**Ballet Terms:**

Adagio: at ease, leisure

Allegro: brisk, lively

Allonge: outstretched, extended

Arabesque: position of the body in profile, supported on 1 leg, which can be straight or in plie, and other leg extended behind and at right angles to it. The arms are held in various harmonious positions creating the longest possible line from fingertips to toes. Shoulders are held square to the line of direction.

Cecchetti

Assemble: to assemble or join together

Attitude: pose derived by Carlo Blasis from the statue of Mercury by Giovanni da Bologna. Position on 1 leg w/the other lifted in back, the knee bent at an angle of 90 degrees and well turned out so that the knee is higher than the foot.

Avant: forward, a direction for the execution of a step.

Balance: rocking step. Shift of weight from 1 foot to the other. Can be done crossing the foot either in front or back.

Ballonne:

Barre

Battement: Beating. Action of the extended or bent leg. 2 types: grand and petit. Petits: tendus, degages, frappes, and tendu releves.

Cabriole: A step of elevation in which the extended legs are beaten in the air. The working leg is thrust into the air and the underneath leg follows and beats against the first leg sending it higher. The landing is made on the underneath leg.

Chaînés: [“chains, links”]. A series of rapid turns on half or full point with the legs in a tight first position, rotating a half turn on one foot and the other half on the other foot. Done one after the other so they're "chained" together.

Chasse: A gliding step. The working leg slides out; put weight on working leg and draw [other leg](http://www.dancehelp.com/articles/dance-dictionary/ballet-dictionary.aspx%22%20%5Ct%20%22_top) along floor to it. One foot literally chases the other in a graceful sideways gallop like step.

Coupe: to cut, small intermediary step, done as a preparation

Croise: Crossed.

Croix, en: in the shape of a cross. An exercise is to be executed to 4th position front, 2nd position, 4th position back, and vice back.

En l’air: in the air

Demi: half

Demi Bras: half arms

Devant: in front. A movement or the placing of a limb in front of the body. Jete devant

Detourne: turned aside. A pivot turn on both points or demi-points.

Developpe en fondu: developpe sinking. Working leg executes a developpe while supporting knee bends in fondu.

Developpe Passe

Ecarte: separated, thrown wide apart.

Echappe: escaping or slipping movement. A level of opening both feet from closed to open. 2 kinds: echappe sauté: spring from 5th position and finishes in a demi plie in the open position; echappe sur les pointes, or demi-pointes: releve and has straight knees when in the open position.

Echappe battu: echappe beaten, 5th position, demi, jump to second, back to 5th, beat, finish w/other leg in front.

Efface: shaded. Position towards the audience in which one part of the body is hidden. Legs are open, not crossed.

Emboite:

Entrechat: interweaving or braiding. Can count from 2 to 10. Lets beating in the air.

Enveloppe: rotation of the body turning en dedans on the supporting leg while the other legs envelops or encircles it. Used to give momentum to inward turns.

Failli: giving way, fleeting movement done on 1 count.

Fondu: sinking down, lowering of the body made by bending the knee of the supporting leg.

Fouette: whipped. A turn in which a whipping motion of the working leg makes the body go round. Usually but not always done en dehors, which is the description that follows. The working leg opens to 2nd position at 45 degrees. The working leg whips in behind the calf of the supporting leg, while the arms come in, the body turns en dehors, and the supporting leg rises to releve. Quickly, the working foot is brought to the front of the calf and is opened to 2nd at 45 degrees while the working foot is lowered into demi-plié. While in this position, the arms open to second in preparation for a repeat of the movement. When you hear of "32 fouettés" in Swan Lake or some other ballet, this is what they mean.

Frappe: to strike. in full, battement frappé, "struck beat". Working foot rests lightly on the ankle of the supporting foot. Throw the working leg forcefully out to a dégagé position so that it strikes the floor 1/3 of the way out. Hold the leg out as long as possible, returning it to its initial position at the last moment. (Russian frappés start in tendu, darting to the supporting leg and back out again.) Can be done to the front, side, or back.

Glissade: to glide. Always begin and end w/a demi plie, a transitional step usually. Can cross foot in front or back.

grand battement: ["big beat"]. A controlled leg lift in which the working leg is raised as high as possible while keeping the rest of the body aligned.

grand jeté: ["big thrown (step)"]. A long horizontal jump, usually forward, starting from one leg and landing on the other. In the middle of the jump, the dancer may be doing a split in midair. This is a grand jump that you will see in most grand finales (see photo).

