Vowel-Consonant-Vowel-Pattern Words – Instructions

Vowel-consonant-vowel-pattern (VCV-Pattern) words, that is words with one consonant between two vowels at a syllable break, are challenging for many students for several reasons. The syllable boundary may not be obvious; having learned the "short" sounds in single closed syllables, the students find that the "rules" change, and the vowel sound is more frequently "long"; and VCV-pattern words tend to be more complex semantically and therefore less familiar. Mastering how VCV-pattern words are read and learning to learn their meanings will prepare these students to read and understand meanings of words with three or more syllables.

This document contains instructions and materials for three applications to be used in three different instances. The first, comparatively rare, instance is when beginning readers expect words to contain only one syllable and require specific instruction. In the second instance, mastering how vowel-consonant-vowel-pattern words are read (and learning their meanings) prepares students to read and understand meanings of words with more than two syllables. The application is used with the VCV-pattern "early" words when students have learned to read the 600 Most Commonly Used Words (MCUW 600); the application can also be introduced in conjunction with Level 2 Spelling. The third application contains later-occurring (advanced) VCV-pattern words that are appropriate for older students who are not yet using the alphabetic principle when they read.

It is imperative that teachers continue instruction in how to negotiate VCV-pattern words even after students have developed a sight-word vocabulary of one- and two-syllable frequently used words. In particular, a student taught to "sound out" and then "blend" sounds to form words will experience bewilderment if using this strategy beyond one-syllable because the "rules" change: for example, *puny* becomes /pŭny/, *spirit* becomes /sp<u>er</u>-it/, etc.

Application	Words Used	When to Use	Materials Used
1	Early	Student expects words to be one syllable	Early Word List
2	Early	After MCUW 600 or together with Level 2 Spelling	Early Word List, Word Bank, Flashcards
3	Advanced	Student is not using the alphabetic principle as appropriate to their grade level	Advanced Word List

Table: The three applications are summarized.

Application 1

The first, simple, application of this component is warranted when beginning learners are expecting words to contain only one syllable, e.g., reading *planet* as *plant* and *final* as *find,* or omitting final syllables, e.g., reading *ready* as *read*. In these instances, instruction consists of the teacher's picking words that a student is familiar with but has not read before from the Early VCV-Pattern Word List below.

Steps

The student is directed to:
- Place a *C* under the consonant between the two vowels.
- Place *V*s under the two vowels.
- Draw a diagonal line "before the consonant". The word is then read as having two syllables and matching a known word.

The practice continues with newly targeted words until the student expects the two-syllable pattern to occur.

Application 2

The second application of this component is the starting point for polysyllabic-word learning and is more complex than the first. The application enables students to apply vowel correspondences, to acquire words that have 'schwa' ending syllables to support subsequent instruction, and to strengthen vocabulary-learning capability. At this juncture, word learning becomes less transparent; for example, the word *puny* requires two aspects of meaning: both small and weak. Other words, although familiar, are apt not to be easily specified, e.g. *local*.

Steps

First, explain to students:

- Being able to decode two-syllable words will make it possible to learn to read and spell words with any number of syllables.
- Learning meanings of words at the two-syllable level is an excellent start in learning the meanings of words of three or more syllables.
- In words with a VCV pattern, the vowel letter will most likely say its name, which is termed its "long" sound in an "open syllable", but it can also say its "short" sound in what is termed a "closed syllable".

Second, demonstrate:

- "I have written the word, ***pony.*** Please put the letter *C* under the consonant between the two vowels and the letter *V* under each vowel. Place a diagonal line before the consonant. When you say the word, your voice will break the word 'before the consonant' and in this word, the vowel will say its name. The vowel is called 'long and the syllable is 'open'.""
- "I have written the word, ***puny.*** Again, please put the letter *C* under the consonant between the vowels and the letter *V* under each vowel. Place a diagonal line before the consonant." Again, the vowel is called 'long and the syllable is 'open'.""
- "I have written the word, ***cabin.*** "When you say this word, your voice will still break the word 'before the consonant' and, in this word, the vowel will say its sound. The vowel is called 'short' and the syllable is 'closed'.

Finally:

- Have students read and define VCV-pattern words. A word list has been provided.
- For the early words, start with long-vowel-sound words.
- A word bank and flashcards have been provided for the early words. (The word bank also categorizes the words into long-vowel and short-vowel words.) Banking the words (checking them off) as they are learned can be helpful to student confidence. If using the flashcard pack, a word that can be read and defined is "banked" and/or removed from the deck.
- When early words with the long-vowel pattern are secure enough in the teacher's judgment, assign the student long-vowel/short-vowel pairs*. Continue building word knowledge by adding short-vowel pattern words to the flashcard pack.

Application 3

The list of advanced words is appropriate for older students experiencing difficulty in reading words they have never read before; they 'discover' the phonological structure of VCV-pattern words, which allows them to read complex words. It also gives them confidence in reading words of more than two syllables.

Steps

- Start the advanced words by comparing words such as helix/Helen and placate/placid.
- Continue by choosing words appropriate for students' grade level and interest.

