

Deep Dive into: HOW TO DEFINE OPEN AND CLOSED SYLLABLES FOR SPELLING

This week you will be building and using a wall chart, Which sound for the single vowel? (Master F-5). You will be teaching your students to answer this question by understanding in which type of syllable the vowel is found.

A syllable is a word or word "chunk" containing one vowel sound and all the consonants that are spoken with it. Since single vowels can represent more than one sound, knowing the rules about English syllable types and how the syllable type affects the vowel sound helps in decoding words and spelling words. See Margaret Bishop's *The ABC's and All Their Tricks*, pages 24-26. Approximately 65% of all English syllables are "closed syllables." A closed syllable is spelled with a single vowel and one or more consonants following it that "close" the vowel in that syllable. The consonant/s act like a door that closes the vowel into the syllable. In a closed syllable or a one-syllable word that is a closed syllable, the vowel regularly represents its first sound. Basic Code words are all closed syllable words because that is the way we keep the vowel representing its first sound. You have been using many closed syllable words with your students. You will teach the top half of the chart as formal instruction for closed syllable by reviewing any of the words you have used during informal spelling practice.

Another basic syllable type in English that will be used in this week's spelling lessons is called an "open syllable." An open syllable occurs when a single vowel is found at the end of the syllable. It is "open" because no consonant follows it in the syllable to close it from the next syllable. In most open syllables, the consistent vowels A, E, O, and U represent the second sound, which is also the "name" of the letter (with [u] it can be the second or third sound /U/ or /oo/). Once a phonogram is representing any sound other than the first, we are no longer in Basic Code. A common rule in spelling English words states the vowel sound regularity of the open syllable, especially with A, E, O and U which are called the Consistent Vowels: "A, E, O, U usually say, /A/, /E/, /O/, /U/ or /oo/ at the end of a syllable." See Vowel Rule (VR) 1, English Spelling Rules (Master C-3). Many of the short English words demonstrate this spelling rule, e.g., no, so, me, he.

