

## The Syllables Pack

The Syllables Pack provides a variety of resources which enable a wide range of teaching games and activities. The Pack is appropriate for school and home use.

As with all of our game resources, it is possible to use the Syllables Pack on its own, or in conjunction with our other resources or a range of game components or resources you may already have.

### Contents

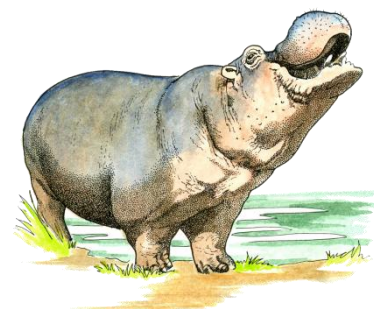
The Pack contains 25 picture cards. These are arranged into sets of 5 x sets of five cards. One set for 1-syllable words, one set for 2-syllable words, etc.

1 Syllable	2 Syllables	3 Syllables	4 Syllables	5 Syllables
dog	fountain	dinosaur	caterpillar	electricity
jug	kennel	Inuit (Eskimo)	rhinoceros	hippopotamus
clown	necklace	motorbike	television	corrugated iron
bird	bucket	violin	vacuum cleaner	refrigerator
church	surfer	parachute	Australia	combine harvester

### General

Syllabification is the ability to break down words into the separate beats or syllables. Examples are as follows:

Horse	1 syllable
Ta-ble	2 syllables
El-e-phant	3 syllables
Au-to-ma-tic	4 syllables
Mul-ti-pli-ca-tion	5 syllables



Syllabification is an aspect of phonological awareness (awareness of sounds and sound patterns in language) and it is a particularly important skill because it is essential for literacy development. When reading, children learn to recognise some words as whole entities (sight vocabulary) without necessarily having to break them down into parts to decode them. Likewise, they learn some spellings automatically, by rote, without necessarily being able to work out the spelling from the sound.

This is a natural stage and it is important that children acquire these skills. However, a child needs to learn to break words down into component sounds or syllables if he is to work out spellings for himself, or decode unfamiliar words for himself when reading.

The ability to use syllabification is developmental. Very young children develop an awareness of sound patterns and rhythms in language through listening to language and then by experimenting themselves. Nursery rhymes have a very strong and distinct rhythm and pattern. Sharing nursery rhymes and, with older children, other forms of poetry, is particularly important for the development of phonological awareness. Tapping or clapping the rhythms is very useful and is usually enjoyed. However, it is important to include other activities which will help children develop the ability to syllabify. This is the reason we have developed this pack of picture cards. Children with learning disabilities may have particular difficulty acquiring this skill and extra reinforcement is often necessary.

### **Background Information**

Syllabification has two aspects. There are extensive rules about dividing written words into syllables and categorising syllables according to whether they are 'open' or 'closed'. Many teachers teach this aspect very successfully and find it a useful way of making learners more aware of word structure. If you wish to follow this route, there are many sources of information, including the website above.



However, it is our belief that auditory syllabification is of more practical importance for literacy. Auditory syllabification is the ability to identify aurally how many syllables ('chunks') there are in a word. Unless you can do this, you will never progress successfully to spelling multi-syllabic words ('preliminary'). Some common spelling mistakes ('remember') indicate that the learner cannot cope with auditory syllabification.

### **Syllables Rules**

Every syllable has a vowel. Therefore, the number of times you hear the sound of a vowel in a word is the same as the number of syllables in that word. There is a way of calculating the number of syllables in a word as follows:

1. Count the number of vowels (a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y) in the word.

2. Subtract any silent vowels (like silent 'e' at the end of a word).
3. Subtract 1 vowel from every diphthong (combination of two vowels together, e.g. 'ei').
4. The number you are left with should be the number of syllables in the word

This sounds quite complex. There is a much easier way to establish the number of syllables in a word by doing it in an auditory way!

1. Place your hand just underneath your chin (palm down), so that your chin strikes the hand when you say a word.
2. Say the word as you would normally say it. The number of syllables is the number of times your chin strikes your hand.

There is also a handy automatic calculator (syllables dictionary) at [www.howmanysyllables.com](http://www.howmanysyllables.com).

## Game Suggestions

Before using picture resources, it is always a good idea to go through the pictures with the child and ensure that he or she knows what the picture is supposed to represent. This is also a good stimulus for language discussion.



Explain what a syllable is and do a little practice using some of the cards. If the child has difficulty, get him to put his hand just under his chin with the back of the hand upwards. Then get him to say the word very slowly and notice how many times his chin hits the hand. This is the number of syllables in that word.

### Game 1 - Sorting

Initially use only 1, 2 and 3 syllable word cards. Get the child to sort them into piles according to the number of syllables. When the child is confident with this, add in 4 and then 5 syllable words.

### Game 2 – Syllables snap

Play syllables snap with the cards. Divide the cards equally between the players and say the word out loud as you place it on the pile. 'Snap' on two consecutive cards with the same number of syllables. *Note: Be careful about using 'snap' games with groups, as it relies on processing speed. You are likely to find that one child always wins (and one always loses), which is very demotivating for the weaker ones. For this reason, Snap may not be a suitable game with some groups.*

### Game 3 – Odd one out

Place several (3-4) cards in a row with all except one having the same number of syllables. The child has to pick the 'odd one out'.

### Game 4 – Matching pairs

Vary by including pairs of words with the same number of syllables. The child has to identify the matching pair.

### Game 5 (you will need a wipe-clean gameboard)

Use a wipe-clean gameboard (see gameboard set). Write the numbers 1-5 into the spaces on the gameboard at random and spread the syllables cards face upwards around the gameboard. Each player throws the dice and moves that number of spaces. He then has to find a card with the same number of syllables as the number on that space. The winner is the one with the most cards when all players have reached the end of the board. You can make this simpler by using only one counter, instead of each player having their own counter. All players move the same counter.



