



## Syllabication Activities

The following quick, fun activities can heighten students' awareness of syllable divisions (Carreker, 1999). Use the Common Syllable Frequency Charts on pages 196–199 to select syllables for the activities.

### Research Behind the Common Syllable Frequency Charts

One chart contains the **100 Most Common Non-word Syllables**. The other contains the **322 Most Frequent Syllables in the 5,000 Most Common Words in English**. Of these syllables, 222 or 69% are non-word syllables and 100 or 31% are word syllables. These syllables account for over 70% of the syllables used in these 5,000 words. Sakiey and Martin (1980) have shown that 92% of the syllables found in primary-grade basal readers have no more than two pronunciations; 66% of the syllables have only one pronunciation. Therefore, because these syllables are so regular and are used so often, knowing them will give students great flexibility and agility in reading multisyllabic words.

**1. Separated-Syllables Read:** Write words on the chalkboard syllable by syllable, leaving enough space between the word parts for students to see syllable divisions. Ask students to use their knowledge of common syllable spelling patterns (e.g., closed syllables, open syllables, consonant + *-le*) to read each word. Model blending as necessary by discussing syllable generalizations. When there's a question about a syllable's pronunciation, be sure to have students explain why they pronounced it as they did. It is critical that students be able to verbalize all six syllable-spelling patterns. When they've read each syllable in a word, have students read the word at a natural pace (Gillingham and Stillman, 1997).

fan tas tic	fa ble	ab sent
pump kin	ad ven ture	croc o dile



**2. Related-Syllables Read:** Write on the chalkboard a series of related open and closed syllables, such as *re, rem, em*. Have students use their knowledge of open and closed syllables to read each. *Alternative:* Create syllable lists using all prefixes, all suffixes, all consonant + *-le* syllables, or some other grouping.

re	rem	em	lo	lom	om
fi	fim	im	bo	bot	ot

**3. Multisyllabic Words Manipulation:** Divide words you've selected from upcoming reading selections into syllables. Write each syllable on a note card. Display the syllables that make up one of the words in jumbled order (e.g., *tas fan tic*). Have students arrange the syllables to form the word. When necessary, discuss the pronunciation and spelling generalizations of any confusing syllables.



**4. Syllable Scoop:** On a reproducible master, write 20 multisyllabic words from an upcoming story. Have students work with a partner to draw an arc, or to scoop with their finger, under each syllable as they read each word aloud. Then have them code each syllable by type (e.g., draw a macron over all open syllables with long vowel sounds, circle all the prefixes). *Alternative:* Have students code a specific type of syllable—circle all consonant + *-le* syllables or underline all closed syllables—and then read the words. Visually identifying the common syllable-spelling pattern makes reading the entire word easier.

table

**5. Speed Drills:** These quick-paced, timed drills (see pages 193–194 for samples) are fun. One drill contains 20 common syllables in random order. The other contains words with a specific syllable-spelling pattern (consonant + *-le*). Before timing students, give them a chance to practice reading the syllables or words on the drill. Then, give them one minute to read as many syllables or words as they can. This must be done one-on-one with each student. I suggest selecting five students each day to test. On a copy of the drill, mark the syllables or words the students mispronounce. Have students count the number of syllables or words read correctly and mark this on a progress chart. Students find it highly motivating to track their own progress.

## Sample Syllable Speed Drill

ing	un	ture	ex	dis	com	un	im	ter	ment
er	der	ing	dis	un	ver	er	ble	ble	tion
ter	num	ment	ver	ing	bout	der	ex	er	ple
tion	ble	er	ple	ple	re	dis	num	re	est
re	ment	bout	re	ble	der	ing	com	un	ver
ver	ture	un	ble	er	em	bout	tion	ing	ture
ex	est	ter	im	num	ex	ter	re	fi	com
bout	dis	com	tion	est	tion	ture	ver	dis	ex
com	im	est	num	ter	ment	ment	fi	der	bout
ple	fi	der	fi	ture	fi	est	ple	num	im

## Sample Consonant + le Word Speed Drill

bubble	circle	giggle	pebble	steeple	wiggle	fable	middle	sample	simple
battle	crinkle	handle	little	sparkle	puddle	bottle	steeple	rattle	settle
angle	fable	purple	shingle	stubble	uncle	angle	marble	needle	saddle
bridle	cattle	fizzle	middle	rattle	wrinkle	title	apple	uncle	single
apple	eagle	noble	simple	struggle	title	cattle	gentle	pebble	struggle
ankle	fiddle	kettle	puzzle	puddle	saddle	eagle	rumble	vehicle	ankle
double	maple	jungle	rumble	temple	vehicle	circle	giggle	purple	stubble
bottle	dazzle	kindle	mantle	sprinkle	bubble	fiddle	tumble	jungle	puzzle
bugle	marble	sample	single	tumble	double	bundle	maple	little	wrinkle
bundle	gentle	muzzle	needle	settle	battle	handle	kettle	bridle	wiggle