

# **Syllabication**

## **Syllabication**

The ability to segment words into syllables (a letter or group of letters that forms a pronunciation unit), which is a form of phonemic awareness that can be useful when encountering unknown words.

### **Open Syllable**

A syllable ending in a vowel (CV).

### **Closed Syllable**

A syllable ending with a consonant (CVC).

## Recommendations for Syllabication Instruction

- First, students should learn how to effectively divide words into syllables. This can be done through worksheets and activities that stress syllabication rules (see **word attack generalizations**). Some basic syllable rules are also provided at: [www.english.glendale.cc.ca.us/syllables.html](http://www.english.glendale.cc.ca.us/syllables.html)
- After learning how to divide words into syllables, students must apply their phonic analysis skills. Activities, such as **Separated-Syllables Read** and **Related-Syllables Read** emphasize the difference between open and closed syllables.
- Have children use **Stomping, Clapping, Tapping, and Snapping** with rhyming poetry, songs, chants, or raps to help them hear the syllables in a word.
- **Clap and Count Practice Sheet** is a computer-based activity, in which the students say the word, clap and count for each beat, and click on the words with one syllable. [www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/elementary/palmasola/CandCSh1.htm](http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/elementary/palmasola/CandCSh1.htm)
- **Multisyllabic Words Manipulation** and **Syllable Scoop** help students practice dividing words into syllables.
- **Reviewing syllabication rules 1 through 10** and **Reviewing syllabication rules 1 through 5** are worksheets that provide each student with the rules of syllabication and practice using each rule. *This activity may be used as an assessment tool*, but with caution because the rules are presented to each student. As an assessment tool, it would only show if the student can use the rules, not if they actually know the rules.
- Use **Whole-Class** and **Small-Group Activities** and have the class work together in learning to identify syllables in stories.

## Word-Attack Generalizations for Syllabication

- Syllabication Rule 1: A word has as many syllables as vowel sounds; remember a final e is usually silent.
- Syllabication Rule 2: Whenever two consonants represent one sound (digraphs th, ch, sh, ph, ck) they stay together in syllabication.
- Syllabication Rule 3: When r follows a vowel, it is attached to the vowel in syllabication.
- Syllabication Rule 4: A compound word is made up of two or more smaller words. Syllable divisions occur between the words (birth/day, mail/man) and at other places as needed (bas/ket/ball).
- Syllabication Rule 5: The common word beginnings (ad-, al-, com-, can-, de-, dis-, en-, ex-, in-, im-, per-, and un-) form the first syllable of the word.
- Syllabication Rule 6: Word endings (-cal, -ed, -ful, -ish, -ing, -ment, -ness, -tive, -sive, -ture, -tion, -sion, -ty, -ly, -fy, -ity, -less) usually are divided from the rest of the word forming the final syllable. (Exceptions: the ed forms a new syllable only if the verb root ends in d or t).
- Syllabication Rule 7: When le ends a word it forms a syllable with the preceding consonant.
- Syllabication Rule 8: When two consonants or a consonant and a blend come between two vowels, the syllable division is between the consonants or the consonant and blend.

Lesiak, J., & Bradley-Johnson, S. (1983). *Reading assessment for placement and programming*. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher.

### Separated-Syllables Read

Write words on the chalkboard syllable by syllable, leaving enough space between the word parts for students to see syllable divisions. Ask students to use their knowledge of common syllable spelling patterns (e.g., closed syllables, open syllables, consonant + -le) to read each word. Model blending as necessary by discussing syllable generalizations. When there's a question about a syllable's pronunciation be sure to have students explain why they pronounced it as they did. It is critical that students be able to verbalize all six syllable-spelling patterns. When they've read each syllable in a word, have students read the word at a natural pace (Gillingham and Stillman, 1997).

fan tas tic      fa ble              ab sent              pump kin              ad ven ture      croc o dile

### Related-Syllables Read

Write on the chalkboard a series of related open and closed syllables such as re, rem, em. Have students use their knowledge of open and closed syllables to read each.

*Alternative:* Create syllable lists using all prefixes, all suffixes, all consonant + -le, or some other grouping.

re      rem    em              lo      lom    om  
fi      fim    im              bo      bot    ot

### Multisyllabic Words Manipulation

Divide words you've selected from upcoming reading selections into syllables. Write each syllable on a note card. Display the syllables that make up one of the words in jumbled order (e.g., *tas fan tic*). Have students arrange the syllables to form the word. When necessary, discuss the pronunciation and spelling generalizations of any confusing syllables.

### Syllable Scoop

On a reproducible master, write 20 multisyllabic words from an upcoming story. Have students work with a partner to draw an arc, or to scoop with their finger, under each syllable as they read each word aloud. Then have them code each syllable by type (e.g., draw a macron over all open syllables with long vowel sounds, circle all the prefixes).

