

The Ultimate Ballet Vocabulary

Term	Translation	Description & Example
adage	At ease (Italian)	The second part of the ballet class with emphasis on sustained positions on a balance.
adagio	Slow	A slow, sustained movement.
allegro	Fast Happy (Italian)	Jumps. Performed to a quick, sharp tempo. OR The third part of a ballet class with emphasis on fast jumps and turns.
allonge	to elongate, to stretch	With the arms stretched out as far as possible.
arabesque	Arabic	A pose. Balancing on one leg with the other leg extended to the back.
arriere, en	To the back	To the back.
assemble	to assemble	A jump from one foot to two feet. Brushing the working leg out and assembling the legs together midair.
attitude	attitude	A pose. Position where the leg is slightly bent.
avant, en	To the front	To the front.
balance	to swing, to rock	A swinging 3 step movement that is usually used to a musical tempo of $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$.
balancoire	See-saw	A movement that as the leg moves forward and backwards the body bends in the opposite direction.
ballonne	Expanded, as a balloon	A Jump from one foot to the same foot as the other leg is extended outward and then returns to its original position. Ex. From 5 th position brush the front leg outwards as the other leg jumps off the floor then landing on the same leg, return the working leg sur le cou-de-pieds.
ballotte	To toss	A jump that can be done from either one foot or two feet. Ex. From 5 th position jump off the floor with both feet, extend the front leg, bending the knee and land on the back leg.
basque, pas, de	Pas duh bahsk Step of the Basque	A step that can be performed as a sliding movement on the floor or as a jump. Ex. Right leg front in 5 th position, extend the right leg to the front, supporting leg demi-plie, right leg rondes de jambes a terre en dehors a quarter circle, transfer weight onto the right leg

		and bring the left foot sur le cou-de-pieds en avant.
battement	beating	A movement of the leg.
batterie	battery or beating	A general term used to describe the beating of the legs.
battu	beaten or beat	A term used to describe certain steps and jumps. OR Standing on one leg while the other leg beats against it.
bourree	to tamp	A series of very small and rapid steps where one leg pulls the other to close both in a tight 5 th position.
bourree, pas de	Stuffed feet Step of the bourree An Auvergne dance	A series of 3 steps. Ex. Right leg back in 5 th position. Lift right foot coupe behind the left ankle, step on the right foot, step side on the left foot then bring the right down to 5 th position front in demi plie.
brise	To break apart To burst	A beating jump from 5 th position to 5 th position traveling forward or backwards. Ex. Right foot back 5 th position, on the diagonal throw the back leg forward and while traveling forward beat the supporting leg to the working leg and land with the working leg back in 5 th position.
cabriole	caper or leap	A beating jump from one leg to the same leg. Ex. Hold one leg off the floor and jump up with the supporting leg, beat it against the other and land on the same supporting leg.
chaine	to chain	A series of connected turns on two legs. Ex. Make half-turns in 1 st position traveling to the side very quickly.
change	To change	To change.
chasse	to glide	A smooth gliding movement. Ex. With right leg extended front, pull both legs together traveling in the air then land on the back leg with right leg extended forward.
chat, pas de	Step of the cat	A jump from one foot to the other and when in the air both feet are off the ground. Ex. Right leg front 5 th position, pull the right leg up sharply to the knee and then extend it to the side with the knee slightly bent, jump of the left leg bring it up to meet the right leg, landing on the right leg and then bring the left leg front 5 th position.
cheval, pas de	Step of the horse	A movement that can be done on the floor or as a jump. Ex. Right leg front 5 th position, pull the right leg up sharply to the supporting leg's ankle, extend it forward and touch the floor with the toes, then close it 5 th position front.

ciseaux, pas de	Step of the scissors	A jump from one leg where both legs pass each other forward in the air and landing on one leg. Ex. Step on left leg, pass right leg through 1 st position to the front off the floor, jump up with the left leg passing the right then landing on the right leg, pass the left leg through 1 st position to the back off the floor.
cloche, en	As a bell	A rocking swinging motion like a bell.
contretemps	Contrary step	A step from one direction that quickly changes to the other.
cote, de	To the side	To the side.
cou-de-pieds, sur le	Upon the neck of the foot	Upon the neck of the foot.
coupe	To cut	A movement that calls for the foot to be sharply pulled off the floor and placed either in front or back of the ankle.
couru, pas	To persue	Step to travel. Ex. Walking.
croise	To cross	A position on the diagonal and have one leg crossed in front of the other.
croix, en	In a cross shape	A movement that is done to the front, side, back and then side again.
d'ici-de la	From here to there	A movement with one leg off the floor going from side to side.
en, dedans	Inwards	A directional term used to describe a turn moving inwards.
en, dehors	Outwards	A directional term used to describe a turn moving outwards.
demi-plie	Small bend	A movement where the knees bend over the toes without the heels lifting off the floor.
demi-pointes	Small point; rise	A rise onto the ball of the foot.
demi-ronds	Half circle	A movement of the leg in a circular motion from front to back or back to front.
derriere	Back	Back
dessous	Under	A directional term used to describe a movement. Ex. Right leg front in 5 th , extend right leg to the side and then place it in 5 th position back.
dessus	Over	A directional term used to describe a movement. Ex. Right leg back in 5 th , extend right leg to the side and them place it in 5 th position front.
devant	Front	Front.
developpe	To unfold	
diagonale	Diagonal	Diagonal.

