

# Syllabication Types & Rules

A Structural Approach for Decoding Longer Words



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## Rate Your Own Knowledge (pre)

- Use as Pre- and Posttest
- I am confident in my understanding of syllable types. 1 2 3 4 5 (least to most)
- I am confident in my understanding of rules for dividing syllables. 1 2 3 4 5
- I am confident in teaching students how to divide and read two-syllable words. 1 2 3 4 5
- I am confident in teaching students how to divide and read words with more than two syllables. 1 2 3 4 5

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## Measuring Students' Knowledge

- Pre and post-test with reading two- and multi-syllable words
- Found in Participants' Packet
- Can split into two parts

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## Why Syllabication Knowledge Is So Important

- By 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 50% of reading is multi-syllabic words.
- Understanding syllable types can help students to accurately identify patterns in words.
- Knowledge of syllable types can serve as an organizational and visual tool for decoding unknown words.
- Syllable type assists the reader in determining the vowel sound.
- Syllabication teaches students to read unknown words, increases their sight-word vocabulary, and aids in learning how to spell words (Torgesen, 2004; Moats, 2001; Curtis & Longo, 1999).

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## Why Syllabication Knowledge Is So Important (2)

### 3<sup>rd</sup> grade “wall”, 4<sup>th</sup> grade “slump

THEN: Jeanne Chall first defined the **fourth-grade** reading **slump** in 1983 as the time when students fall behind in reading. The premise was that the **slump** in reading occurs because of the change in academic language required to read **grade**-level content texts.

NOW: What often happens to dyslexic students in the 3rd grade is that they're unable to make the leap between simple reading of single syllable phonics words to new lower frequency multiple syllabic words that that infuse 3rd and 4th grade texts.

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## What is a Syllable?

- What is a syllable? – unit of spoken language
- Each syllable has one vowel sound (not necessarily just one vowel letter)
- The number of times you hear a vowel in a word is the number of syllables in that word.
- Syllables are not the same as phonemes or letter sounds. For example, “chat” has 3 phonemes but only one syllable.

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## How Can Learning Syllabication Skills Help Our Dyslexic Students?

- More than 80% of words in English are multi-syllabic.
- It is much easier to read a new, unfamiliar word in chunks than to try to sound out all the letters in one long, continuous string. This is because we need to hold onto the sounds in short term memory as we blend the word together before we can recognize it.
- Chunks are easier to hold on to than smaller bits of information.
- It is easier and more accurate to spell a long word if you try to spell it in chunks of syllables rather than trying to remember all the letters separately.

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## Phonological Awareness of Syllables

- Students must be able to determine the number of syllables in a spoken word before learning about syllable types and rules.
- Show students how to listen for syllables (jaw drop, “beat” or clap )
- Practice by saying a number of words with 1, 2, 3+ syllables until students can identify the number in each.
- Ex: (Read) some, matches, cucumber, ocean, relax, time, possible, inexpensive, several

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## 6 Syllable Types

- **R** = r-controlled syllable (der, mar)
- **E** = “magic e” syllable (rive, fuse)
- **V** = vowel team syllable (teer, tain)
- **L** = consonant+ *le* syllable (cle, tle)
- **O** = open syllable (long vowel) (mo, ri)
- **C** = closed syllable (short vowel) (mod, riv)

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## Practice with Syllable Types

- |        |      |      |
|--------|------|------|
| • ca   | sim  | per  |
| • fle  | mo   | rel  |
| • tar  | gle  | fute |
| • tee  | fur  | boo  |
| • vice | cue  | ple  |
| • mag  | pose | tu   |

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## Answer Key

- |                   |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| • <b>ca</b> (O)   | • <b>sim</b> (C)  | • <b>per</b> (R)  |
| • <b>fle</b> (L)  | • <b>mo</b> (O)   | • <b>rel</b> (C)  |
| • <b>tar</b> (R)  | • <b>gle</b> (L)  | • <b>fute</b> (E) |
| • <b>tee</b> (V)  | • <b>fur</b> (R)  | • <b>boo</b> (V)  |
| • <b>vice</b> (E) | • <b>cue</b> (V)  | • <b>ple</b> (L)  |
| • <b>mag</b> (C)  | • <b>pose</b> (E) | • <b>tu</b> (O)   |

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## Syllable Division Rules 1 - 3

- **1. Compound Words:** Divide between the words (cow/boy)
- **2. Prefix/Suffix:** Divide between the root and the prefix/suffix. (im/press, live/ly)
- **3. Consonant + le:** Keep a consonant with the *le*. (bun/dle) Words with *ck* divide after the *k*. (crack/le)

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## Syllable Division Rules 4 - 6

### 4. VC/CV and VCCCV:

Divide between two consonants. (mag/net)

Do not divide consonants that go together  
(blends and digraphs - ath/lete)

### 5. VCV:

Divide after the first vowel to get the long vowel sound.

(pi/lot) 60% of VCV words

Divide after the consonant to get the short vowel sound.

