

Dear Parents,

During their first few years of elementary, your children have learned many foundational skills in word study. Our teachers plan to build on these skills by teaching students how to use the basic rules of syllabication to read and spell new words. Throughout this school year, students will learn each of the six syllable types as well as concrete rules for dividing syllables. Ultimately, the goal is for students to learn strategies for pronouncing unknown words in order to build new vocabulary. This process will begin with simple one-syllable examples and move to more complex words as students master each of the syllable types.

Why Teach the Six Syllable Types?

Without a strategy for chunking longer words into manageable parts, students may look at a longer word and simply resort to guessing what it is — or altogether skipping it. Familiarity with syllable-spelling conventions helps readers know whether a vowel is long, short, a diphthong, r-controlled, or whether endings have been added. Familiarity with syllable patterns helps students to read longer words accurately and fluently and to solve spelling problems.

During instruction, your children will be exposed to many words that follow the focus rule, and they are encouraged to articulate the rule itself for use with additional words. In many cases, teachers also include pseudo (nonsense) words for application. The incorporation of nonsense words in phonics instruction is supported by current research and serves different purposes. One purpose is that it ensures application of the rule or pattern. More importantly, it enables students to read words that are not in their vocabularies because students will be able to apply the rules to accurately decode the word. Additionally, reading nonsense words prepares students to decode unfamiliar multisyllabic words. When the basic syllable division rules are applied to break down longer words, students must read the parts (which in many cases are nonsense words). For instance, if a student breaks the word **sarcastic** into syllables, he/she must read the “nonsense” words **sar**, **cas**, and **tic** to accurately read the word. Through practice reading and writing nonsense words, students will be more prepared to solve words with more than one syllable.

By learning the syllable types and the rules for dividing words, students are empowered to solve unknown words and increase their vocabularies. Please use this same syllable terminology with your child when working with them at home to support the patterns and/or rules he or she is learning in school.

What are the Six Syllable Types?

Six written syllable-spelling conventions are used in English spelling. These were regularized by Samuel Webster to justify his 1806 dictionary's division of syllables.

1. **Closed Syllable (CVC)**

A closed syllable ends with a consonant. The vowel has a short sound.
Examples: cab-in, nap-kin, trum-pet

2. **Open Syllable (CV)**

An open syllable ends with a vowel. The vowel has a long sound. The long sound of the vowel is usually the name of the vowel.
Examples: pho-to, re-ply, ti-ger

3. **Vowel Consonant –e Syllable (silent e) (CVCe)**

The final e is silent. The silent e (magic e) at the end of the word makes the vowel before it have a long sound.

4. **R- Controlled Syllable**

The syllable has at least one vowel followed by r.
The vowel combinations are: ar, or, ir, er, ur, and ear.

5. **Vowel Combination Syllable (CVVC)**

The vowel in this syllable has a special sound according to the pattern.
It **usually** has two vowels together.
Examples: rain, snow, light

6. **Consonant –le Syllable**

The syllable comes at the end of a word. The final e in the syllable is silent.
The syllables are: ble, dle, fle, gle, kle, ple, zle, and stle.
Examples: turtle, bubble, bundle

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact your child's teacher.
Thanks so much for supporting our readers and writers at home!