

Articulation Marks

[Articulations](#) (or [accents](#)) specify how individual notes are to be performed within a phrase or passage. They can be fine-tuned by combining more than one such symbol over or under a note. They may also appear in conjunction with phrasing marks listed above.



[Staccato](#)

This indicates that the note is to be played shorter than notated, usually half the value, the rest of the metric value is then silent. Staccato marks may appear on notes of any value, shortening their performed duration without speeding the music itself.



[Staccatissimo](#)

Indicates a longer silence after the note (as described above), making the note very short. Usually applied to quarter notes or shorter. (In the past, this marking's meaning was more ambiguous: it sometimes was used interchangeably with staccato, and sometimes indicated an accent and not staccato. These usages are now almost defunct, but still appear in some scores.)



[Accent](#)

The note is played louder or with a harder attack than surrounding unaccented notes. May appear on notes of any duration.



[Tenuto](#)

This symbol has several meanings: It may indicate that a note be played for its full value, or slightly longer; it may indicate a slight dynamic emphasis; or it may indicate a separate attack on a note. It may be combined with a staccato dot to indicate a slight detachment ("[portato](#)" or "[mezzo staccato](#)").



[Marcato](#)

The note is played somewhat louder or more forcefully than a note with a regular accent mark (open horizontal wedge).



[Left-hand pizzicato](#) or [Stopped note](#)

A note on a stringed instrument where the string is plucked with the left hand (the hand that usually stops the strings) rather than bowed. On the [horn](#), this accent indicates a "stopped note" (a note played with the stopping hand shoved further into the bell of the horn).



[Natural harmonic](#) or [Open note](#)

On a stringed instrument, denotes that a natural [harmonic](#) (also called **flageolet**) is to be played. On a valved brass instrument, denotes that the note is to be played "open" (without lowering any valve, or without mute). In organ music, this denotes that a pedal note is to be played with the heel.



[Fermata](#) (Pause)

An indefinitely-sustained note, chord, or rest. Usually appears over all parts at the same metrical location in a piece, to show a halt in [tempo](#). It can be placed above or below the note.



Up bow or Sull'arco

On a bowed string instrument, the note is played while drawing the bow upward. On a plucked string instrument played with a [plectrum](#) or [pick](#) (such as a [guitar](#) played [pickstyle](#) or a [mandolin](#)), the note is played with an upstroke. In organ notation, this marking indicates to play the pedal note with the toe.



Down bow or Giù arco

Like *sull'arco*, except the bow is drawn downward. On a plucked string instrument played with a [plectrum](#) or [pick](#) (such as a [guitar](#) played [pickstyle](#) or a [mandolin](#)), the note is played with a downstroke. Also note in organ notation, this marking indicates to play the pedal note with the heel.