**Six Syllable Types**

Our English language has 26 letters, five vowels (a, e, i, o, u, and y when not at the beginning of a word) and 21 consonants (letters that are not vowels such as b, c, d, f, and so on). Combining these letters make syllables (a unit of pronunciation having one vowel sound). Some words have just one syllable, such as cat, fly, and sweet. Other words have more than one syllable such as turtle (2 syllables), understand (3 syllables), collaborate (4 syllables), and refrigerator (5 syllables). There are only 6 types of syllables ~ closed, open, vce, r-controlled, cle, and vowel team. Learning these syllables will help with decoding unknown words which will improve fluency (the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression) and comprehension (understanding what is read). The six syllable types are as follows:

Closed ~ One vowel followed by a consonant (or more than one consonant) will produce a short vowel sound such as /a/ like apple, /e/ like Eddie, /i/ like itchy, /o/ like olive, and /u/ like upper. The following words are closed syllables – at, bend, and with. The consonant or consonants are guardians because they protect the vowel and keep it safe. Therefore, the vowel makes its short vowel sound.

Open ~ One vowel NOT followed by a consonant will produce a long vowel sound such as /a/ like ape, /e/ like eel, /i/ like ice, /o/ like oak, and /u/ like use. The following words are open syllables – a, be, I, and sky. Since there is NOT a guardian consonant, the vowel screams its name. Therefore, the vowel makes its long vowel sound.

Vowel-Consonant–e (vce) or Rule of Silent e ~ One vowel, followed by one consonant, followed by the letter e will produce a long vowel sound. The e at the end will always be silent, it is there to tell the other vowel in the syllable to say its name. The following words are vce syllables – cake, tube, and globe. The first vowel is long, and the e is silent.

R-Controlled ~ One vowel followed by the letter r will produce a special vowel sound such as /ar/ like car and start, /or/ like for and sport, and /er/ /ir/ /ur/ like herd, first, and surf. The letter r controls the sound of the vowel – the vowel is not short or long but makes a special sound.

Consonant-L-e (cle) ~ One consonant, followed by the letter l, followed by the letter e will produce a silent e. This syllable will be found at the end of a multisyllabic word such as lit/tle, ta/ble, and pur/ple. The cle syllable will only contain these 3 letters – the consonant, the l, and the e. Little has a closed syllable (lit) followed by cle syllable (tle). Table has an open syllable (ta) followed by cle syllable (ble). Purple has an r-controlled syllable (pur) followed by cle syllable (ple).

Vowel Team ~ Two vowels that are together will produce a long vowel sound (first one does the talking; second one does the walking) or a special vowel sound. The following words contain a vowel team with the long vowel sound: snail, team, fruit, boat, and play. The following words contain a vowel team with a special sound: book, moon, toy, mouse, bread, and field. Vowel teams also consist of a vowel followed by the letter w such as aw, ew, and ow as in the words paw, blew, and crow and the letter i followed by the letters gh such as light and thigh.

With the knowledge of the six syllable types, one can decode almost any word in our English language with some syllable division rules. Most words will follow the rules, but not all. When an unknown multisyllabic word is encountered, follow the steps below to help decipher it.

1. Spot and place a dot below the vowels.
2. Count the number of consonants between the vowels.
3. Split the syllables being mindful of blends (two or three consonants together in which all sounds are heard such as br, tw, and spl) and digraphs (two consonants together that make one sound such as sh, ch, and th). Blends and digraphs must stay together.
   * One consonant – one must run
   * Two consonants – split them
   * Three consonants – one/two split
   * Four consonants – one/three split
4. Decide which syllable type (closed, open, vce, r-controlled, cle, or vowel team) for each syllable and mark the vowels (short, long, silent, or special sound).
5. Continue this process for the entire word.
6. Read the word!
7. If the word does not sound correct, perhaps the actual word can be determined. If not, split the syllables in a different place (step 3 above) and continue the steps.

Give it a try with the following words that follow the rules:

cucumber, establish, timetable, disciple, skedaddle

Now, give it a try with these words that do NOT follow the rules:

marvelous, speculator, honeysuckle, refrigerate, volunteer

Would you like more information? Your child(ren) and you can watch six syllable videos! The link below contains 7 videos ~ one for each of the six syllable types and a final review video. Also, handouts are included for each video.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mfd7H6SFTv3ztdq9UsAdP-naojoCyoQx?usp=sharing>

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