paragraphs comparing and contrasting the tempos.

SAMPLE

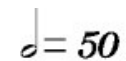
Week 3: More Tempo Markings

In Theory I, students were introduced to four common tempo markings: Allegro, Andante, Adagio, and Moderato. Students were told that the higher the metronome numbers, the faster the speed of the beat and likewise the lower the metronome numbers, the slower the speed of the beat.

Tempo markings, such as Adagio, appear above the music staff and indicate a range of tempos that would be appropriate for the song. However, when a composer or music publisher wants to suggest an exact tempo, they will show a note, and equal sign, and a metronome number, which indicates beats per minute. Here is an example:

=120

The above indicates setting your metronome to 120, and each click represents a quarter note. The quarter note does not always receive the beat. For instance:

= 50

This indicates to set your metronome to 50, and each click represents a half note. Music can change tempo during a piece of music, and is indicated by two terms: **Ritardando** and **Accelerando**.

- **Ritardando** means to gradually slow down. It is often abbreviated as rit. or ritard.
- **Accelerando** means to gradually speed up. It is often abbreviated as acc. or accel.

Another tempo marking often used in conjunction with Ritardando and Accelerando is **A Tempo**.

- **A Tempo** means to return to the original speed of the beat.

Primary Grades

There are so many different tempo markings, and it would be almost futile to attempt to memorize them all. What is most important is to focus playing at the speed indicated. Students may want to dance to feel the differences in tempos, or simply move a scarf to the music. Some of my favorite songs that illustrate the new tempo markings are as follows.

Ritardando at the end

- Handel's Suite No. 2 in D Major from *Water Music*

Accelerando

- Edvard Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" from *Peer Gynt* (student should recognize this piece from Theory I)

Varying Tempo Changes

- Chopin's Waltz in C-sharp Minor

Secondary Grades

Have student select two tempo markings from below and research to find different pieces of music that illustrate the tempos. The following are tempos in order from slowest to fastest.

- Grave – Very Slow
- Largo, Lento – Slow
- Larghetto – A little faster than Largo
- Adagio – Moderately Slow
- Andante – "Walking" Tempo
- Andantino – A little faster than Andante
- Allegretto – A little slower than Allegro
- Allegro – Fast
- Vivace – Lively
- Presto – Very Fast
- Prestissimo – Very Very Fast

Then have them write a few paragraphs comparing and contrasting the different tempos and how they are illustrated in their selected pieces.

Week 4: More Duration of Notes and Rests

In Theory I, students were introduced to the most common notes and rests. This week we will learn a few more that are important and appear in many pieces of music.

Dotted Quarter Note – 1 ½ beats



Dotted Quarter Rest – 1 ½ beats



In Theory I, students were introduced to the first flagged note—the eighth note. However, there are other notes that can have flags. The sixteenth note is one of them.

Sixteenth Note – ¼ beat



Sixteenth Rest – ¼ beats



Quite often eighth notes and sixteenth notes are beamed in groups of four like this.



1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &



1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

Primary and Secondary Grades

Encourage students to create patterns with a variety of notes and rests. If they are doing well, have them increase the difficulty by using patterns that are not expected.