



THE SIX TYPES OF SYLLABLES

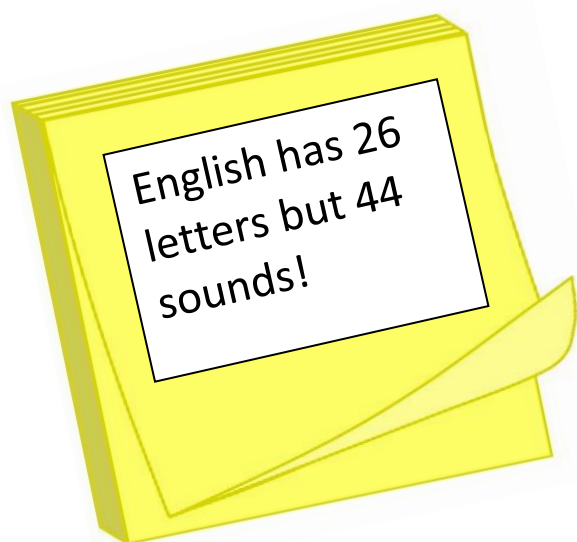
AN EXPLANATION FOR
PARENTS AND TEACHERS

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FACTS ABOUT ENGLISH

The English language is a melting pot – we come from many different languages and we add words to our language constantly. Many people think English is a mystery – with little rhyme or reason – no wonder our students have trouble learning to read!

The truth is much of our language is predictable – it does follow rules. Many students learn to read almost regardless of what or how we teach. But, students with dyslexia need to be taught the rules of English directly and specifically. They need many exposures to words.

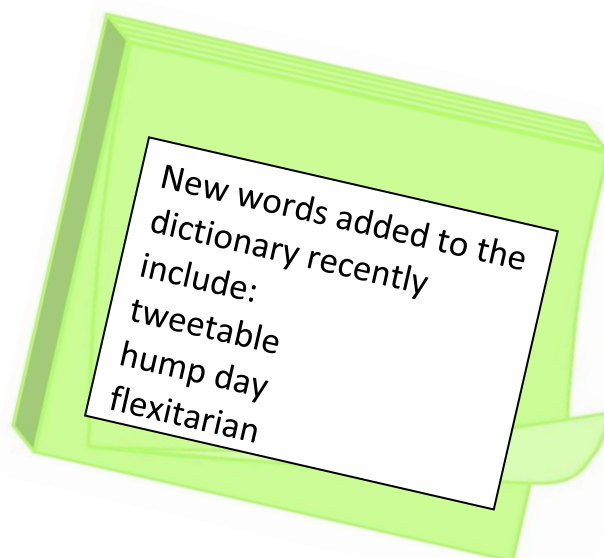


Most dyslexia programs are based on the six types of syllables. Students have the most difficulty with vowel sounds – little wonder since each vowel makes several sounds and even more when combined with other letters. The type of syllable helps the reader with the vowel sound.

This file is intended to give the reader a basic explanation of the six types of syllables.

Once students have mastered these syllables they are able to decode most of our words. Of course, there are exceptions and additional rules, but those are also taught to the student with dyslexia as they go through programs.

I hope this file is useful to you!



CLOSED SYLLABLES

The closed syllable is usually the first syllable students learn.

A closed syllable is a syllable with one vowel followed by one or more consonants. There may or may not be a consonant, consonant blend, or consonant digraph in front of the vowel. The vowel makes the short sound and is marked with a breve (căt).

Some examples of closed syllables are:

dog

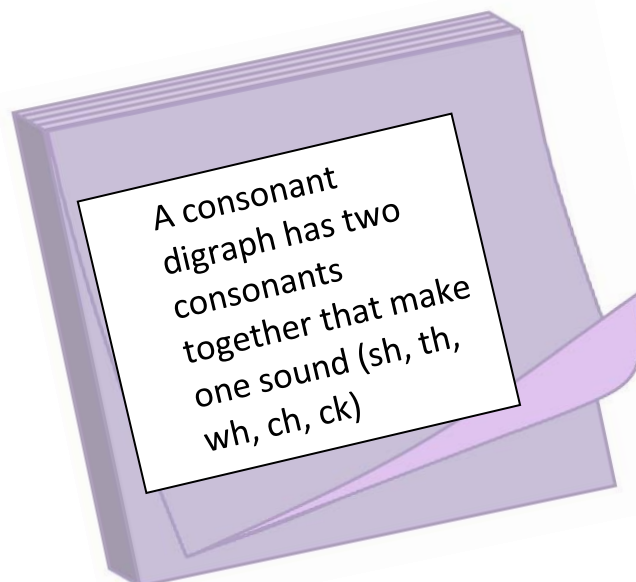
cat

ask

ship

stop

Once students have learned the basic consonant and short vowel sounds found in closed syllables, they are introduced to consonant digraphs, consonant blends, and exceptions to the closed syllable rule.



