Tempo can be defined as the pace or speed at which a section of music is played. Tempos, or tempi, help the ………………….. to convey a feeling of either intensity or relaxation. We can think of the tempo as the speedometer of the music. Typically, the ……………………. of the music is measured in beats per minute, or BPM. For example, if you listen to the second hand on a clock, you will hear 60 ticks - or in …………………………… terms, 60 beats - in one minute.

The tempo can have virtually any …………………….. of beats per minute. The lower the number of beats per minute, the slower the tempo will feel. Inversely, the……………………. the number of beats per minute, the faster the tempo will be. You can think of it like a speed limit. The higher the number of the speed ……..…………., the faster you are allowed to drive.

While car speeds are dictated with street signs, tempos are often indicated with an …………………. word. These words, called tempo markings, can appear anywhere in a ……………………… of music, but most often, **they** are seen either at the beginning of a piece of music or at the beginning of a section within a piece of music. The tempo markings represent a spectrum of tempi. Let's look at some of the most common tempi and their ………………………….. within the spectrum of 20 beats per minute to 208 beats per minute.

Starting with one of the ……………………….. tempos, *grave* is extremely slow and solemn at 20 to 40 beats per minute. Playing or listening to a song at this pace can be ……………………………., as the pulse of the song is literally about every two seconds. This does make its name easy to remember, though, as you'd basically have to have recently risen from the grave to move that ………………………………….

*Largo* is the next bump up the speedometer with a pace of 40 to 50 beats per minute. At around the same …………………….., we also have *lento,* which falls between 40 to 60 beats per minute. The difference between **the two** is that *lento* is generally slow, and *largo* is …………………………. for more broadly-played music. *Largo* is usually reserved for thick, bold or even majestic sounds, like the feeling you might get when approaching a king's castle. *Lento*, on the other hand, is used to denote slow music in general and tends not to be so thick or …………………………………..

One more notch up the tempo ladder is *adagio*. *Adagio* checks in at 51 to 60 beats per minute and literally means 'at ease.' A very ……………………………… tempo is *andante*. *Andante* is meant to be at walking pace and generally registers from 60 to 80 beats per minute. Remember that these tempi were ………………………….. before stressed-out Wall Street bigwigs and corporate movers and shakers were moving so quickly. *Andante* can also be remembered as near one's resting ………………………….. rate.

At the middle of the spectrum is *moderato*. *Moderato*, as you can probably guess, is at a moderate pace and is played at 81 to 90 beats per minute. From here, we start moving into faster tempi. *Allegretto* is………….…………… quick at 91 to 104 beats per minute. Its slightly quicker brother, *allegro*, is a very commonly-used tempo, partly because of its happy, quick pace and ……………………………. because the range of BPM is so large: its range is from 105 to 132 beats per minute. Many commercials will use this tempo because **it** is ……………………………. higher than the average heart rate and therefore gives a sense of excitement.

*Vivace* livens the pace at 132 beats per minute and above, while *presto …………………….* a sprinter's heart at a quick 168 to 177 beats per minute. Finally, *prestissimo* is the territory of the cheetah at an extremely fast 178 to 208 BPM. For those of you keeping track, that's a little more than ……………………………..beats per second!