

The PE Hub Glossary - Gymnastics

Apparatus – The different equipment that can be used to perform actions and **sequences** on in gymnastics. Examples include a tabletop and benches.

Asymmetry – An action where both sides of the body are different. For example, a **balance** on 1 leg.

Balance – The holding of a static gymnastic position which uses good core strength to minimise ‘wobbliness’. The performer should be able to hold the balance for between 5-8 seconds. Examples of balance include an arabesque and a front support position.

Box top/table – A piece of **apparatus** with a large flat top ideal for balancing on and vaulting over. Tables come in various heights and are padded.

Canon – Movements or phrases that are repeated by different gymnasts, but with a time delay between each repetition. It creates a cascading effect, with performers executing the same movement sequence one after another, often overlapping in time.

Composition – the design and arrangement of a routine or performance. It involves strategically selecting and organising gymnastics skills, movements, and transitions to create a cohesive and engaging presentation.

Compositional ideas – Different elements that can be included in the **composition** of a gymnastics **sequence**. These include different **pathways** when **travelling**, the timing of a sequence, the relationship between different performers (for example, **mirroring** and **matching**) and working at different **levels**.

Counter Balance – where two or more individuals work together to create a balanced position through opposing forces. It involves one gymnast providing a counteracting force or weight to another gymnast, enabling them to achieve a stable and controlled position.

Crash mats – Commonly used when children are learning higher level flight work such as vaulting and landing from spring boards. Crash mats can be used to prevent injury from falls when learning new skills.

Extension – commonly occurs in joints such as the elbow, knee, hip, shoulder, and spine. For example, elbow extension: Straightening the arm from a bent position,

increasing the angle between the upper arm and the forearm or keeping fingers and toes straight during an action.

Flexibility – This is the range of movement somebody has around a joint. Being more flexible allows a performer to perform a wider range of actions with greater control. So, for example, how high can somebody lift their leg in the air is the flexibility in their hip joint.

Flight – An action where a performer is in the air completely unaided with no contact at all with the floor or apparatus. This can be done through jumps, either from the floor or off the **apparatus**.

Floor mats – Used to prevent injury when rolling, or dismounting from apparatus. Floor mats are thin compact mats without much give, so cannot be used to prevent falls.

Fluency - Is when an action or sequence is performed with smooth transitions without noticeable pauses. So, for example, moving from a balance into a roll smoothly.

Landing – Position of a performer when they finish a flight action e.g. jumping off a box top to the floor.

Leap - a dynamic and graceful movement where a gymnast jumps off one foot, extends their legs, and lands on the other foot. It is a fundamental skill commonly seen in floor exercise routines, beam routines, and some vault variations.

Levels – The height that an action is performed. These are low-level (on or close to the floor), medium-level (standing) or high-level (using **flight** or on **apparatus**).

Matching – When two or more performers perform the same action exactly the same way.

Mirroring - When two or more performers perform the same action as if there is a mirror line between them, So for example, one person raises their right arm, and the other raises their left.

Patch balances – A **balance** performed on a large part of the body, such as the legs, back and stomach.

Pathway – The route a performer takes whilst travelling across the floor.

Pike position – A **shape** that can be used during gymnastic actions. It involves bending forward at the waist whilst keeping the legs straight.

Point Balances – A **balance** performed on small body parts, such as feet, hands and toes.

Rolls – A complete rotation of the body around a point whilst the body stays on the ground. For example, a forward roll.

Ropes – Apparatus used for hanging, climbing or balancing.

Sequence – When two or more actions are performed one after another with fluency, e.g. a roll into a balance into a travel.

Shape – The position of the body when performing an action. There are different types of shapes used commonly in gymnastics, such as **pike, straight, straddle, tuck and star position**.

Springboard - is an apparatus used to provide additional height and propulsion for gymnasts during various events, particularly for vaulting. It is a rectangular with a padded top surface.

Star position – A **shape** that can be used during gymnastic actions. It involves keeping arms, legs and back straight, with arms and legs extended and held out away from the body.

Straddle position – A **shape** that can be used during gymnastic actions. It involves keeping the legs straight and set wide apart, creating as close to a 180° angle as possible. E.g. forward roll into straddle sit.

Straight position – A **shape** that can be used during gymnastic actions. It involves keeping the whole body in a straight line, with arms raised straight above the head, touching the ears.

Symmetry – An action where both sides of the body are the same. For example, a handstand **balance**.

Take-off - The step that makes somebody leave the ground when taking **flight**.

Travel – The way a performer moves across the floor in gymnastics. Examples of types of travel include a roll and a cartwheel.

Tuck position – A shape that can be used during gymnastic actions. It involves bending at the knees and bringing them up to the chest.

Turns – Rotating the body while it is moving. For example, performing a quarter, half or full turn in the air whilst jumping.

Twists – Rotating the body while either one or both feet stay on the floor. For example, performing a quarter, half or full pivot.

Unison – The timing of a sequence when it is performed where the actions are performed by all performers at the same time.

Wall bars – Made from wood or metal wall bars are used for hanging and climbing skills and are usually stored against the wall of the gymnasium or hall.

Weight on Hands – An action in gymnastics that requires a performer to place their hands on the floor or **apparatus** and shift their weight from their feet. This means all the performer's weight is on their hands. It is seen in actions such as bunny hops or vaulting.