

## BALLET VOCABULARY LIST

### Absolute Beginner Ballet

#### Alphabetically Sorted

##### Arabesque

- a position where the leg is extended behind the body with a straight knee

##### Cambré – “arched”

- a stretch where the body folds sideways (towards or away from the barre) or back

##### Chaîné Turns – “chained turns” or “linked turns”

- turns that travel across the floor - you are on the balls of your feet, turning 180 degrees with each step

##### Dégagé – “to disengage”

- one leg extends away from the body in a straight, stretched position, with the foot and ankle fully extended, about 2-3” off the ground

##### Demi Pointe – “halfway to pointe”

- standing on the balls of the feet with the heels lifted as high as the foot/ankle will allow off of the floor. Typically this position is held for a balance. Can be done on one foot or two.

##### Développé – “developed/to develop” or “unfolding”

- a movement where the leg begins in 3rd (or 5th) position and slowly passes up the leg before extending away from the body ending in a straight leg and pointed foot

##### Echappé – “to escape” or “to slip away”

- where the legs transition from 3rd (or later, 5th) position into 2nd position then return back to 3rd (or 5th) with the opposite leg in front. Can be done as a saute or a releve.

##### En Croix – “shape of the cross”

- to do the same sequence of material to all directions (front, side, back, and side)

##### En l'air - “a movement in the air”

- any movement where the leg is in the air rather than on the ground (we typically use this in ronde de jambes)

##### Épaulment – “shouldering”

- the placement of a dancer's head/neck/shoulders in relation to the lower half of the body

##### Fondu – “to melt”

- a fluid movement where both legs (or just the standing leg) bend, and then extend together, the working leg extending away from the body and into the air (typically at 45 degrees or higher off the ground)

##### Frappé – “to strike”

- begins with a flexed foot. A quick brushing of the ball of the foot that results in a brisk, sharp extension of the leg away from the body about 2-3” off the ground

##### Glissade – “gliding” or “sliding”

- a small connecting/transition jump that begins and ends in 5th or 3rd position. The back foot brushes out to a degege, then the supporting leg pushes you onto the other leg via a small jump, and the second leg closes in front.

##### Grande Battement – “large battement” (I like to think of this as “big toss of the leg”

- A large, quick extension of the leg (almost like a big kick) where the leg begins on the ground then is tossed up with energy and returns to the starting position with control.

##### Grande Jeté – “air before the descent”

- a large leap jump where one aims to get a split in the air with the legs (this was our “jump over the river” jump)

##### Plié – “to bend”

- the act of bending the knees.

##### Piqué – “to prick”

- there are a few uses of this term in ballet, but we learned the version where the leg is straight and extended away from the body (perhaps you just did a degege) and it makes a

light, quick, sharp touch on the ground then quickly goes back off the ground. Think “hot potato”!

Port de Bras – “movement of the arms”

- general term for arm positions and movements

Relevé – “raised” or “to rise”

- rising up onto the balls of the feet (“demi pointe”) with a plié before to give power

Retire – “withdrawn”

- a position where one foot is off the ground - the toe of the foot in the air is touching the standing knee (just below the kneecap on the inside front of the leg). Just the baby toe is touching the leg and the heel of the foot that is up is pressing away from the leg

Reverence

- a bow or curtsy series at the end of class

Rond de Jambe – “circle of the leg”

- one leg traces a half circle on the floor (a terre) or in the air (en l’air)

Sauté – “to jump”

- a small jump that begins and ends in a plie, and the feet and legs extend fully in the air

Sickle

- the term used to describe an improperly pointed foot (i.e. if the toes point up towards the ceiling instead of reaching the smallest toes towards the floor and presenting the heel forward in a tendu)

Spotting

- the act of focusing on one spot while turning to keep balance (your head is the last thing to leave as your body turns around and the first thing to arrive as your body comes back to face front)

Temps lié – “joined movement” - a transfer of weight

- typically begins and ends with a tendu (think tendu, plie, tendu on the opposite foot)

Tendu – “to stretch”

- one leg extends out from the body in a straight, stretched position (foot and ankle are also fully extended)