divises en quarts	Divide in quarters	A movement on one leg the other extended switches the position of the body and leg with one quarter turn. Ex. With one leg extended in the air in front, turn on the supporting leg one quarter circle as the leg moves to the side.
ecarte	Step aside; swerving; deviation; pulled apart	One of the three epaulement positions. A directional term used to describe a position where the leg is extended to the side.
echappe	To escape	A movement that begins legs in 5 th , and moves quickly to 2 nd either by sliding on the balls of the feet or a jump.
efface	To draw aside; shaded; obscured	One of the here epaulement positions. A directional term used to describe a position where the leg is extended to the front or back.
emboite	To fit in; joining	A jumping movement from one foot to the other.
entrechat	To caper; to dash against each other	A jump from two feet, beating the legs together and landing either on one foot or two feet.
entrelace	To interlace	To interlace.
epaulement	Shoulder	A term used to describe one of three positions; croise, ecarte, efface.
face, en	To face front	Face the front.
faillie	To nearly fall	A movement from one leg, leaning off balance and quickly pass the other leg in a given direction before catching the fall.
ferme	To close	A term used to describe numerous jumps that requires the dance to close the working leg after the jump ends.
filc-flac	Slap/Pop	A term used to describe a sound or action. A movement performed either in place or with a turn. Ex. with the working leg extended to the front it closes front 5 th position, brushes up the front of the ankle, extends to the side, closes back 5 th position, extends to the back then closes 5 th position.
fondue	To melt	A movement that calls for the dancer to stand on one foot bending and extending both legs at the same time. Ex. the working leg extended to the side, bring the working leg's foot tot the ankle of the

		supporting leg as both legs bend and the knees, extend the working leg to the side with the knee bent, then stretch both legs at the same time.
frappe	To strike	A quick action of the leg Ex. working leg's foot is placed in the front of the supporting leg's ankle – quickly throw the foot forward then softly bring it back to strike the ankle. This movement can be done front, side or back and also can be done with beats.
gargoulliade	Water spout	An advanced jump from one foot to other and can be done en dehors or en dedans Ex. right foot front 5 th position – brush the front leg quickly to the side and jump up off the other leg – while in the air first execute a ronds de jambes en l'air en dehors with the right leg and as the right leg lands execute a ronde de jamebs en l'air en dedans with the left leg, then close the left leg 5 th position front
glissade	To slide	A jump from one foot to the other that travels either front, side or back and can be done with the legs changing positions or not Ex. right leg front 5 th position – brush the right leg to the side and jump on to it, then bring the left leg and close it 5 th position back
grande	Large	Large.
grande jete	Large throw, to fling	A large jump that is done from one foot to the other.
grande pirouette	Large turn	A turn with the leg extended to the side that is usually executed by the male dancer in a series of turns. In single form, both males and females practice it.
grande plie	Large bend	A movement that requires both knees to fully bend at the same time and the body is lowered very close to the floor
grande ronds de jambes	A large movement of the leg	A movement of the leg that requires the dancer to either have a leg travel from the front to the back in a large half-circle
huit	Eight	Eight
jambes, rends de	Circling of the legs	A movement that calls for the dancer to move the leg in a circle – this can be done on the floor, or in the air.
jete	To throw, to toss	A large movement that either describes a throw of a leg or a jump with a throw of a leg
jete entrelace	A throw inelaced	A large advanced movement from one leg to the other Ex. Step forward on the right leg, throw the left leg forward and jump in the air, switch the

