



FANCY PANTS MUSIC WORDS

Early childhood is one of the very best times to build language and vocabulary. That's why, in Little Kiddos Music Academy® classes, we intentionally introduce real music terminology—our *"Fancy Pants Music Words."* We rarely say one of these words without also explaining what it means in simple, child-friendly language.

Repeatedly hearing the vocabulary and its definition together, helps children naturally understand and remember each concept. As they sing, move, play instruments, and experience music firsthand, these words take on real meaning. Before long, children aren't just hearing music vocabulary—they're understanding it, using it, and building a strong foundation for future music learning.

Don't worry if your little kiddos don't remember every term right away. Repetition through joyful, hands-on musical experiences is where the magic happens!

Here is a list of the Fancy Pants Music Words and how they are used or defined throughout our lessons.

Beat/Steady Beat: The constant, even pulse in music. It is the heartbeat of music. While not often defined, we frequently practice keeping a steady beat through patting on our legs, clapping, marching with our feet, tapping on an instrument, etc.

Tempo: How fast or slow does the beat go. (The speed of the beat.)

Accelerando: The magic word that speeds up tempo. (We use our magic-music/music-magic "wand" which is a pointer-finger held up and circled.)

Largo: Very slow.

Adagio: Slow and smooth. (Creamy peanut-buttuh!)

Moderato: Not too fast, not too slow.

Allegro: Quick, quick, quick!

Vivace: Super-duper quick.

Presto: Super-duper stinkin' fast!

FANCY PANTS MUSIC WORDS

PITCH

Pitch: Where does the note go? Does it go high? Does it go low? Does it go anywhere in-between?

Scale: Our pitches going up and coming down. (C major scale.)

Melody: That's what we sing. We sing pitches to make the melody.

Harmony: When two or more pitches play at the same time and sound good. (Typically not “next door neighbor notes” from our (C major) scale. It's like hot cocoa for your ears—a sweet treat!)

DYNAMICS

Dynamics: How loud or how quiet the music is.

Pianissimo: Very, very quiet.

Piano: Quiet.

Forte: Loud.

Fortissimo: Really, really loud.

Crescendo: Getting louder. (Often described as our music crocodile's open mouth.)

Decrescendo: Getting quieter. (Our music crocodile's closing mouth.)

RHYTHM

Rhythm: Patterns of sound on a steady beat.

Ostinato: A repeated rhythm pattern.

Quarter Note: One sound on one beat. Our steady heartbeat note.

Double-Eighth Notes: Two sounds on the beat.

Quarter Rest: A beautiful, blissful beat of silence. You don't make a sound for one beat. Our “squiggle wiggle.”

Half Note: One sound for two beats.

Whole Note: One sound for four beats.

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Staccato: Short, hard, “punchy” notes.

Legato: Smooth and creamy notes.

INSTRUMENT FAMILIES: While we only go into these during our *Music*-themed class, these are good for reference.

Percussion Family: The instruments we play in Little Kiddos Music Academy® classes. They can be tapped, shaken or scraped.

Examples: egg shakers, rhythm sticks, jingle bells, drums, triangle, cymbals, rainstick, claves, maracas, castanets, etc.

Woodwind Family: Instruments that make sound by blowing air through a mouthpiece or reed. Typically higher in timbre (the sound quality) and often playing the melody.

Examples: flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, saxophone, etc.

Brass Family: Instruments that make sound by buzzing your lips into a mouthpiece. Gold, brass and shiny. Often associated with a strong, triumphant sound.

Examples: trumpet, trombone, tuba, french horn, etc.

Strings Family: Instruments that make sound when their strings are plucked, strummed, or played with a bow. Often associated with having an emotional sound quality and playing the melody.

Examples: Guitar, ukulele, violin, cello, string bass, harp, etc.