

# Express Yourself

One of the unique things about a piano is its ability to express a wide range of expressions through changes in tempo (speed), dynamics (volume) and articulation (how notes are separated or connected). Even the range high or low) where you play or how you use the pedals can help create a mood. The piano can tell a story based on the different ways you play parts of a song. Check yourself on the terms below to see how much you know about some of the most common terms that tell us how to express a piece of music. Match each item by drawing a line between its name and the correct meaning or description. Answers are at the bottom of the page.



## A. Make a Connection

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Piano ( <i>p</i> )                        | A. Fast and lively        |
| 2. Forte ( <i>f</i> )                        | B. Gradually grow louder  |
| 3. Crescendo ( $\text{>}$ )                  | C. Smooth notes           |
| 4. Decrescendo ( $\text{<}$ )                | D. Emphasize a note       |
| 5. Largo                                     | E. Soft                   |
| 6. Allegro                                   | F. Slow and broad         |
| 7. Andante                                   | G. Moderate and graceful  |
| 8. Legato ( $\text{f} \text{---} \text{f}$ ) | H. Loud                   |
| 9. Staccato ( $\text{f} \text{ } \text{f}$ ) | I. Short, separated notes |
| 10. Accent ( $\text{>}$ )                    | J. Gradually grow softer  |

## B. Play It, Don't Say It

Put your knowledge of tempo, dynamics and articulation terms, symbols and marks to work. Find a partner and play with two, or divide your class into two teams. Copy the Expression Flash Card Set (find it at [www.ptg.org/learningcenter](http://www.ptg.org/learningcenter)) onto cardstock, cut out the cards and glue the front and back sides together (or make a two-sided copy). One player sits at the piano and demonstrates the tempo, dynamic or articulation item marked on the card that the other player holds up. Definitions are on the back of the card. Keep going until you miss one, then switch places. See if both players (or teams if you have a group) can make it through the whole deck of cards.



## C. Stories Alive!

Choose one of your favorite fairy tales or bedtime stories (like *The Three Little Pigs* or *The Hare and the Tortoise*). For each of the characters in the story, create a unique melody with just a few notes that you think represents that character. A wolf might have a loud, low sound (forte, accented). A tortoise could have a very slow, connected sound (largo, legato). Use all the different ways a piano can express itself to create a musical background for your story. Have someone read the story while you perform the music for your family or friends.

Make a Connection answers: 1-E, 2-H, 3-B, 4-J, 5-F, 6-A, 7-G, 8-C, 9-I, 10-D

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**Play It, Don't Say It**

*Card Front 1*

*p*

*f*



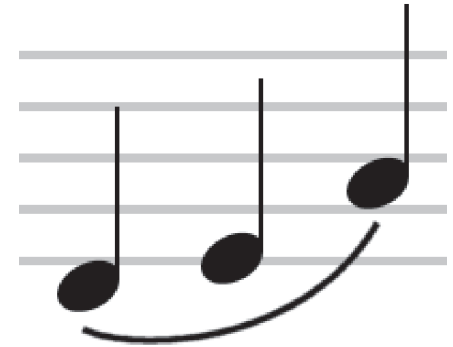
**Play It, Don't Say It**

*Card Front 2*

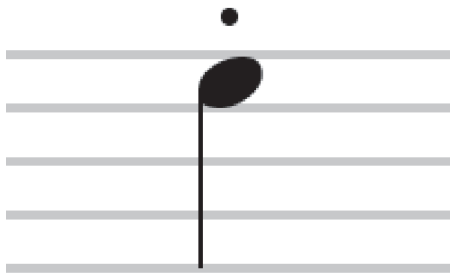
top



top



top



*mf*

**Play It, Don't Say It**

*Card Front 3*

*Largo*

*Allegro*

*Andante*

*Con brio*

*Doloroso*

*Marcia*

**Piano**  
**Soft**

**Forte**  
**Loud**

**Bass Clef**  
**Lower keys**

**Fermata**  
**Hold**

**Trill**  
**Alternate**  
**2 notes**

**Treble or**  
**G Clef**  
**Upper keys**

**Crescendo**

**Gradually  
louder**

**Decrescendo**

**or diminuendo  
Gradually  
softer**

**Legato**

**Smooth &  
connected**

**Staccato**

**Short,  
separate**

**Accent**

**Emphasize**

**Mezzoforte**

**Medium  
loud**

**Slow &  
Broad**

**Cheerful**

**Walking**

**Spirited**

**Sadly**

**March**