Jete ["thrown"]. A jump from one foot to the other foot, throwing the working leg out. Basically this is used in petit allegro quite often. One foot brushes out and jumps off the ground as the dancer lands on her other foot in b+.

jumps:. There are a variety of jumps in the ballet vocabulary. Jumps have been classified as follows: (1) from both feet to both feet (e.g. changements) (2) from both feet to one foot (e.g. sissonnes); (3) from one foot to both feet (e.g., assemblés); (4) from one foot to the same foot (e.g., temps levés); (5) from one foot to the other foot (e.g., jetés).

pas de basque: ["Basque step"]. A position starting in fifth position which goes into a demi-plié, then the working foot glides forward in croisé and continues with a demi rond de jambe en dehors to the side, while the other foot remains in plié. A small jump occurs onto the working foot in demi-plié. The other foot now glides through 1st position into croisé forward. On the final count, the weight is transferred to the other foot and a small jump is made to bring the feet together where the left one was placed. The movement finishes in 5th croisé. Best to have a live demonstration of this one! Words can’t explain what the body does…

pas de bourrée: ["bourrée step," the bourrée being an old folk dance]. This term is one of the simplest connecting steps, used to link other steps in a combination. The most common form is probably the pas de bourrée dessous. It is a gliding movement by a dancer on pointe consisting of many very small steps taken with the feet close together. When a dancer uses bourrée as a verb ("Then you bourrée downstage"), she usually means pas de bourrée couru. This is what the “Dying Swan” does a lot of in Swan Lake, it is intended for pointe.

pas de chat: ["step of the cat"]. A basic jump that starts with a demi-pliè in fifth, to a leap off of one leg and both legs bend in the air – one after the other to land back in fifth position demi pliè. In the famous dance in Swan Lake in which the four cygnets dance with interlaced arms, they do sixteen pas de chat. It’s a common connection step in basic ballet.

pas de cheval: ["step of the horse"]. Starting with the working leg in pointe tendu, draw it along the floor back to the supporting leg; then, without pausing, move it up to cou-de-pied and back out to pointe tendu in a small developpé. The step resembles the pawing of a horse. It is quick and smooth.

passé: ["passed"]. A movement in which the pointed foot of the working leg is made to pass the knee of the supporting leg. Basically you start with your working foot in front and end with it behind – or vice versa. It is a very common ballet move at the barre and used to change which foot will be the working foot.

penché: ["leaning"]. An extreme arabesque in which the body stays lifted and extended, but the back leg goes up and out as far as possible bringing the arms to almost touch the ground (if the ballerina has that sort of extension and flexibilty).

Pas de Basque: basque step

petit battement: ["little beat"]. This is an exercise for speed and agility in the [lower legs](http://www.dancehelp.com/articles/dance-dictionary/ballet-dictionary.aspx%22%20%5Ct%20%22_top). The working leg starts sur le cou-de-pied and beats front to back repeatedly to the music then ends on the opposite side of the leg from where it started. The knee and thigh of the working leg stay in the same place and do not move during the exercise.

petit jeté: ["little jump"]. A small jump used in petit allegro often. Brush the working foot out, hop off the supporting leg, and land on the working foot with the other foot sur le cou-de-pied behind. Can be done to the front, the side, or the back.

pirouette: ["spin"]. A controlled 180 degree turn on one leg. The dancer usually turns more than once. The raised leg is most commonly held in rétiré, but pirouettes with the leg in other positions are not uncommon. If the direction of the turn rotates the raised leg away from the front of the body, the pirouette is en dehors; if it rotates the leg toward the front, it is en dedans. The dancer spots (see "spotting") in order to avoid becoming disoriented. Pirouettes are usually fast, but supported pirouettes, in which a partner steadies the soloist, may be done very slowly.

placement: Roughly, alignment of the body. Becoming properly placed means learning to stand up straight, with hips level and even, shoulders open but relaxed and centered over the hips, pelvis straight (neither protruding nor tucked under), back straight, head up, weight centered evenly between the feet. This posture is frequently described as "pulled up," but it is also a relaxed posture; you aren't tensed up like a soldier standing at attention. (A teacher once said you should imagine that you are suspended by a thread attached to the top of your head. This suggests both the "pulled-up" and relaxed aspects of good ballet posture.) And as you dance, you seek to maintain this posture except when the step requires something different, like épaulement, or like the slight forward arch of the [spine](http://www.dancehelp.com/articles/dance-dictionary/ballet-dictionary.aspx%22%20%5Ct%20%22_top) that accompanies an arabesque.