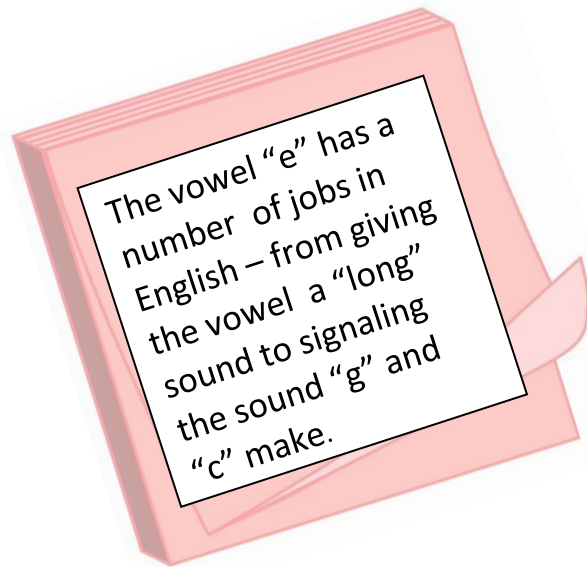
VOWEL-CONSONANT-E SYLLABLE

In the dyslexia program I use, the next type of syllable taught is the vowel-consonant-e syllable. Please be aware that some programs teach the types of syllables in a different order – but they cover them all.

The vowel-consonant-e syllable has one vowel followed by a consonant, then an “e”. The final “e” makes the vowel say its name, or the long sound, and the “e” is silent. The vowel is marked with a macron (cāke).

Some examples of vowel-consonant-e syllables are:

bike
throne
June
whine
grade
smile



Of course, there are exceptions to this syllable rule. No English word ends with the letter “v”, so there is always an “e” after “v” at the end of a word. The vowel can be short or long.

OPEN SYLLABLES

The open syllable ends with one vowel. That vowel is long (or says its name) and is marked with a macron (shē).

When students learn the open syllable, they also learn that “y”, at the end of a syllable, acts as a vowel. In a one syllable word, a final “y” usually makes the long “i” sound (ī).

Some examples of open syllables are:

hi

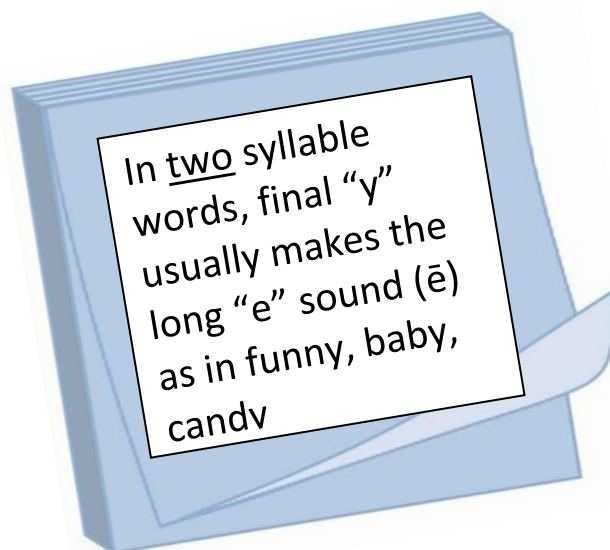
we

shy

flu

she

cry



CONSONANT-LE SYLLABLE

The consonant-le syllable has a consonant followed by “le”. These are the only three letters in this syllable and it is the last syllable in the word. The final “e” is silent and the syllable sounds like a blend (puzzle).

