

Breaking Words into Syllables

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Play this fun game online to practice breaking words into syllables:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/game/en01soun-game-syllables-factory>

How to identify the number of syllables:

1] Say the word out loud.

2] As you say the word, clap each vowel sound that you say. Each clap makes a beat, which marks a syllable.

Say these words out loud and clap out the syllables:

look	we say one vowel sound, that's one clap, so there's 1 syllable.
voice	we say one vowel sound, that's one clap, so there's 1 syllable
walking	wal-king we say two vowels, that's two claps, so there are 2 syllables.
carpet	car-pet we say two vowels, that's two claps, so there are 2 syllables.
carefully	care-fu-llly we say three vowels, that's three claps, so there are 3 syllables.
consistent	con-sis-tent we say three vowels, that's three claps, so there are 3 syllables.



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Here are some more examples:

Clap out the syllables as you say each word out loud.

Target Word	Syllables	IPA	Number of syllables
dog	dog	/dɒg/	1
meet	meet	/mi:t/	1
nice	nice	/naɪs/	1
nicer	ni-cer	/'naɪ.sə/	2
project	pro-ject	/'prɒ.dʒekt/	2
table	ta-ble	/'teɪ.bəl /	2
reporter	re-por-ter	/rə'pɔː.tə/	3
radio	ra-di-o	/'reɪ.di.jou/	3
adventure	ad-ven-ture	/əd'ven.tʃə/	3
Impossible	im-po-ssi-ble	/ɪm'pɒ.sɪ.bəl /	4
operation	o-pe-ra-tion	/,ɒ.pə.'reɪ.ʃən/	4
discovery	di-sco-ve-ry	/də'skʌ.və.ri/	4
congratulations	con-gra-tu-la-tions	/kən,græ.tjʊ'leɪ.ʃənz/	5
qualification	qua-li-fi-ca-tion	/,kwɒ.lə.fə'keɪ.ʃən/	5
undeniable	un-de-ni-a-ble	/,ʌn.dɪ'naɪ.jə.bəl /	5



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Things you need to know:

- 1] Each syllable in English contains a vowel.
- 2] Be aware that we use sounds when we speak. We use letters when we write. For breaking words into syllables it is the way we pronounce the word that is important, not the spelling. We focus on the number of vowel **sounds**, not the letters.
- 3] Make sure you can identify English consonant letters and vowel letters. Remember there are five vowel letters in English: a, e, i, o, u.
- 4] Sometimes one vowel sound is made up of more than one vowel letter. For example in the word 'laugh' the two vowel letters 'au' form one sound. The letters 'au' make the single vowel sound /a:/ like in 'car'. The word 'laugh' has one syllable because we pronounce one vowel sound.
- 5] Beware silent letters, like in the words 'late' and 'name'. 'Late' and 'name' have one syllable as we only pronounce one vowel when we say these words. The letter 'e' is silent.
- 6] A diphthong vowel sound makes one syllable. For example /ou/ makes one syllable in the word 'most' - /moʊst/ and /eɪ/ in the word 'rate' - /reɪt/.
- 7] English words can have one syllable or many syllables. Most words have 1, 2, 3 or 4 syllables.

