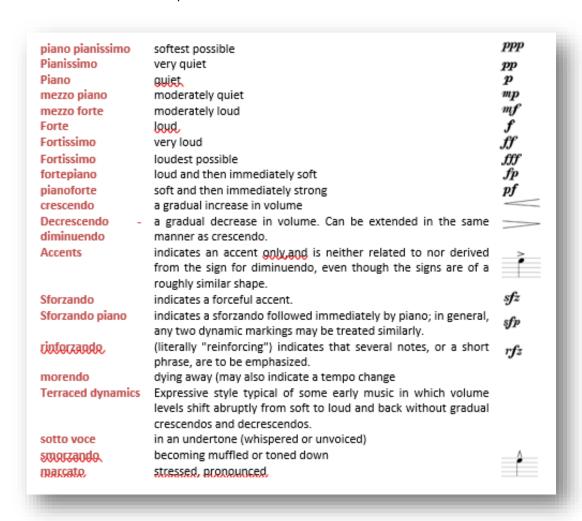
DYNAMICS

In music, dynamics means how loud or how quiet the music is. When music is written down, the dynamics are represented by letters, which stand for Italian words for the dynamic levels. Forte means loud and piano means quiet.

The instrument, commonly called the "piano", was originally called the "pianoforte" because it could play dynamics, unlike earlier popular keyboard instruments such as harpsichord and spinet, which could only play forte (loud) or piano (soft), but no crescendo (getting louder) or decrescendo (getting quieter).

Hence the term terraced dynamics, which is a characteristic feature of baroque music and means a sudden change in tempo or volume without gradual crescendos and decrescendos. Dynamics are relative and do not relate to a specific volume level.



Dynamics are an important way of conveying the mood of a piece and your use of dynamics is a marked element of your performance. Composers use dynamics to change the mood. Sometimes a piece will have very few dynamics and others will have many changes.