EXPRESSION MARKINGS

The most basic expression markings are articulation symbols. These appear above or below the note head and tell you how to play individual notes:

Symbol	Name	How to play
	staccato	tongue and separate each note
	tenuto	lightly tongue and connect each note
	slur	tongue first note only
> > >	accent	tongue with stronger attack and air
	marcato	tongue with very strong attack and air, separate notes
f f f	sforzando	tongue with very strong attack and air
fp fp	forte piano	start the note loudly and immediately get soft
•	fermata	hold note longer than its value or until director cuts off

There are also a number of Italian terms that composers use to tell you how to play a passage:

leggiero	lightly	pesante	heavily
cantabile	like singing	maestoso	majestically
legato	smoothly	subito (sub.)	suddenly
molto	much, very	poco	little, slightly
simile (sim.)	continue with the same articulation		