

THE SEVEN SYLLABLE TYPES

FIRST: A REVIEW OF THE VOWEL SOUNDS

Each syllable in our language has a vowel sound.

LONG vowels say their NAMES. It's that easy;
just say the vowels and you've said their LONG
sound. Go ahead, do it!

Now you've said the LONG vowel sounds!

SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS

These clue words will remind you of the sounds that the SHORT vowels say:

- A apple a
- E elephant e
- I itch i
- O octopus o
- U up u

You have to listen VERY carefully to hear the differences between the short vowel sounds.

CLOSED SYLLABLE

This syllable type is generally thought of as CVC (consonant/vowel/consonant), although it also includes VC. It is a closed syllable because the consonant following the vowel keeps the vowel closed in. Therefore, the vowel sound is SHORT!

Of course, these words can include consonant blends, as can all the syllable types.

Examples

- Tap
- Strap
- Gab
- Bat
- Brat
- At
- Get
- Pet
- Felt
- Pit
- Bib
- Rip
- In
- Quit
- It
- Top
- Stop
- Bob
- Fox
- On
- Pup
- Up
- Cup
- Club
- Putt
- Buck

OPEN VOWEL SYLLABLE

- This syllable ends with a single vowel sound which makes it an OPEN syllable. (This DOES NOT include the silent e which does **NOT** make a sound.)
- Open syllables usually make the vowel sound LONG, especially in words ending with Y. Of course, some OPEN syllables have a short vowel sound. Just say the word and you'll know if it's long or short.

Examples

- Ma
- A
- Pa
- She
- Me
- Be
- The
- I
- go
- No
- So
- Do
- Who
- To
- My
- Fly
- Sky

VOWEL CONSONANT SILENT E

- This syllable type has a vowel followed by a consonant followed by a silent e. The silent e makes the vowel sound LONG. It jumps over the consonant and makes the vowel say its NAME.
- Note: This is NOT a common way to make a long E sound.

Examples

- Name
- Gate
- Plate
- Ape
- Babe
- Brake
- Safe
- Glide
- Tribe
- Wife
- Bike
- Spike
- Joke
- Code
- Spoke
- Stole
- Wrote
- Cube
- Mule
- Rule

VOWEL R SYLLABLE

- The Vowel R syllable contains a single vowel followed by an R. It makes the vowel sound change. It's like the vowel was glued to the R sound. We call these “*R-controlled vowels.*”
- Note: This does NOT include vowel R words that have a silent e at the end. Look at the differences between **fir** and **fire**!

Examples

- Car
- Cart
- Part
- Star
- Her
- Herd
- Germ
- Verb
- Clerk
- Fern
- Stir
- Fir
- Sir
- Bird
- Third
- Corn
- Thorn
- Form
- Fur
- Curb
- Hurt
- Burst

VOWEL DIGRAPHS

This syllable type consists of two vowels together and the first one is **LONG** (says its name). You've heard the saying, "Two vowels go walking. The first one does the talking and it says its name." Sometimes these are called "vowel teams" because they work together to make **ONE** sound.

Note: A *digraph* is two letters together that make ONE sound. Consonant digraphs are th, sh, wh, ch. Vowel digraphs are ai, oa, ea, ee, ie, aw, ay, ey, oo. They ALL make **ONE** sound.

Examples

- Paid
- Rain
- Tail
- Fail
- Brain
- Paint
- Drain
- Waist
- Say
- Pay
- Pea
- Each
- Bleach
- Peak
- Stream
- Bee
- Free
- Speed
- Greed
- Sleep
- Die
- Pie

More Examples

- Chief
- Piece
- Load
- Loan
- Foam
- Roam
- Oat
- Coat
- Doe
- Toe
- Key
- Grow
- Snow
- Draw
- Saw
- Lawn
- Straw
- Pool
- Stool
- Look
- Took

VOWEL DIPHTHONGS

This syllable type consists of two vowels together that **slide** in your mouth to make one unique sound. Sometimes these are called vowel *sliders* or vowel *gliders*.

The vowels that make up the sliders are oi, oy, ou, ow. Try saying “oi” as in “oil”, or say “ou” as in “out.” You can feel the vowel sounds **slide** in your mouth.

Examples

- Oil
- Broil
- Foil
- Soil
- Spoil
- Boy
- Toy
- ploy
- Out
- About
- Snout
- Pout
- Cow
- Now
- How
- Brown
- Town
- Clown
- Frown

Consonant L E

This syllable type is the only one that is actually TWO syllables. These are two syllable words that END with a consonant followed by an L followed by an E. The whole idea here is that you count back THREE letters from the end of the word. This shows you where to divide the word into TWO syllables. Then you can see if the syllable at the beginning of the word is OPEN or CLOSED.

Examples

- Bottle
- Title
- Rifle
- Simple
- Tremble
- Bubble
- Table
- Bridle
- Saddle
- Puddle
- Stable
- pebble
- Bot / tle
- Ti / tle
- Ri / fle
- Sim / ple
- Trem / ble
- Bub / ble
- Ta / ble
- Bri / dle
- Sad / dle
- Pud / dle
- Sta / ble
- Peb / ble

THAT'S IT

Those are the seven syllable types. Of course, there are some outlaw words (exceptions), but most of our words fit these syllable types.

Words can be divided into syllables that fit these syllable types. For example: protect – pro is an open syllable (vowel is long) and –tect is closed (vowel is short). This should help your reading and spelling!

Practice

Identify the syllables in these words

- Hum/ble
- Bar/ter
- Jel/ly
- Or/der
- Cy/ber/space
- Read/ing
- Pow/der
- Re/sult
- Hope/ful
- Pie/crust
- Box/er
- Un/coil
- Tree/top
- Pea/nut
- Se/cret
- Loud/est
- But/ter
- Boat/ing
- Rain/drop
- Joy/ful