### Game 6 (using gameboard)

Place the syllables cards face downwards in a pack. When each player moves, he has to turn over the top card and say how many syllables it has. If he is correct, he stays on the space. If not, he has to return to his original space.

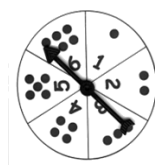


### Game 7

Deal out 5 cards each (3-4 players) and place the remainder face downwards in the centre. Each player holds the cards in his hands so that only he can see them. Place the word list card in the centre, so that all players can refer to it. Each player takes turns to pick a card off the top of the pack. He then decides to keep it or discard it face upwards next to the main pack. During his turn, he can also ask any other player for a card to complete his set of 5 cards with the same number of syllables. If that person has the card, he has to hand it over and the player asking gets another turn. Players can only ask for a card if they already have one in the same set. The winner is the first to collect all 5 cards in a set.

### Game 8 - Spinner game

You will need a spinner with 6 numbers. Spread all of the picture cards face up on the table. Each player takes turn to spin the spinner. He then has to make that number using the picture cards. For example, if he spins a 5, he has to find a picture with 5 syllables. If all of that number have gone, he can then use other cards to make up that number. He could take a 2-syllable card and a 3-syllable card. The winner is the person with the most pictures when all the cards have gone.



### **Game 9 - Spinner game variation**

Play as above, but allow players to 'steal' from each other instead of using more than one card to achieve that number of syllables.

### **Game 10 - Speed game** *(only suitable if you have reasonably well behaved players!)*

Spread all of the cards face up on the table. Give each child a different number (between one and five). Tell the players they have to try to be the first to find all five cards with that number of syllables when you say 'go'.

### **Game 11 – Eat the Teacher gameboard**

The 'Eat the Teacher' gameboard, which is part of the A3 Gameboard Set, is specifically designed as a syllables game. Rules for 'Eat the Teacher' are on the back of the gameboard. It's a popular game (can't think why!).



## **Memory Games**

### **Game 12**

Select cards so that you have two cards each of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 syllables. Shuffle them and place them face down in a regular pattern. Take turns turning 2 cards over. When a player turns two which have the same number of syllables, he keeps the pair and has another go. The winner is the one with the most cards when they have all been turned over.

### **Game 13**

Place a selection of cards face upwards on the table. Allow the learner to study the cards for a few minutes, telling them to remember which cards are there. Then ask the learner to close their eyes and you remove a card, rearranging the others slightly to disguise the 'gap'. Ask the learner to open their eyes and tell you which card is missing. Good for visual memory. Encourage the child to say the items out loud (reinforces auditory strategies).

### **Game 14**

Use a small box or bag. Place several cards into it, one at a time, showing the learner each card and saying its letter (or naming the picture). When all the cards are in the box/bag, ask the learner to tell you which ones are inside. Start with one 3 or 4 and build up as the learner's memory improves.

### **Game 15**

Spread all the cards face upwards on the table. Explain that you want the learner to remember which cards you touched. Then touch 3 cards at random, saying the letter/picture name out loud. Ask the learner to touch the same cards, in the same order. Increase the number touched as the learner becomes more confident.

Vary the above activity by asking the learner to touch the cards in reverse order. This builds working memory and develops concentration. Be careful, though. It is **much** more difficult.

### **Game 16 - Memory challenge**

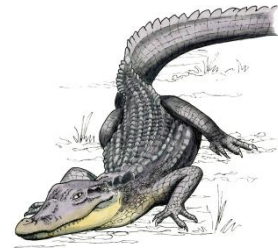
A useful (and fun) memory challenge, which develops auditory sequential memory, working memory, word retrieval and sequencing:

Place 3 or 4 picture cards face up in a row, saying the name of the picture out loud as you do it. Then get your learner to go through them with you, saying the name again out loud.

Go through the row, turning each card face down as you both say the name again out loud. Then ask your learner to name each card from the beginning of the row before you turn it face up to check. If your learner gets to the end of the row with all the pictures correct, add another card, saying the name aloud.

Each time you turn the cards face down, you both say the words (this develops auditory memory). Then the learner goes through independently, saying the word before you turn the picture over to check. Each time the learner gets it correct, you add a new picture card at the end of the row. The challenge is to see how many pictures you can do.

Variation: It is very useful to vary this from time to time. After your learner has done a couple of correct 'recitals', challenge them to recite the pictures backwards (turning the pictures over from the end!).



### **Other game/activity ideas for language development**

#### **Sight vocabulary**

Use a non-permanent pen and write the names of objects beneath the picture to help develop a sight vocabulary.

#### **Expressive language**

Place the pile of words face down in the middle of the table. Learners take turns to turn over a card. Each time a learner turns a card over he/she has to give a sentence containing that word + any previous words he has turned over. In other words, the learner gives a sentence with the first word he turns up. The next time he picks a card, he has to give a sentence with both words, and so on. Leads to loads of silly sentences and lots of laughs!

#### **Additional materials**

There is an extensive range of computer activities and printable resources on the Steps software program. A 15-day free trial can be downloaded from the website.

*Note: We have used 'he' throughout to avoid being long-winded. No offence intended!*

## General Notes

With most of these games, it is possible to be creative about which word you use. For example, when playing the 'Eat the Teacher' game, it is an advantage to have a word with more syllables. We encourage learners to think outside the square! For example, the following picture could be:



**boots** (1 syllable)

or

**hiking boots** (3 syllables)

The following picture could be:



**church** (one syllable)

or

**Christchurch Cathedral** (we'll leave you to work that one out!)

## Have fun!



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