Composers have described tempo with Italian words for centuries. Since the metronome was patented in 1815, each term maps to a rough BPM range.

Slow tempos

Grave means slow and serious. Largo is broad, about 40–60 BPM. Adagio is slow and expressive.

Moderate tempos

Andante is a relaxed walking pace. Moderato is moderate, roughly 108–120 BPM.

Fast tempos

Allegro is fast metronome and bright, about 120–156 BPM. Vivace is lively, around **metronome** 156–176 BPM. Presto is very fast, and Prestissimo is as fast as possible.

Interpreting a marking

These terms describe mood as much as speed. Consider the meter, note values and period when choosing a BPM.