

Dynamic Signs

DYNAMIC SIGNS indicate the volume, or how *soft* or *loud* the music should be played. Most musical terms are written in Italian since Italian composers were among the first to write such instructions in their manuscripts.

The word *piano* in Italian means soft; the word *forte* means loud.

The most commonly used dynamic signs are:

ITALIAN	SIGN	ENGLISH
<i>piano</i>	<i>p</i>	soft
<i>forte</i>	<i>f</i>	loud
<i>mezzo piano</i>	<i>mp</i>	moderately soft
<i>mezzo forte</i>	<i>mf</i>	moderately loud
<i>pianissimo</i>	<i>pp</i>	very soft
<i>fortissimo</i>	<i>ff</i>	very loud

Mezzo means moderately; *issimo* means very.

Dynamic signs arranged in order from very soft to very loud, are: *pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff*

A Gradual Change in Dynamics

Terms used to indicate a gradual change in volume, from *soft* to *loud* or *loud* to *soft* are:

ITALIAN	SIGN	ENGLISH
<i>crescendo</i> or <i>cresc.</i>		gradually louder
<i>diminuendo</i> or <i>dim.</i> or <i>decrescendo</i> or <i>decresc.</i>		gradually softer

Exercises

- 1** Write the Italian word for the following dynamic signs:
- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>f</i> _____ | <i>pp</i> _____ |
| <i>mp</i> _____ | <i>ff</i> _____ |
| _____ | <i>mf</i> _____ |
| <i>p</i> _____ | _____ |

- 2** Circle the dynamic signs. Put a box around the *cresc.* or *decresc.*

- 3** Use every dynamic sign learned above at least once to mark the appropriate dynamic signs on the lines beneath the following story.

"Wake up!" whispered Ron to his brother Steven. The boys walked softly out the door. They heard
 a. _____ b. _____
 the moderately soft sound of a distant airplane, which became gradually louder and roared very loudly as it
 c. _____ d. _____ e. _____
 flew over head, then faded away gradually. Steven said, "Let's play basketball," in a
 f. _____
 moderately loud voice. They shouted a loud "Yes!" as they ran to the park.
 g. _____ h. _____

Dynamic Signs

1 Write the Italian word and musical sign for each of the following English definitions.

Italian	Sign	English
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5-30

- Very loud
- Moderately soft
- Soft
- Moderately loud
- Very soft
- Loud

2 Arrange the dynamic signs above in order from loudest to softest.

5-30

3 Write the Italian word and musical sign for each of the following English definitions.

Italian	Sign	English
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5-10

- Gradually louder
- Gradually softer

4 Name two things that might have the dynamic marking of *piano*:
(Example: leaves moving in a breeze)

5 Name two things that might have the dynamic marking of *forte*:
(Example: a roaring lion)

5-10

- a.
- b.

- a.
- b.

5-10

6 What nationality of composers was among the first to use dynamic signs in their manuscripts?

10

100

Tempo Marks

TEMPO is an Italian word meaning "rate of speed." Tempo marks tell how *fast* or *slow* the music should be played. Tempo marks are also written in Italian.

ITALIAN	ENGLISH
<i>Largo</i>	Very slow
<i>Adagio</i>	Slow
<i>Andante</i>	Moving along (walking speed)
<i>Moderato</i>	Moderately
<i>Allegro</i>	Quickly, cheerfully
<i>Vivace</i>	Lively and fast

Moderato may be combined with other words:

Allegro moderato = slightly slower than *Allegro* but quicker than *Moderato*

A Gradual Change of Tempo

Terms used to indicate a gradual change in tempo are:

ITALIAN	TERM	ENGLISH
<i>ritardando</i>	<i>ritard.</i> or <i>rit.</i>	gradually slower
<i>accelerando</i>	<i>accel.</i>	gradually faster

Exercises

- 1 In writing music, tempo marks tell the _____.
- 2 A very slow tempo marking is _____.
- 3 A lively and fast tempo marking is _____.
- 4 Match the Italian term to its English meaning by writing the correct letter in each blank.

_____ Quickly, cheerfully	a. <i>Moderato</i>
_____ Gradually slower	b. <i>Vivace</i>
_____ Lively and fast	c. <i>Adagio</i>
_____ Moderately	d. <i>Ritardando</i>
_____ Moving along (walking speed)	e. <i>Accelerando</i>
_____ Very slow	f. <i>Largo</i>
_____ Gradually faster	g. <i>Andante</i>
_____ Slow	h. <i>Allegro</i>

Tempo Marks on Safari

1 On each line, write the Italian translation of the tempo mark indicated below the line. Use the following tempo marks:

Accelerando, Adagio, Allegro, Andante, Largo, Moderato, Ritardando, Vivace

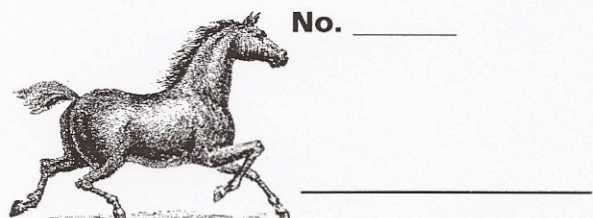
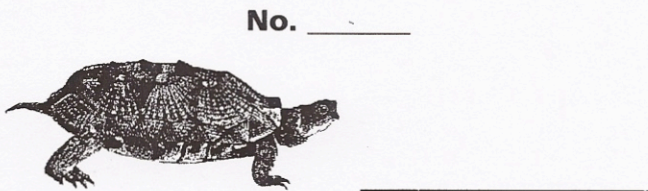
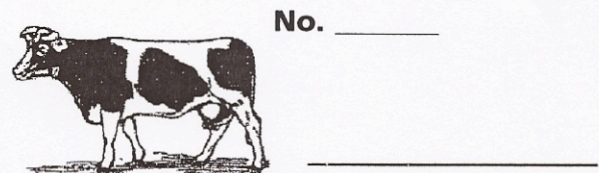
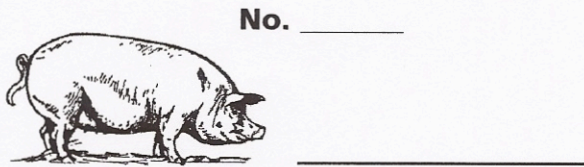
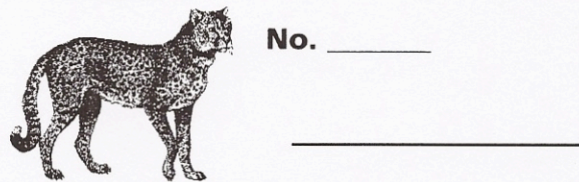
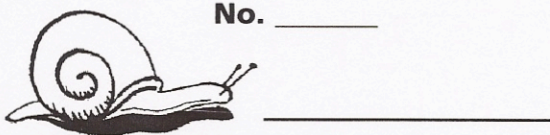
In deepest Africa a jeep moves at a _____ pace. Through the trees, a giraffe moves at _____ *moderate*. A bird flies past the adventurers _____ *quickly and cheerfully*. Turning, they spot an elephant herd lumbering _____ *slowly* toward them. Later, the passengers of the jeep are startled when a lion runs past, _____ *lively and fast*. A hippo and her baby move _____ *very slowly* across the road and the jeep _____ *gradually slows* to a stop. As the sun sets over the plain, the jeep goes _____ *gradually faster*, headed back to camp.

8-64

2 Number the pictures below from 1 (slowest) to 6 (fastest) and write the appropriate tempo marking for each on the line.

Slower

Faster



6-36

100