Petite: little, small

Pique: pricked, pricking

Piroutte: whirl or spin

Piroutte en dedans: turning inward, towards the supporting leg.

Piroutte en dehors: turning outward, towards the raised foot.

plié: ["bent"]. Knee bends, done with the legs turned out from the hips. It is usually the first exercise in a ballet class. Demi-plié ["half-bent"] is a shallow bend (in all positions but second, as far down as you can go without lifting the heels off the floor); grand plié ["big plié"] is a deep bend, down to where the thighs are almost horizontal. In all positions except second, the heels release from the floor in a grand plié. A pliè is the prelude and finish of every jump. It is one of the most important moves in the ballet vocabulary and if it is not executed properly it can cause injury to the knees, ankles and hips.

port de bras: ["carriage of the arms"]. A movement or position of the arms. Every ballet class has a port de bras section of barre. It is the upper body carriage while executing lower body steps. It makes steps look effortless and graceful when done correctly. A grand port de bras is a circular bend, either toward the barre, then down, then up away from the barre, and then backward and back toward the barre: or the same thing in the opposite direction.

promenade: ["walk"]. A balanced pivot turn in which the dancer moves slowly around by shifting the heel of the supporting leg. The rest of the body may be in arabesque or attitude. In a supported promenade, the partner turns the soloist.

relevé: ["raised"]. A movement in which the heels are raised off the floor. The rise may be smooth or aided by a slight spring, depending on the school. A dancer in such a position is said to be "in relevé” or “on pointe”.

retiré: ["withdrawn"]. A position in which the working foot is drawn up to the knee of the supporting leg usually while the other leg is in releve.

rond de jambe: ["circular movement of the leg"]. A movement in which the working leg comes up to retire and circles in a circular motion. May be done with the working foot on the floor or in the air. In a rond de jambe en dehors the leg moves outward and ends by passing back down the leg into fifth. A wonderful exercise for turnout. In a rond de jambe en dedans ("inward"), the direction of movement is reversed. In a demi rond de jambe, the working leg goes only half-way around, stopping in second position. A grand rond de jambe, is executed with the supporting leg in plié. A rond de jambe en l'air ("in the air") is done with the working leg raised off the floor, frequently at an angle of 90 degrees (parallel to the floor).

saute: ["jump"] To jump into the air from two feet, landing on two feet.

sissonne: [Named for its inventor]. A basic sisonne is a jump from two feet into a scissor action jump into the air - with one leg higher then the other landing back on two feet. There are many types of sissone ranging from petit jumps to grand jumps and they can be done in any direction.

sous-sus: ["under-over"] (or sus-sous ["over-under"]). A relevé in a tight fifth position with one foot almost on top of the other.

soutenu: ["sustained"]. Performed smoothly and slowly as a crossed leg turn up onto pointe. It starts from 5th position where the working leg is taken out to the front, 2nd position, or to the back, while the supporting leg is lowers to demi-plié, then the supporting leg rises to demi or full pointe while the working leg is drawn into it, ending in a tight sus-sous position.

spotting: A technique used to avoid disorientation during turns. Basically the dancer spots an object or area of the room or stage and as she turns she catches glimpse of that same area and focuses. This is the only way to do many turns without feeling dizzy.

tendu: ["stretched"]. This is a very basic barre movement that is used commonly in ballet movement. The tendu (same as battement tendu) is when a dancer pointes out extending out starting from her torso throughout her toes.

turnout: The foundation of ballet. A stance in which the legs are rotated outward from the hips so that the knees (and feet) point in opposite directions. A dancer adopting this position is said to be "turned out." The ideal, turnout is 90 degrees. Forcing the feet and letting everything else follow puts severe strain on the joints, especially the knees, and defeats the purpose of turnout, which is to rotate the thigh bone to permit greater extension, especially to the side. Doing this incorrectly can cause great injury to the dancer.

working leg: the leg that is executing the given movement while the weight of the body is on the other leg.