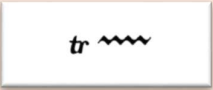







Grade 6 – 8 Orchestral Terms and Signs

The table below provides a comprehensive explanation of each orchestral term. For ABRSM exams, it is not necessary to give the full explanation of each term, and the bold selection provides a satisfactory answer for exams.

Arco	A direction to string players (e.g. violinist) to use the bow after a passage of pizzicato
Arco flautato	To bow with the point of the bow near the fingerboard to produce a flute-like sound on a string instrument. Harmonics are used when the sign 'o' is written above the note.
à2, à due	Two instruments that normally play separate parts (e.g. 2 oboes or 2 flutes) are to play in unison .
Avec les sourdines (Fr.) (Avec les sourd.)	With the mutes
Chevalet	The bridge of a string instrument
Chiusa, chiuso	An indication of a stopped note on a horn.
Colla parte	A direction to an accompanist to keep in time and rhythm with the instrumental soloist (e.g. a violinist)
Colla voce	A direction to an accompanist to keep in time and rhythm with the solo singer
Col pedale (Con ped.)	Depress the sustaining (right) pedal of the piano
Con sordini (Con Sord.)	With the mutes.
Cuivré	To force the tone of a horn by blowing hard when the hand is pushed well inside the bell of the instrument.
Dämpfer (Ger.)	A mute
Detaché	A type of broad detached bowing to produce staccato on a string instrument (e.g. violin).
Divisi (div.)	A direction to string players to divide into 2 (or more) groups when the orchestral string parts are written in double (or sometimes more) notes so that each group plays a part instead of in unison.
Double stopping	Bowing on two strings at the same time to produce a two-part harmony. The two strings are either one stopped or one open or both open.
Durété	Hard tone
Étouffes	Damped
Flam	Rhythm of a side drum
Flatterzunge (Flzg)	Flutter-tonguing
Flautando, flautato	The production of flute-like sound from a string instrument either by bowing near the fingerboard with the point of the bow or by the use of harmonics.
Gestopft	An instruction to produce a stopped note on a horn by more or less covering the bell of the instrument with the hand.
Glissando (gliss.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Slide a finger on a string of any string instrument (portamento) ii) Quick sweep of the fingers over the strings of a harp iii) A quick change of the tension of the drum head of a pedal timpani
Laisser vibrer	A direction to a cymbalist to let the sound continue vibrating by holding the two metal plates apart after clashing them together.

Martelé	A direction to string players (e.g. violinists) to use the point of the bow to hit the strings with short sharp blows resulting in percussive or hammered tone.
Mit Dämpfer (ger.)	With the mutes
Muta D in G	A direction to a timpanist to change the tuning of the drums from D to G.
Muta in	A direction to wind players to change from one instrument to another in the same family. (Fag. 4, Muta in C Fag. 2 means 4 th bassoon change to 2 nd double bassoon)
Mute	A device used by string and brass players when they want to soften the tone of their instruments. For the strings, a clip is fixed on the bridge of the instruments; for brass, a plug which is shaped like a pear or a cone is inserted into the bell of the instrument.
Naturale	A direction to string players to return to the normal bowing position after bowing near the bridge.
Ohne Dämpfer (Ger.)	Remove (without) the mutes.
Ôtez les sourdines (Fr.) (Ôtez les sourd.)	Remove (without) the mutes.
Pavillon en l'air	A direction to a brass player to raise the bell of the instrument so that the sound can be prominent.
Pizzicato (pizz.)	A direction to string players to pluck the strings instead of using the bows.
Portamento	A direction to string players to slide the finger from one note to another instead of playing them with different fingers.
Prés de la table	A direction to a harp player to pluck the strings near the soundboard in order to produce a more metallic tone.
Roll	Rapid succession of notes on a drum produced by quick alternating blows .
Saltando, saltato	A direction to string players to make the bows spring just as in spiccato.
Sautille	A type of bowing on a violin, viola and cello in which the bow bounces lightly off the string – a lighter type of spiccato.
Scordato	A term to disconnect the snare in a side drum.
Scordatura	Abnormal tuning of a string instrument in order to produce a special chordal effect and a change of tonal quality.
Sec.	An indication to a percussionist (esp. cymbalist) to stop the sound of his instrument immediately after playing .
Senza corda	Without the snare i.e. to remove the snare of a side drum
Senza pedale (Senza ped.)	Do not use the sustaining (right) pedal of the piano.
Senza sordini (Senza sord.)	A direction to strings and brass players to remove the mutes after having used them.
Son bouchés	An indication for the notes to be stopped on a horn.
Son étouffés	A direction to a harp player to stop the sound immediately with the hands.
Sordini (plural)	Mutes
Sordino	A mute
Sourdine (Fr.) (Sourd.)	Mutes
Spiccato (Spicc.)	A direction to string players to make the bows bounce on the strings to produce staccato.

Sul C	On the C string.
Sul G / G-Saite	On the G string.
Sul la touche	On the fingerboard.
Sul ponticello (Sul Pont.)	To bow near/as close as possible to/on the bridge
Table	Soundboard.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Timpani – drum roll / rapid reiteration of the same note ii) String / woodwind / brass instruments – trill / shake
	Tremolo / rapid reiteration of the same note / rapid alteration of bow strokes
	Play each printed quaver as 2 semiquavers
Tre corde	Release the left pedal of the piano.
Tutti	A direction for everyone in the orchestra to play together after a solo passage.
Una corda	Depress the left pedal of the piano.
Unisono (Unis.)	An indication to orchestral players to play the same notes after a divisi passage.
	Down bow
	Up bow
'+' above the notes in the horn part (stopped note)	An indication to a horn player to push his hand well inside the bell of the instrument to hand stop the sound.
'o' above the notes in the horn part	Indicates the end of stopped notes on a horn.
	For strings - indicates that the note is a harmonic note and the sound is produced by lightly touching a certain part of the string. The effect produced is like the sound of a flute.
'0' above a note in the string part	Indicates that the note is to be played on the open string without the pressure of a finger. <i>*Note that open strings are usually played on the lowest string/note that the instrument can play though.</i>