*Alternative:* Have students code a specific type of syllable- circle all consonant + le syllables or underline all closed syllables- and then read the words. Visually identifying the common syllable-spelling pattern makes reading the entire word easier.

## **Stomping, Clapping, Tapping, and Snapping Sounds**

### **Purpose:**

Helping children hear syllables in words enables them to segment sounds. This knowledge can be used in myriad ways to improve writing/spelling, increase awareness of letter combinations used to produce speech sounds, and apply knowledge of onsets and rimes. All these skills and more enable students to sound out words in print more effectively. For ages, teachers have found success in helping children hear syllables by clapping them out when reading nursery rhymes, such as “Mar-y had a lit-tle lamb, lit-tle, lamb...”

### **Materials:**

We prefer to use rhyming poetry, songs, chants, or raps for these syllabication activities. Use an enlarged version produced for an overhead projector, a big book version, or simply rewrite the text on large chart paper using a colored ink marker.

### **Procedure:**

First, model read the enlarged text aloud in a normal cadence for your students. Reread the selection at a normal cadence, inviting students to join in as they wish. Next, explain that you will reread the selection, but this time you will clap (or snap, or stomp, and so on) the syllables in the words. (Note: If you have not already explained the concept of syllables, you will need to do so at this point.) Finally, invite students to clap (or make whatever gesture or sound that you have chosen) as you reread the passage.



## Reviewing syllabication rules 1 through 5

Directions:

Read the rules. Write each word, dividing it into syllables. Then write the number of the rule that you used to help you.

Rules:

1. A one-syllable word is never divided.
2. Divide a compound word between the words that make up the compound word.
3. When a word has a suffix with a vowel sound in it, divide the word between the base word and the suffix.
4. When a word has a prefix, divide the word between the prefix and the base word.
5. When two or more consonants come between two vowels in a word, the word is usually divided between the first two consonants.

- |             |       |               |       |
|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| 1. airplane | _____ | 13. quickly   | _____ |
| 2. surprise | _____ | 14. hungry    | _____ |
| 3. homeless | _____ | 15. hardness  | _____ |
| 4. balloon  | _____ | 16. displease | _____ |
| 5. smallest | _____ | 17. slowly    | _____ |
| 6. monkey   | _____ | 18. safe      | _____ |
| 7. donkey   | _____ | 19. curtain   | _____ |
| 8. helping  | _____ | 20. harmful   | _____ |
| 9. outdoors | _____ | 21. backyard  | _____ |
| 10. sudden  | _____ | 22. churches  | _____ |
| 11. later   | _____ | 23. railroad  | _____ |
| 12. refresh | _____ | 24. circus    | _____ |



## Whole-Class Activity

### *Literature*

Read *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney.

### *Preparation*

Place four green towels on the floor approximately 1 foot apart.

### *Activity*

“We just read a book about two rabbits. Real rabbits don’t walk or run, they hop or jump.”

“For our next activity each of you will get to pretend to be a rabbit. I have four green towels on the floor with a little bit of space between each of the towels. We are going to pretend the green towels are bushes. When it’s your turn to be a rabbit, I’ll tell you a word. You say the word that I say. Tell me how many syllables are in the word. Clap as you say the word to figure out how many syllables there are. Next, you get to jump into the bushes, once for each syllable in the word. If there are two syllables in the word (e.g., ‘birthday’), you will jump to the first bush (for the first syllable, ‘birth’), then to the second bush (for the second syllable, ‘day’). If there are four syllables, you will jump four times all the way to the last bush.”

### *Words for whole-class activity:*

snowflake (2)  
tablespoon (3)  
announcement (3)  
grandpa (2)  
mailbox (2)  
flag (1)  
bookkeeper (3)  
graduation (4)  
tugboat (2)  
grandmother (3)  
fisherman (3)

## Small-Group Activity

### *Preparation for the Bunny Rabbit Race:*

Choose as many colors of construction paper as you have children in your small group. Cut 10 circles out of each color. Arrange each set of circles in a straight line next to each other on a table or floor. This will be the rabbit race track. Place a bunny cutout on top of the first circle of each color, and place a string or piece of yarn straight across between the ninth and tenth circles of each color. The string is the finish line.

Copy and cut up picture cards for small group, mix up, and place face down in front of teacher at table or on floor.

### *Activity:*

Explain to the children that each of them will be a bunny who is running a race. They will take turns drawing a card from the pile. Each child will say the word on the picture and then figure out how many syllables are in the word. The child will then move his or her bunny forward one hop for each syllable in the word. The first bunny to cross the finish line at the end wins. You can repeat this game as often as time and the children's attention permits.

If a child is having difficulty determining the number of syllables in words, you can clap with the child as he or she says the word. You may also wish to say the word for the child, pausing slightly between each syllable as a hint for him or her to clap. You might practice putting up a finger each time a syllable is said in a word; then at the end of the word the child can count the number of fingers that are up to determine the number of syllables.

