

The Six Syllable Types

There are six syllable types. It is very helpful for struggling readers to be able to identify the syllable types in words when trying to read or spell. The sound a vowel makes often depends upon what type of syllable it is in.

Here are the six syllable types, in a suggested order of teaching:

Closed Syllables (the most frequent syllable type)

Closed syllables have one vowel, followed by one or more consonants. The vowel has a short sound. (So the vowel is CLOSED in on the right side by one or more consonants.)

Examples:

in

on

cat

him

pot

truck

stick

French

trash

Words with more than one syllable can be made up of entirely closed syllables, such as the words *ad/mon/ish* or *plas/tic*.

You should teach your students a key word to remember each short vowel sound.

Example:

Apple for short a

Eddie for short e

Itchy for short i

Olive for short o

Upper for short u

If the student forgets the short sound, remind them of the key word, have them say the key word slowly, so they can hear the first sound of it.

One more thing about closed syllables: When A is followed by m or n, it gives a nasally sound. It sounds like Bugs Bunny saying “Aaaaaaah, what’s up, doc.”

Examples:

Am

Can

Ant

Open Syllables

An open syllable ends in one vowel and the vowel says its name (long sound).

Remember:

U and Y have two long sounds.

U can sound like U as in (U/tah) or oo as in (flu).

Y can sound like I or E as in shy or ba/by.

Examples:

Me

So

I

Fly

She

Flu

Vowel-Consonant-E Syllables (Commonly known as silent E syllables)

In this syllable type, there is a vowel followed by a consonant and silent e. The silent e makes the vowel before it say its name (long sound).

Examples:

Hate

Mile

Hole

grape

Vowel Team Syllables

This syllable type contains two vowels next to each other. The vowels make one sound. **About fifty percent of the time**, this rule will apply to double vowels: If two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking and says its name. The other vowel stays quiet. You can compare it to a bully. The first vowel shouts its name and the second one is quiet.

Examples:

Wait

Beach

Beet

Play

R-Controlled Syllables

In r-controlled syllable types, a vowel is followed by the letter r. The r "controls" vowel, and gives it a different sound that is neither long or short.

Examples:

Car
Bar
Tar

} Ar sounds like the name of the letter R. You don't hear the A at all.

Er
Ir
Ur

} Often sounds like ER as in her

OR sounds like the word or.

Any of the R controlled syllables (ar, er, ir, or, ur) can sound like ER when it appears at the end of words and is not accented.

Example:

Sailor
Regular
Grammar

Consonant-le Syllables

Consonant-le syllables are normally found at the end of a word. They consist of a consonant followed by the letters le. The le sounds like UL.

Examples:

Tur/tle
Lit/tle
Sta/ble