

TIPS FOR TEACHERS



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SYLLABICATION RULES

READING MANIPULATIVES PRODUCT: Syllable Sorts

P/R/S	VC/CV	VC/V	V/CV
nonsense	dentist	study	rumor
fiercely	sentence	river	focus
climbing	pumpkin	olive	vacant

STEP 1:
Divide off affixes.

STEP 2:
Divide between consonants.

STEPS 3 & 4:
If one consonant is between vowels, divide after long vowel or after consonant if vowel is short.

Students consider all syllabication rules as they break down two-syllable words.

Students sort 36 words in each set by 4 basic rules, applying them in order. This material provides abundant practice, thereby allowing students to see patterns and decode rapidly.

Once students have worked through the 12 sets, they are ready to apply steps to longer words. Improving syllabication consciousness is a valuable spelling aid.

SYLLABLE SORTS **Download PDF** **\$7**

TEACHING STRATEGIES: Assure that students have prerequisite phonics skills

Students who need to use syllabication to decode words must be taught syllabication rules holistically. When they apply basic rules in steps, they begin to recognize patterns and break down unknown words. Initially, the rules are applied to two-syllable rules. Once students learn the patterns, the same rules are used to break down longer words.

Even those students who read words with ease in context generally improve spelling accuracy if they become more cognizant of word structure and syllabication patterns.

Students should possess certain prerequisite skills and concepts before being taught the syllabication rules. Frequently, it is necessary to review short and long vowels, as well as prefixes/root words/suffixes, before proceeding with syllabication. You will see why as you review the following foundation concepts.

- Each syllable must contain a sounded vowel. It can be a single vowel sound (i•de•a) or used with one or more consonant sounds (be•gin).
- There are two kinds of syllables: open and closed. A closed syllable ends with a consonant and the vowel is usually short (or a schwa). An open syllable ends with a vowel that is generally long (clo•ver, e•vent). The vowel may be a y pronounced as /e/ (fun•ny) or occasionally /i/ (my•self).
- Since the first rule deals with dividing between root words and affixes, students must be familiar with prefixes, suffixes, and root words.
- Digraphs, or two consonants that make a single sound (ch, sh, th, wh, ng, nk, ng, ck, ...), cannot be divided (buck•le, noth•ing, cash•ier, bush•el, fur•ther).
- In some cases, blends are not divided (se•cret, mi•grate, ze•bra). Do not preteach since students discover this when identifying open vs. closed syllables.

MAKING MATERIALS: Syllable Sorts

1. Line off cover-weight sheets of paper (8.5 x 11 inches) into 10 horizontal strips (1.1”).
2. Draw vertical lines at 4.25” (center), 2.125” (center left column), and 6.375” (center right column).
3. Use the accompanying syllabication resource list. Write the 4 rules at the tops of the columns
4. Write 9 words for each rule below it.
5. Sets must be coded in some way. This can be done with codes or color.
6. Laminate cards. Cut apart and place pieces in zipper bags or other storage devices.
7. Create a checklist to track the completed sets.

SYLLABICATION RULES — APPLY IN ORDER

P/R/S — Check the word for prefixes and suffixes. The first step is to divide between them and the root word. If necessary, affixes need to be reviewed with the students (farm•er, read•ing, mis•take).

VC/CV — Check for multiple consonants together between vowels. Divide between the consonants (can•dy, hap•py, el•bow).

If a word has one consonant between vowels, decide whether the first vowel is long or short.

V/CV — If the vowel is long, divide after the vowel leaving an open syllable (fa•vor, sea•son, stu•pid).

VC/V — Otherwise, divide after the consonant leaving a closed syllable (hon•ey, plur•al, drag•on).

Students consider all of the rules as they sort the words. By the time they have completed several of the Syllable Sorts, they begin to see the patterns. Soon they have the strategies they need to break down unknown multisyllabic words.

SYLLABLE SORTS

Draw lines. Write the syllabication rules at the top of each column. Then write 9 words that follow each rule below it (RM product 310).

P/R/S	VC/CV	V/CV	VC/V
asking	allow	clover	camel
beside	center	eager	closet
brighter	clumsy	haven	finish
lovely	grammar	ladle	honey
prepaid	hello	major	modern
restless	humble	photo	robin
sliding	signal	rumor	shovel
tallest	silly	season	vision
unkind	suggest	tiny	widow

SYLLABICATION – LONGER WORDS

The same rules are applied to divide words of 3 or more syllables (RM product 320). In the sample below, division lines have been inserted.

