

# Syllabication Method: Spot and Dot

## Syllable Division for Closed Syllable Words

1. Instruct students to spot the vowels in the following word by placing a dot over each vowel.

v e l v e t

2. Ask students to connect the dots.

v e l v e t

3. Ask students to circle the consonants between the dots and divide between the two consonants:

v e l v e t

4. Have the students sound out each syllable, “vel” and the “vet,” and blend both syllables together to read “velvet.”

Students often find that it is easy to read a two-syllable word by using the “rule of thumb.” Tell them to cover the second syllable with their thumb, read the first syllable, and then lift their thumb to read the whole word.

- When the first syllable ends with a digraph (ch, sh, th, wh, ck) divide the word after the digraph and treat the digraph as one consonant sound, digraphs always stay together.

Example: dish / pan

- Also, if “ng” or “nk” appears between two vowels with another consonant, treat it as one consonant.

Example: trink / et

Practice: words with a \* denote this word contains a schwa sound in one or more syllables

basket*	submit	cactus	picnic
vanquish	napkin	goblin	witness
hobgoblin	malcontent*	Atlantic	fantastic

## Closed Syllable Words with Blends (VC/CV, VCCCV)

Point out that some words that contain two or more consonants between the vowels may be divided as follows: If student sees a familiar consonant blend between the vowels, they will divide the word before or after the blend:

Example: h u m / d r u m

Practice: words with a \* denote this word contains a schwa sound in one or more syllables

complex*	constrict*	hundred	abstract
pumpkin	dandruff	tantrum	express
encampment	consulting*	calisthenics	transatlantic

### Syllable Division for Magic – e Words

1. Instruct students to spot the vowels in the following word by placing a dot over each vowel. Cross out the magic e as it does not make a sound.

• •  
casca~~d~~e

2. Ask students to connect the dots.

— •  
casca~~d~~e

3. Ask students to circle the consonants between the dots and divide between the two consonants:

• •  
casca~~d~~e

4. Have the students sound out each syllable, “cas” and the “cade,” and blend both syllables together to read “cascade.”

Practice: words with a \* denote this word contains a schwa sound in one or more syllables

compote	concrete	contrive*	reptile
cupcake	bathrobe	combine*	dislike
demonstrate*	postponement	recognize*	distribute

### Dividing Open and Closed Multisyllabic Words

#### Dividing Before the Consonant

Students have learned that single vowels at the end of a word or syllable may be long. However, they have not experienced vowels in the middle of a word (i.e., m u / s i c). Words following the VCV pattern may be divided before or after the consonant, depending upon the word.

✱Teach division before the consonant first: V/CV

1. Demonstrate with the following word:

bison

2. Have the students dot the vowels in bison

b i s o n

3. Point out that we have a new pattern and demonstrate dividing before the consonant.

b i / s o n

4. Have students identify the syllable types, mark the vowels with a macron or breve, sound out each syllable, and blend to read the word.

b ī / s ö n

Practice: words with a \* denote this word contains a schwa sound in one or more syllables

humid	student	bonus	modem
pilot*	basic	crocus	raven
absolute*	coconut*	develop*	impolite*

### Dividing after the Consonant (Dividing Options)

1. Some words will not make sense with the first division:

c ā / b ĩ n

2. This word, according to the division pattern, could be pronounced: ca /bin.
3. The second division choice (after the consonant) provides the correct pronunciation.

c ä b / ĩ n

When teaching this strategy, be sure to use words that are familiar to the student so they can recognize which pronunciation is appropriate.

Practice: words with a \* denote this word contains a schwa sound in one or more syllables

comic	panic	denim*	radish
tonic	blemish	famish	lemon*
cabinet*	management	microscope*	profited

## Syllable Division for Vowel Digraphs and Diphthongs

1. Vowel digraphs are two vowels that make one sound. Vowel diphthongs are one or more vowels or a vowel in combination with other consonants (e.g. aw, igh, ew). Since they make one sound, underline the two vowels making the team and place one dot over top of the team. Mark all other vowels with a dot.

• •  
seamstress

2. Connect the dots.

• — •  
seamstress

3. Circle the consonants between the vowels. Decide if there are blends or digraphs that may stay together.

• •  
seamstress

4. Have the students sound out each syllable, “seam” and “stress” and blend both syllables together to read “seamstress”. You may want to have the students mark up each syllable type for practice.

Practice: words with a \* denote this word contains a schwa sound in one or more syllables

repeat	soapstone	mailbox	frighten
outwit	expound	rescue	August
nautical*	bazooka*	heavenly	euglena

## Syllable Division for R-Controlled Syllables (Bossy-R)

Any r-controlled syllable or bossy-r (b-r) is a vowel or pair of vowels followed by the letter r. The r obscures the sound of the vowel so that it sounds neither short nor long.

1. Underline the r-controlled pair in the word. This is considered to be one vowel sound and gets one dot. Place a dot over every other vowel.

• •  
perhaps

2. Connect the dots.

• — •  
perhaps

- Circle the consonants between the vowels. Decide if there are blends or digraphs that may stay together.

perhaps

- Have the students sound out each syllable, “per” and “haps” and blend both syllables together to read “perhaps”. You may want to have the students mark up each syllable type for practice.

Practice: words with a \* denote this word contains a schwa sound in one or more syllables

sterling	surplus	vermin	skirmish
birthday	murder	harvest	bombard
Saturday	garnishment	comforting	marketer

### Syllable Division for Consonant –le Syllables

The consonant –le syllable is unusual in that it doesn’t contain an actual sounded vowel. The “e” is silent, but when the syllable is pronounced there is a distinct /ǘ/ sound before the “l”. The consonant –le syllable will always be in a multisyllabic word and will always be the last syllable in the word.

- Instruct students to spot the vowels in the following word by placing a dot over each vowel. Circle the consonant-le syllable.

stumble

- Draw a line between the syllables.

stum|ble

- Have the students sound out each syllable, “stum” and the “ble,” and blend both syllables together to read “stumble.”

Practice: words with a \* denote this word contains a schwa sound in one or more syllables

handle	simple	nimble	spindle
ankle	candle	dimple	sniffle
soluble	vehicle*	ventricle*	multiple*