

French Vocabulary



The words used to describe the movements in ballet are French and they are universally understood by dancers. If a ballet dancer were to go to a class in any country, they would be able to understand what steps to do even if they did not speak the language of the country they were in.

Dictionary of Classical Ballet

TERM	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Plie	plee ay	to bend
Releve	rel u vay	to raise
Tendu	tahn dew	to stretch
A Terre	ah teyr	on the ground
Degage	day ga shay	to disengage
Rond Je Jambe	rawn duh zhahmb	circle of the leg
En Dehors	ahn duh or	outside
En Dedans	ahn duh dahn	inside
Fondu	fawn dew	to melt
Coupe	koo pay	to cut
Passe	pa say	to pass
Developpe	dayv low pay	to develop
En L'Air	ahn leyr	in the air
Frappe	fra pay	to strike
Soutenu	soot uh new	to sustain
Petit Battement	puh tee bat mahn	small beat
Grand Battement	grahn bat mahn	big beat
Port De Bras	porre duh brah	carriage of the arms
Croise	kwah zay	crossed
En Face	ahn fahss	facing front
Efface	ay fah say	shaded
Ecarte	ay kar tay	separated, wide open
En Croix	ahn kwah	in a cross
Devant	duh vahn	in front
Derriere	deh ree eyr	behind
En avant	ahn a vahn	forward
En arriere	ahn a ree ayr	backward

ACTIVITY BOX



Discuss in groups what ballet moves/positions you think might be described by these French words.

Bingo: Make a grid that is 3 squares by 2. Choose terms from the list of French words in the first column, write 1 in each box. Ask someone to read out the definitions in English. If it matches with your word cross it out. As soon as all your words have been crossed off raise your hand and say **BINGO**.