* agent/agile; coma/comet; even/ever; final/finish; gravy/gravel; hero/heron; lemur/lemon; lilac/lily; meter/metal; minus/minute; polar/polish; Polish/polish; puny/punish; radar/radish; rival/river; sequin/second; solar/solid; spiral/spirit; student/study; topaz/topic; visor/visit

acid	devil	lily	petal	shadow
acorn	donate	limit	pilot	shiver
agent	dragon	local	pirate	silent
agile	even	locust	planet	siren
atom	ever	logic	poker	soda
bacon	evil	magic	polar	sofa
balance	favor	major	polish	solar
bison	female	medal	Polish	solid
body	fever	melon	pony	spiral
bonus	final	merit	present	spirit
cabin	finish	metal	private	static
camel	fury	meter	proper	station
cedar	future	mimic	punish	student
china	gravel	minus	puny	study
chisel	gravy	minute	pupil	tiger
cider	habit	moment	radar	timid
clever	hazard	motion	radish	tiny
closet	hero	motor	rapid	titan
clothing	heron	music	rather	topaz
clover	holy	naked	recent	totem
coma	image	native	recess	travel
comet	item	nature	record	trophy
comic	ivy	navy	regal	tropic
cozy	judo	notice	rival	tulip
crazy	label	odor	river	unit
credit	labor	opal	robin	unite
cupid	lady	open	robot	vacant
damage	later	over	savior	visit
demon	lazy	oval	satin	visor
denim	lemon	panic	second	wager
desert	lemur	paper	sequin	wagon
detail	lilac	pedal	seven	zero

Pattern Word Bank

SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS – VOWEL SAYS ITS SOUND					
credit	lily	planet	seven		
comic	lemon	petal	second		
comet	image	pedal	satin	wagon	
closet	heron	panic	robin	visit	
clever	hazard	minute	river	tropic	
chisel	gravel	mimic	record	travel	
camel	finish	metal	rather	timid	
cabin	ever	merit	rapid	study	
body	dragon	melon	radish	static	
balance	devil	medal	punish	spirit	
atom	desert	magic	proper	solid	
agile	denim	logic	present	shiver	
acid	damage	limit	polish	shadow	
LONG VOWEL SOUNDS – VOWEL SAYS ITS NAME					
detail	label	native	puny	station	
demon	judo	naked	private	spiral	
cupid	ivy	music	pony	solar	
crazy	item	motor	Polish	sofa	
cozy	holy	motion	polar	soda	
coma	hero	moment	poker	siren	
clover	future	minus	pirate	silent	
clothing	gravy	meter	paper	sequin	
cider	fury	major	oval	savior	
china	final	locust	over	robot	
cedar	fever	local	open	rival	
bonus	female	lilac	opal	regal	
bison	favor	lemur	odor	recess	
bacon	evil	later	notice	recent	
agent	even	lady	navy	radar	
acorn	donate	labor	nature	pupil	

aphid	digit	honest	oral	rumor	topic
Arab	donor	hyphen	ova	saber	tragic
avid	duty	iris	ovum	salad	tremor
banish	echo	latent	palate	saline	tribute
basin	ego	lavish	panel	savor	trident
biceps	epic	leper	patent	scavenge	tuba
blatant	era	libel	peril	series	tumor
blazer	ether	linen	perish	serum	tumult
brazen	ethic	lipid	photon	sinew	tuna
brutal	evil	liver	phylum	sinus	tunic
butane	famish	livid	pigeon	sisal	usher
caliph	famine	locus	placate	slogan	valence
carol	feline	logic	placid	sober	valid
cater	felon	lumen	polo	social	value
chapel	feral	lyric	polyp	solace	vanish
chili	fetid	manic	potent	solute	vigil
chitin	fetus	manor	prefix	sonar	vapid
chronic	fiber	method	primer	sonic	vapor
civic	figure	mica	propane	stamen	vigor
clamor	frequent	miser	protein	stupid	virus
cleric	frigid	model	proton	stupor	vital
climate	frolic	modem	pylon	super	vivid
closure	gamete	modern	quiver	swivel	vomit
cobalt	genome	modest	ration	synapse	volume
cogent	glacier	mucous	ravage	tacit	whether
colon	glucose	mural	raven	talent	widow
covert	gavel	mutate	region	taper	wiry
crater	guru	nadir	relic	tapir	wither
cubic	haven	nephew	relish	tepid	wizened
curate	havoc	neuron	renal	thorax	xylem
damask	Helen	novel	rigor	thymus	zenith
data	helix	novice	rodent	tether	
decent	hijack	nylon	rotate	toga	
digest	honor	onus	ruby	tonic	

acorn	agent	bacon
bison	bonus	cedar
china	cider	clothing
clover	coma	cozy
crazy	cupid	demon

detail	donate	even
evil	favor	female
fever	final	fury
gravy	future	hero
holy	item	ivy

judo	label	labor
lady	later	lemur
lilac	local	locust
major	meter	minus
moment	motion	motor

music	naked	native
nature	navy	notice
odor	opal	open
over	oval	paper
pirate	poker	polar

Polish	pony	private
puny	pupil	radar
recent	recess	regal
rival	robot	savior
sequin	silent	siren

soda	sofa	solar
spiral	station	student
tiger	tiny	titan
topaz	totem	tulip
unit	unite	vacant

visor	wager	zero
closet	comet	comic
credit	damage	denim
desert	devil	dragon
ever	finish	gravel

hazard	heron	image
lemon	lily	limit
logic	magic	medal
melon	merit	metal
mimic	minute	panic

pedal	petal	planet
polish	present	proper
punish	radish	rapid
rather	record	river
robin	satin	second

seven	shadow	shiver
solid	spirit	static
study	timid	travel
tropic	visit	wagon