		torso and hips to face the opposite direction and throw the left leg forward, then land on the left leg with the right leg held off the floor in the back
Jete passé		A movement that basically begins in 5th position and after the jump ends with one leg to the back Ex. left leg front 5th position facing the diagonal – sharply lift the back foot to the ankle of the front leg, close it back in 5th position as the left leg is thrown backwards with the knee slightly bent, as the left leg returns to the floor jump up with the right leg and throw it backwards keeping the knee slightly bent, then land on the left leg and keep the right leg in the back with its knee slightly bent
L'air, en	In the air	A term used to describe a jump or leg position raised off the floor
Porte	To travel, to carry	A descriptive term used for a number of jumps calling for the movement to travel smoothly and close to the floor
pose	To pose	A term used to describe a specific position held.
preparation, grande	Large preparation	A term that describes a large circular movement with the leg as the body is bent forward then backward Ex. right leg 5th position front – bend the knee of the supporting leg as the right leg is extended forward and the body is bent forward over the extended leg, then carry the right leg to the back as the supporting leg straightens and the body is lifted up and bent backwards
promenade	A walk, an excursion	A movement that is done on one foot and is usually done slow and even
quarter	Four	four
releve	To rise	A term used to describe a rise from the whole foot to demi-pointe
releve lent, battement	To rise slowly and evenly	A movement that requires one leg to extend evenly forward as the other leg rises to demi-pointe
renverse	Reversing, overturning	A circling movement of the leg and the coordination of the torso - can be done on the floor or as a jump Ex. face the down-room left corner (on the diagonal) with the left leg back with its knee slightly bent – bend the knee of the supporting leg as the body is bent to the right side, place the left leg behind the supporting leg and execute a pas de bourree with a full turn counter clockwise
reverence	Reverence, to bow,	A term used to describe the last exercise of the class

	curtsy	
revoltade	To fly back, to revolve	A jump that begins on one foot and lands on the same foot. Ex. step forward on the left leg, throw the right leg forward, and jump onto the left leg, turn the torso and hips in the opposite direction as the left leg steps over the right leg, then land on the left leg with the right leg held off the floor in the back
rond	Round	round
royale	Royal, a beating jump	Ex. right leg frong 5th position – jump in the air with both legs, beat the right leg in front of the left leg and then land in 5th position with the right leg back in 5th position.
sans	Without	without
saute	Jump	A jump off the ground with either one or two legs.
seconde, a la	To the second	A pose on one leg with the other extended to second position off the floor
serre	Close, compact, tight	A movement with fast beating of the foot against the ankle of the other leg
sissone	Scissor	A jump from two feet to one.
soubresaut	Sudden leap	A jump from two feet to two feet with the legs held tightly together
sous-sus	Below-above	A term used to describe a very tight 5th position on demi-pointe
temps	Step, in time	Though the action is similar as a saute, the saute action is usually even in its jumping form where the temps denotes a sharper, springy action
temps de cuisse	Step of the thigh, quartering the thigh	A movement that places a foot in front of another then jump with two feet and land on one foot Ex. tight leg back 5th position – bend both legs and extend the right leg to the side and place it in front of the left leg in 5th position, then jump from two feet travelling to the side and landing on the left leg, then close the right leg front 5th position
temps de fleche	Step of the arrow	A jump from one foot to the other and in the air they pass by each other with bent legs Ex. extend the right leg forward – throw the right leg up in the air and jump off the floor with the left leg, while in the air bend the knee of the left leg and then extend it as the right leg lands on the floor – the passing of the left leg is very sharp like an arrow from a bow
temps leve	Step to lift	A term used to describe a sharp jump either on one foot or two
temps lie	Step to connect, to thicken	A movement where the legs transfer the weight of the body from one leg to the other
temps releve	Step to releve	A movement that calls for the dancer to extend one leg while the supporting leg is bent then

		to rise up on the supporting leg to demi-pointe as the other leg moves to the side
tendue	Stretched, held out, tight	A basic ballet movement where the leg is extended straight out from the supporting leg with the foot fully pointed – it can be done front, side or back
tendue, double	Two tendus	A movement that requires the leg to extend from a specific position in a given direction with the foot fully pointed, place the heel on the floor, fully stretch the leg with the foot pointed again, then close to original position
terre, a	On the floor	A movement or position on the floor
tire-buchon	Cork-screw, ringlet, like hair	A description of a turn where the working leg is slowly drawn up the sides of the supporting leg as a turn is executed
tombe	To fall	A movement that requires the dancer to fall with all the weight of the body onto the other leg
tour	To turn	To turn
tour lent	To turn evenly and slowly	A term that describes a slow turning movement on one leg
tournant, en	To turn, turn in a circle	A term that can denote many jumps and movements to be executed by turning