

Beginning Ballet Vocabulary

Combinations	
Adagio	Slow and sustained
Petit Allegro	Small jumping and turning steps, performed at a lively and brisk tempo
Port De Bras	Carriage of the arms
Jumping Movements	
Saute	To jump
Changement	To change
Chasse	To chase
Grand Jete	Large throw
Echappe	To escape
Pas De Chat	Step of the cat
Turning Movements	
Chaine	Chain or Link
Pirouette	To whirl or spin
En Dehors	Outward (“Open the Door”)
En Dedans	Inward
Pique	To prick
Directions	
Devant	To the front/ forward
A La Seconde	To the side
Derriere	To the back
En Croix	Performed to the front, side, back, and side ‘Shape of the Cross’

Level Change	
Plie	To bend
Demi	Half or Small
Eleve	To rise (without plie)
Releve	To rise with a plie
Leg Action	
Attitude	A position where the working leg is bent to 90 degrees, can be done to the front, side, or back
Tendu	To stretch
Degage	To disengage
Grand Battement	Large beat
Pas De Bourree	Movement done as a series of 3 steps (back, side, front)
Glissade	To glide
Balance	Rocking step. Shifting the weight from one foot to the other in the pattern down, up, down. Foot can cross front or back.
Developpe	To develop
Sous-sus	Under-over. Drawing the legs and feet tightly together in an elevated position
Foot Action	
Coupe	To cut
Passe	To pass through
Miscellaneous	
Barre	A horizontal bar which dancers use for support while doing exercises in ballet class
Ballerina	The Italian term for a female ballet dancer
Ballerino	The Italian term for a male ballet dancer