## **Informal Assessments of Syllabication**

**Speed Drills**

**Advanced Word and Sentence Structure**

**Syllables in words containing vowel digraphs**

### **Speed Drills**

These quick-paced, timed drills are fun. One drill contains 20 common syllables in random order. The other contains words with a specific syllable-spelling pattern (consonant + le). Before timing students, give them a chance to practice reading the syllables or words on the drill. Then, give them one minute to read as many syllables or words on the drill. This must be done one-on-one with each student. I suggest selecting five students on each day to test. On a copy of the drill, mark the syllables or words the students mispronounce. Have student's count the number of syllables or words read correctly and mark this on a progress. Students find it highly motivating to track their own progress.

### Sample Syllable Speed Drill

ing	un	ture	ex	dis	com	un	im	ter	ment
er	der	ing	dis	un	ver	er	ble	ble	tion
ter	num	ment	ver	ing	bout	der	ex	er	ple
tion	ble	er	ple	ple	re	dis	num	re	est
re	ment	bout	re	ble	der	ing	com	un	ver
ver	ture	un	ble	er	em	bout	tion	ing	ture
ex	est	ter	im	num	ex	ter	re	fi	com
bout	dis	com	tion	est	tion	ture	ver	dis	ex
com	im	est	num	ter	ment	ment	fi	der	bout
ple	fi	der	fi	ture	fi	est	ple	num	im

### Sample Consonant + le Word Speed Drill

Bubble	circle	giggle	pebble	steeple	wiggle	fable	middle	sample
Battle	crinkle	handle	little	sparkle	puddle	bottle	steeple	rattle
angle	fable	purple	shingle	stubble	uncle	angle	marble	needle
bridle	cattle	fizzle	middle	rattle	wrinkle	title	apple	uncle
apple	eagle	noble	simple	struggle	title	cattle	gentle	pebble
ankle	fiddle	kettle	puzzle	puddle	saddle	eagle	rumble	vehicle
double	maple	jungle	rumble	temple	vehicle	circle	giggle	purple
bottle	dazzle	kindle	mantle	sprinkle	bubble	fiddle	tumble	jungle
bugle	marble	sample	single	tumble	double	bundle	maple	little
bundle	gentle	muzzle	needle	settle	battle	handle	kettle	bridle

## Elementary School-Advanced Word & Sentence Structure

**Goal:** The student is able to syllabicate words ending in le and ed by using the rules of syllabication which apply these endings.

**Objectives:**

The student is able to identify that in words ending with a consonant plus le the syllable division occurs before that consonant (handle- han/dle).

The student is able to identify that in words ending in ckle the le stands alone as a final syllable (pick/le).

The student is able to identify that in a word ending in ted or ded the ed is a separate syllable.

## Elementary School: Advanced Word & Sentence Structure - Goal 2

### Pre-Test

Directions: Read each example. Choose the correct answer.

1. Which word is correctly divided?
  - A. Lit/tle
  - B. Li/ttle
  - C. Litt/le
2. Which word is correctly divided?
  - A. tic/kle
  - B. tick/le
  - C. ti/ckl
3. Which word is correctly divided?
  - A. bai/ted
  - B. bait/ed
  - C. ba/ited
4. Which word is correctly divided?
  - A. a/pple
  - B. app/le
  - C. ap/ple
5. Which word is correctly divided?
  - A. buck/le
  - B. bu/ckle
  - C. buc/kle
6. Which word is correctly divided?
  - A. roo/ted
  - B. ro/oted
  - C. root/ed
7. Which word is correctly divided?
  - A. marb/le
  - B. mar/ble
  - C. m/arble
8. Which word is correctly divided?
  - A. cra/ckle
  - B. cr/ackle
  - C. crack/le
9. Which word is correctly divided?
  - A. want/ed
  - B. wa/nted
  - C. wan/ted

\*\*\* Post-Test same questions, but in different order.



## Elementary School-Advanced Word & Sentence Structure Goal 2

### Diagnostic Assessment Key

<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1	2.01	A
2	2.02	B
3	2.03	B
4	2.01	C
5	2.02	A
6	2.03	C
7	2.01	B
8	2.02	C
9	2.03	A

## Syllables in words containing vowel digraphs

Directions:

Read each word. On the first line, write the number of vowels you see. Say each word. On the second line, write the number of vowel sounds you hear. On the third line write the number of syllables in the word.

Vowels	Vowel	Number
You	Sounds	of
See	You	Syllables
	Hear	

autumn  
shook  
bread  
weigh  
broom  
sweater  
bookcase  
school  
reindeer  
spool  
seize  
feather  
bedspread  
weighted  
woodpecker  
laundry  
woodpile  
instead  
neighborly  
naughty  
headline  
shook  
p

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Template: C:\Documents and Settings\helpdesk\Application  
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot  
Title: Phonics  
Subject:  
Author: Bill Biniszkiewicz  
Keywords:  
Comments:  
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