SYLLABICATION – LONGER WORDS [Download PDF](#) \$7

Divide into syllables. Apply rules in order.			
Prefix / Root / Suffix 1. Remove affixes.	VC/CV 2. Look for multiple consonants in middle. First syllable is closed.	VC/V Closed syllable (short/schwa) 3. Determine whether syllable is open or closed.	V/CV Open syllable (long/schwa)
in dus try	pa tri ot ic	ex pla na tion	
com pu ter	ab sorb ing	com mun i cate	
cul ti vat ed	gra cious ly	ac ci den tal	
dis ap pear ance	sup ple ment	ap pro pri ate	
un con di tion al	con struc tion	triv i al	
gen er a tion	ben e fi cial	hy dro gen	
sup er vi sor	cel e bra tion	trans por ta tion	
con ser va tion	un sus pect ing	ad ver tise ment	
es tab lish	ac cept a ble	per son al i ty	
re place ment	stim u la tion	de mol ish	

RESOURCE LIST: Two-syllable words

P/R/S		VC/CV		VC/V		V/CV	
Identify and remove affixes		Divide between consonants		First syllable closed (short)		First syllable open (long)	
act•or	loud•er	af•ter	hel•lo	at•om	mon•ey	ba•by	mo•tor
art•ist	luck•y	ap•ple	hel•met	bod•y	nick•el	ba•con	mu•sic
ask•ing	mis•spell	ar•row	hur•ry	both•er	nov•el	ba•gel	na•tion
bash•ful	mis•take	ath•lete	kit•ten	buck•et	ol•ive	ba•sic	no•tion
be•side	morn•ing	bal•loon	lad•der	cab•in	pan•ic	be•gin	o•bey
big•ger	nois•y	bas•ket	let•ter	cam•el	ped•al	be•hind	o•dor
blind•ness	non•sense	ber•ry	let•tuce	chap•el	pet•al	ca•ble	o•pen
bold•ly	pack•age	blis•ter	lob•ster	chis•el	pit•y	ce•dar	o•val
book•let	pain•less	bot•tle	lum•ber	cit•y	piv•ot	ce•ment	pa•per
boss•y	part•ly	bun•ny	mat•tress	civ•il	plan•et	cli•mate	pho•to
breath•less	pay•ment	but•ter	mon•key	clev•er	pres•ent	clo•ver	pi•lot
bump•y	peace•ful	but•ton	mon•ster	clin•ic	prof•it	co•coa	po•ny
care•ful	plant•ed	cab•bage	nap•kin	clos•et	prop•er	cra•dle	pre•tend
climb•ing	play•ful	can•dle	of•fice	col•umn	pun•ish	de•cay	pri•vate
clos•est	pre•view	can•dy	pat•tern	com•et	quiv•er	de•mand	pu•pil
cloud•less	quick•ly	car•rot	pen•cil	cop•y	rad•ish	de•stroy	ra•dar
com•ing	rain•y	cat•tle	pen•ny	cred•it	rap•id	di•gest	ra•zor
count•less	real•ly	chan•nel	pic•nic	crit•ic	reb•el	do•nate	rea•son
cream•y	re•fill	cir•cle	pic•ture	dev•il	rel•ic	do•nor	re•cess
cry•ing	re•pay	cof•fee	pis•tol	dig•it	rel•ish	du•ty	re•gard
dark•ness	rest•ful	com•mon	plas•tic	drag•on	rig•id	ea•ger	re•sist
dear•est	sad•ly	com•pete	plen•ty	fin•ish	riv•er	ea•sel	ri•val
deep•er	salt•y	con•test	prob•lem	for•est	rob•in	e•qual	ro•bot
dis•cover	sleep•y	con•tract	pup•py	frag•ile	sal•ad	e•ven	ro•tate
dream•ing	slow•est	cot•ton	pump•kin	grav•el	sav•age	e•vil	ru•mor
drop•per	small•er	coun•cil	pur•ple	hab•it	schol•ar	fe•ver	se•cret
drown•ing	soft•ly	cur•rent	rab•bit	hon•ey	sev•en	fi•nal	si•lent
end•less	sog•gy	cus•tom	rib•bon	hon•or	sher•iff	fla•vor	si•ren
ex•port	stop•ping	den•tist	scis•sors	im•age	shiv•er	fo•cus	so•da
farm•er	sub•way	diz•zy	sen•tence	lem•on	shov•el	glo•bal	so•lo
fear•ful	sweet•er	el•bow	sig•nal	lev•el	shriv•el	gro•cer	spi•der
fore•cast	tall•est	en•joy	sil•ly	lil•y	stud•y	he•ro	stu•pid
fool•ish	thank•ful	fan•cy	sis•ter	lim•it	tim•id	ho•tel	su•per
friend•ly	think•ing	fif•teen	soc•cer	lin•en	top•ic	ho•ly	ta•ble
fur•ry	thirst•y	fil•ter	sub•ject	liz•ard	trag•ic	hu•mor	ti•dy
grace•ful	thought•ful	fol•low	sum•mer	log•ic	trav•el	i•dle	ti•ger
hand•y	throw•ing	for•bid	tar•get	mag•ic	trop•ic	i•tem	to•tal
hard•en	tract•or	for•get	thun•der	man•age	ven•om	la•bel	tu•na
hill•y	treat•ment	fran•tic	tur•key	med•al	vig•or	la•dy	u•nite
hot•ter	un•fair	fun•ny	whis•per	men•u	vis•it	le•gal	va•cant
im•prove	vast•ly	gen•tle	win•dow	met•al	viv•id	lo•cate	va•por
itch•y	want•ed	gos•sip	win•ter	mim•ic	vol•ume	ma•jor	vi•rus
joy•ous	warm•est	ham•ster	wis•dom	min•ute	wag•on	mi•nus	wa•ger
love•ly	wind•y	hap•pen	won•der	mod•ern	wid•ow	mo•ment	ze•ro