(cab/in) 40% of VCV words

### 6. V/V: Divide between vowels that do not form digraphs or diphthongs. (ru/in)

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## Syllabication Routine - Short Words

1. Find the vowels, mark the vowels with a 'v'.
2. Find all the consonants between the vowels, mark each consonant with a 'c'.
3. Ask the student to identify how many syllables are in the word.
4. Look for blends and digraphs—digraphs will always act as a unit and stay together, while blends may or may not.
5. Look at the pattern and divide the word.
6. Identify each syllable type to determine how to pronounce it.
7. Blend each syllable and read the whole word.

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## Let's Practice

dentist

perform

moment

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## Let's Practice (2)

lemon

sample

escape

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## Syllable Rules and Types – Practice

- |           |          |          |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| • serpent | simple   | describe |
| • explode | twinkle  | conceal  |
| • cable   | eagle    | fluid    |
| • silent  | complain | rumor    |
| • suppose | carpet   | remote   |
| • menu    |          |          |

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## Answer Key (shorter words)

ser/pent (r,c)	sim/ple (c, l)
de/scribe (o, e)	ex/plode (c, e)
twin/kle(c, l)	con/ceal (c, v)
ca/ble (o, l)	ea/gle (v, l)
flu/id (o, c)	si/lent (o, c)
com/plain (c, v)	ru/mor (o, r)
sup/pose (c, e)	car/pet (r, c)
re/mote(o, e)	men/u (c, o)

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## Longer Words - Strategy

- Underline vowels to determine number of syllables.
- Compound words?
- Prefix, suffix?
- C + le syllable
- Mark vowels V and consonants C. Color code if needed.
- Divide according to the rules: VC/CV, V/CV, VC/V, V/V.
- Label each syllable type.
- Blend and read.

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## Instruction in Morphemes

- Helps students be able to identify prefixes and suffixes when dividing words.
  1. Review the spelling, pronunciation, and meaning of the prefix.
  2. Model adding the prefix to familiar base words and guide the student in determining the new word's meaning.
  3. Divide the prefix from the base word with a slash.
  4. Model blending each part of the word and then blending both parts to make the whole word.
  5. Review the meaning of the new word.
  6. Explain that the letters that form the prefix don't always form a prefix (e.g., the "un" in uncle or the "re" in rest).
  7. Provide examples and non-examples.

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## Longer Words - Practice

### Example 1 - argument

1. Do you see any compound words? (no)
2. Do you see a prefix or suffix? (yes, -ment is a suffix)
3. Do you see a consonant +*le* syllable? (no)
4. Now let's mark our V's and C's –

**argu/ment**

vccv/cvcc

If we divide between the two consonants we have ar/gu/ment

“Ar” is an r-controlled syllable.

“Gu “ is an open syllable, so the “u” will say its name

Now let's read the word syllable by syllable and blend.

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## Longer Words Practice

### Example 2 – surrounding

1. Do you see any compound words? (no)
2. Do you see a prefix or suffix? (yes, -ing is a suffix)
3. Do you see a consonant +*le* syllable? (no)
4. Now let's mark our V's and C's –

**surround/ing**

cvccvcc/vcc

If we divide between the two consonants we have

sur/round/ing

Now let's read the word syllable by syllable and blend.

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## Longer Words Practice (2)

### Example 3 – violent

1. Do you see any compound words? (no)
  - 2.. Do you see a prefix or suffix? (no)
  3. Do you see a consonant +*le* syllable? (no)
  4. Now let's mark our V's and C's **violent**  
cvvcvcc
  5. Is there a VCCV pattern? (no)
  6. Is there a VCV pattern? (yes) I will divide using V/CV first and see if this will work. vio/lent
  7. Is there a V/V pattern? (yes) IO is a V/V pattern because these two vowels are not a vowel team pattern like ea or oa.)
- I will divide between those two vowels. **vi/o/lent**
- The first syllable is open, so the "i" is long.  
The second syllable is open, so the "o" is long.  
The last syllable is closed, so the "e" is short.

Now let's read the word syllable by syllable and blend.

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## Let's Practice porcupine

1. Compound words?
2. Prefixes, suffixes?
3. Consonant +le?
4. Mark V's and C's
5. Divide
6. Mark syllable types
7. Blend and read

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## Let's Practice **Imperfect**

1. Compound words?
2. Prefixes, suffixes?
3. Consonant +le?
4. Mark V's and C's
5. Divide
6. Mark syllable types
7. Blend and read

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## Let's Practice **volunteer**

1. Compound words?
2. Prefixes, suffixes?
3. Consonant +le?
4. Mark V's and C's
5. Divide
6. Mark syllable types
7. Blend and read

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## Additional thoughts

- Teach students to be flexible. (schwa, variant vowels)  
(ex: “breek-fast”)
- Let students know about “oddballs”.  
(ex: “pro-nun- *ci* – a- tion”)
- Practice with stress on different syllables.  
(Teach basic accent rules- in Participants’ Packet)

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## Rate Your Own Knowledge (post)

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