

Syllable Pictures

On the following pages you will find 24 pictures (8 x 1 syllable words, 8 x 2 syllable words and 8 x 3 syllable words). They are ideal for introducing the concept of syllables to students in small groups or individually.

You have the option of using the cards with the words written underneath or with the correct number of dots (one per syllable). For a student who is in the early stages of understanding syllables, following the dots with their finger as they say the word can give a clue to aid success. However, do ensure that students are able to count syllables without the dots when their confidence grows.

The following activities increase in complexity so move through them gradually as the students begin to get a feel for syllables. Some children may need to spend several weeks at the early tasks depending on their aptitude for phonological awareness and how often they have opportunity to practice the skill.

1. Introducing the pictures

Shuffle the cards with dots and place them face down on the table. Turn over a card, ask the student to name the picture.

Tell the student that you are going to help him or her to break the word up into parts or syllables. Explain that some words only have one syllable, even if they have several letters. The syllables are like the beat or rhythm of the word.

Repeat the word again and emphasize the syllable structure. Follow the dots with your finger as you do this. Now ask the student to do the same.

Turn over a second picture in the set and repeat.

2. Counting syllables

Use the set of pictures with words written underneath. Shuffle the cards and place them face down in a stack.

Use the 1,2,3 baseboard and help the student to sort the words onto the correct pile according to the number of syllables in the word.

If the student finds this task difficult, help by clearly pronouncing and then clapping the syllables in the word. Have the student clap the beats and count them.

If the student still has difficulty then carry out the same task using the cards with dots as a visual reminder until their awareness develops.

3. Choose the odd one out from four pictures

Lay four pictures out on the table and explain that one picture is the odd one out because it doesn't have the same number of syllables as the other words.

Ask the student to name each picture and count the syllables in the word. The student should then decide which card is the odd one out.

If the task is too challenging, repeat the word after them, with the emphasis on the syllables. Help the student to clap the beats in the word and use the picture with dots underneath if necessary.

4. Clapping syllables from a group of words (group game)

Choose a topic or group of words (I find animals or brands of cars work really well for this game). Have the students raise their hand to name a word from that category. The group should then clap the word together and decide how many syllables are in the word.

You can also set a challenge by splitting the class into sections and asking them each to search for words with different numbers of syllables (one group finds one syllable words, another group finds those with two and the third finds words that have three or more syllables.)