

# Tempo



**Tempo** is otherwise referred to as **Pace** or **Speed** within music, these are the initial words and technical terms that will need to be learnt for the purpose of the exam.

**Tempo** refers to the speed of the pulse, and not necessarily to the speed of the individual notes within the pulse, when answering questions relating to tempo try to pick out the pulse by tapping your fingers together with the pulse or ‘on the beat’.

## General Tempo/Speed Descriptors

- **Largo** – Very slow & solemn - <60 bpm
- **Grave** – Very slow and solemn - <60 bpm
- **Adagio** – very slow – 60 bpm
- **Lento** – very slow – 60 bpm
- **Andante** – slow – walking speed – romantic stroll – 72 bpm
- **Moderato** – moderate – medium – going shopping – 100 bpm
- **Allegro** – fast – jog – 120 bpm
- **Presto** – very fast – 144+ bpm
- **Vivace** – very fast and furious – 144+ bpm

## Changes in Tempo/Speed

- **Accelerando** – Getting gradually quicker
- **Ritardando** – **Rit.** – Getting gradually slower
- **Ritenuto** – **Rit** – Getting gradually slower
- **Rallentando** – **Rall.** – Getting gradually slower
- **A Tempo** – Back to the original speed at the start of the piece.
- **Rubato** – small changes in speed at the performers discretion, slower and quicker.

In some of your answers you can use everyday English such as ‘the music gets faster’ however many of the questions using these terms will be multiple choice questions and as such will require you to know what you are choosing from.