

How to divide words into syllables

Date: _____

A syllable is a unit of pronunciation that has one vowel sound, and may or may not be surrounded by consonants. For example, there is one syllable in cat, two syllables in monkey and three syllables in elephant.

The syllables help us in:

- Pronouncing words.
- Rhyming words for poems.

Here are some rules to separate words into syllables:

Rules	Examples
1) Monosyllabic words cannot be divided. a. When two vowels carry one sound, they cannot be divided. b. Silent "e"	a) bread b) make
2) When two consonants which are the same separate two vowel sounds, can always be divided.	rab·bit let·ter
3) If the consonants are different, then: a. They go with the second vowel if the first vowel is short. b. They are divided if the first one is long. Never split 2 consonants that make only 1 sound when pronounced together and aren't the same letter, for example: ch, sh, ph, th, wh & gh.	a) be·tween b) per·son catch·er fool·ish ge·og·ra·phy with·out sleigh
4) Use prefixes and suffixes to separate syllables.	re·turn un·usual pay·ing
5) Compound nouns are always divided between the two words.	some·thing how·ever ba·by·sit·ter

Exercises

Divide the following words into syllables and then write the number of syllables. Also identify which rule is being used.

Rule # _____

football _____

motorcycle _____

greenhouse _____

Rule # _____

moon _____

love _____

life _____

Rule # _____

number _____

teacher _____

philosophy _____

Rule # _____

preview _____

triangle _____

democracy _____

Rule # _____

coffee _____

buffet _____

different _____

Short vowels

The most common sound for each vowel is its "short" sound:

ă, pronounced /æ/ as in ap-ple, pan, or mat,
 ě, pronounced /ɛ/ as in el-e-phant, pen, or met,
 ĩ, pronounced /i/ as in in-sect, pin, or mitt,

ö, pronounced /ɒ/ as in oc-to-pus, os-trich or up-on,
 ů, pronounced /ʌ/ as in um-brel-la or mutt.

Long vowels

Long A (ā), pronounced /eɪ/ as in ate or mate,
 Long E (ē), pronounced /i:/ as in eat or meat (or meet or mete-- all pronounced the same),
 Long I (ī), pronounced /aɪ/ as in mite or might,
 Long O (ō), pronounced /oʊ/ as in oats or moat, and
 Long U (ū), pronounced /ju:/ in mute.

Silent 'e' rule: When a vowel and consonant are followed by an 'e', the 'e' is almost always silent, but it causes the preceding vowel to be long. (Examples: ate, plane, Pete, nine, note, cube, and flute.)