Some examples of the consonant-le syllable are:

dribble

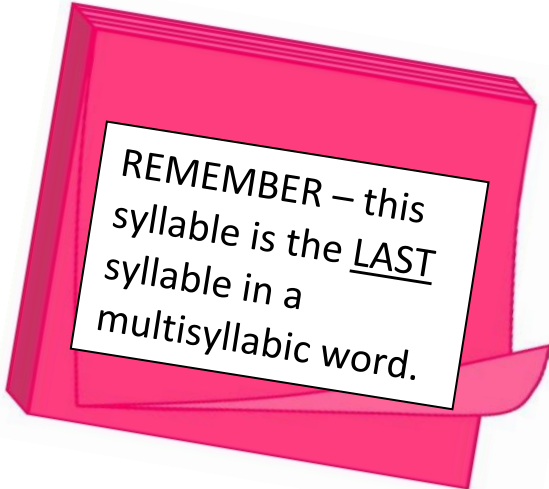
cable

muzzle

apple

tremble

stumble



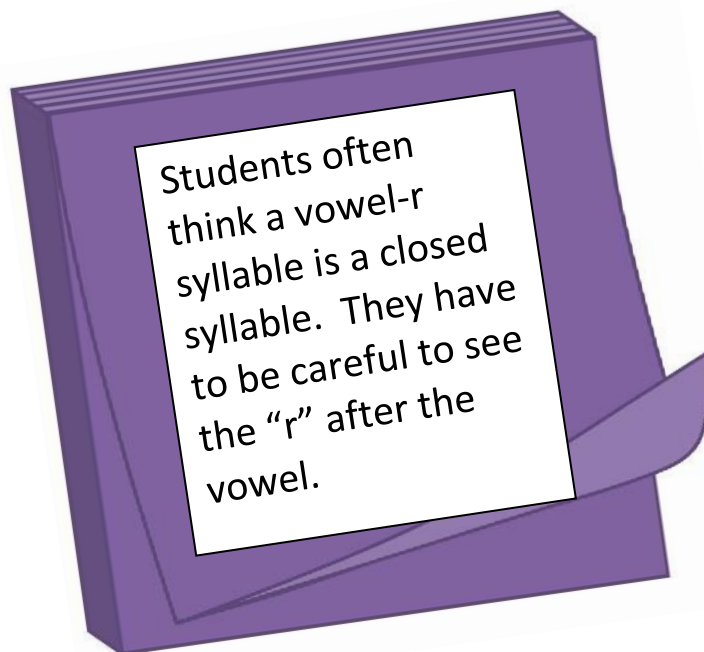
REMEMBER – this syllable is the LAST syllable in a multisyllabic word.

VOWEL-R SYLLABLE

In the vowel-r syllable, there is one vowel followed by an “r”. The vowel in this syllable makes a different sound – neither long or short. We say the “r” is “bossy” or “controls” the vowel. This is a fairly easy syllable to learn to read (er, ir, ur all say “er” as in “fern”, “or” says “or” as in “fork” and “ar” says “ar” as in “barn) but it can be difficult to learn to spell.

Some examples of the vowel-r syllable are:

car
burn
girl
her
short



VOWEL TEAM OR DOUBLE VOWEL SYLLABLE

I call this a vowel team syllable but some call it a double vowel syllable. In the vowel team syllable, there are two vowels together that make one sound. Students need to learn these sounds so the use of sound flashcards comes in handy.

Some examples of the vowel team syllable are:

boot

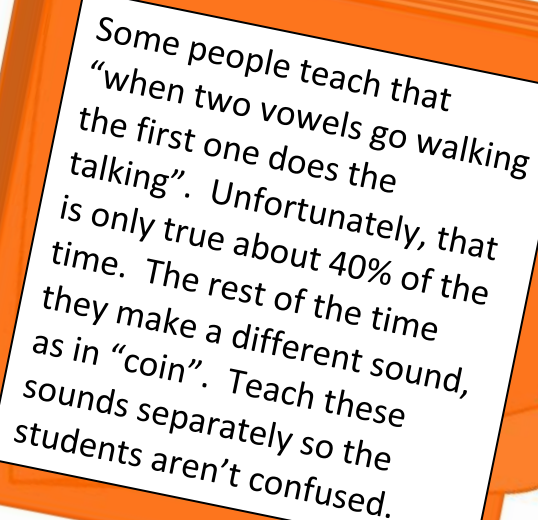
need

sauce

snow

sail

coin



Some people teach that "when two vowels go walking the first one does the talking". Unfortunately, that is only true about 40% of the time. The rest of the time they make a different sound, as in "coin". Teach these sounds separately so the students aren't confused.

REMEMBER...

Please remember this is just a very basic explanation of the six types of syllables. When our students with dyslexia are learning to read, they are taught many more rules of the language – sound options, exceptions to the rules, spelling rules, and syllable division to name just a few!

I hope this file helps you understand what your children and students are learning. Students with dyslexia can learn to read, no matter their age, with the right type of instruction.

Thank you!