

# Syllable Sort

Grades 4 - 6



## Purpose of this activity:

To improve reading fluency by helping students break down and recognize syllables within words.

## What you'll need:

Index cards, markers, a list of multisyllabic words, and the "Rules for Breaking Words Into Syllables" reference card.

## How to play:

1. Place the index cards, markers, reference card, and word list on the work space. Read over the reference card carefully to make sure you understand the process and the steps for breaking a word into syllables.
2. Choose a marker that you will use to underline the vowel sounds in the words on the list (see the reference card for examples, if needed). Using your word list and the marker, underline the vowel sounds in the first word.
3. Look at the number of consonants (letters that are not vowels) between the first two vowels. If there is one letter between, split the word between the first vowel and the consonant. If there are two consonant between the vowels, split the word between the two consonants. If there are three vowel sounds, count the consonants between the second vowel and the third and then follow the rules as above.
4. Write the different syllables on separate index cards and place them on the work surface.
5. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you have all the words written on your index cards.
6. Mix the cards up and then sort them to form complete words.
7. Read the words out loud, saying them by their syllables and then as a whole word.

\*Remember to use the reference card each time you start a new word or when you are feeling unsure about the process.

# Rules for Breaking words into Syllables

## Reference Card

When trying to sound out a word, it is sometimes easier to break it into parts. Once you know how to break a word into parts and understand the rules for sounding out the parts of the word, you will be able to figure out most words. There will always be “rule breaker” words, but most of the time, the words follow the rules listed below.

### Definitions:

**Vowel:** a, e, i, o, and u are all vowels

**Consonants:** any letter except a, e, i, o, and u.

**Open Syllable:** a syllable that ends in a single vowel (the first syllable in mu/sic ends with the letter u, which is an open syllable).

**Closed Syllable:** a syllable that ends in a consonant (the second syllable in mu/sic ends in c which is a consonant so it is a closed syllable).

Below are the steps to breaking a word into parts:

1. Look for the vowel sounds in the word. We are looking for the vowel letters in the word (but remember that there may be two vowels next to each other that only make one sound). Underline the vowels so they are easy to see.
2. Count the consonants that are between the vowels. If there is only one consonant between the vowels, split the word between the first vowel and the consonant (total would be split like this: to/tal). If there are two consonants between the vowels, split the word between the two consonants (setting would be split like this: set/ting).
3. Once the word is split into the syllables, look to see whether the vowel is at the end of the syllable (open syllable) or if there is a consonant at the end of the syllable (closed syllable). If the vowel is at the end of the syllable, it will say the long vowel sound (in mu/sic the u is at the end of the syllable so says it's own name). If the syllable ends in a consonant, the vowel closest to the end of the syllable will usually say it's short sound (in mu/sic the last syllable ends with a c so the i before it says it's short sound).
4. If the word has more than two vowel sounds (three or more) start by splitting the first part of the word by looking for the first two vowel sounds and following the above rules. Then look for the second and third vowel sounds and split that part of the word.