

SYLLABLE

SAVVY

SPELLING

**A SIMPLE STRATEGY
THAT SPELLS SUCCESS**

Syl³ la² ble³

Sav³ vy²

Spel⁴ ling⁴

1. Write the word in syllables.
2. Compare each letter to the answer key.
3. Write the number correct for each syllable.

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Syllable Savvy

Welcome to the world of Syllable Savvy Spelling. This simple technique will not only improve your students' spelling scores this year, but will provide them with a successful strategy that will improve their spelling ability for years to come. In fact, you will likely find that your own ability to spell difficult words is improved after teaching this technique.

THREE COLUMN APPROACH

Each lesson is contained on one page, and provides one week, or five school days, of spelling work. You will notice that each page has three columns. The first is the Phonetic Column. This allows the student to sound out the word using the common dictionary symbols for each phonetic sound. The second column displays the word as it is usually written. The third column is the Syllable Column and prints the words in syllables and gives the number of letters in each syllable. This column prompts the student to focus on the syllables in each word, and the specific letters in the syllables.

PHONETIC COLUMN

The Phonetic Column gives the dictionary symbols to allow the student to sound out the word. If the lesson page is folded the long way so that the second two columns are not shown, the student can only see the phonetic column. The students then know which word to spell, and can attempt to spell the word without having the actual word in front of them. This has two benefits. First, the student has a chance to practice the words each day without

having the answer right in plain view. Second, it also allows the student to work independently, rather than have a teacher or partner dictate the word without them seeing it.

The symbols used in Syllable Savvy are common symbols used in dictionaries. The exception is the short vowel sound. This is the sound one would hear preceding a "ck" at the end of the word (ie. back, deck, sick, lock, duck). In many dictionaries, the short sound is marked with a curved line, somewhat like a smile, over the letter. In Syllable Savvy, the short vowel sound is written as the vowel without any other symbols. The long vowel sound is marked with the standard flat line over the vowel. (ie, **bā**ke, **mē**, **lī**ke, **hō**pe, **tū**ne)

At the bottom of each lesson page, is a pronunciation key which lists the sounds indicated by the different marks. Apart from the short and long vowel sounds, it is not necessary for the student to attempt to memorize any of the other marks. Of course, they will get much more familiar with these marks by using Syllable Savvy Spelling.

One other sound should be mentioned, which is the schwa sound, indicated by the symbol which looks like an upside down e. This is the vowel sound in the non-stressed syllables which rhymes with "duh." It may be spelt with an "a", "e", "i", "o", "u", or "y".

The pronunciation marks provided are based on one common pronunciation for the word. However, it should be noted, that many words have different pronunciations, many of which are regional. If the pronunciation listed is different than that used in your home, you have three options. One, the word on the lesson may be erased with white out, and the familiar

pronunciation substituted. Or, the more familiar pronunciation can be written above the one on the lesson page, emphasizing to the students that there are indeed, more than one correct way to pronounce a word. Finally, one can acknowledge the differences with the student, and leave the word as it is. Probably, it is best to use whatever approach is preferred by the student.

PHONETIC COLUMN: A WARNING

It should be noted that some younger children in lower grades may have difficulty with the Phonetic Column. It may be confusing to some students when they are presented with the "wrong" letters and the phonetic marks may reinforce using the wrong letters. Of course, the purpose of Syllable Savvy is to promote correct spelling, and if a student finds the phonetic "clues" confusing, this is counter-productive. However, other aspects of Syllable Savvy can still be used. If you determine the phonetic marks are confusing to your student, you may simply cut the Phonetic Column off of the Lesson Page.

If the Phonetic Column is eliminated for younger students, there are a few techniques that can be employed to keep the benefit of the phonetic clues. First, a picture or sample sentence can be written on one side of an index card, and the other two columns glued to the opposite side. For instance, if the spelling word is "ocean", the first side could have the sentence, "Let's go swim in the o....." and have the waves of the sea drawn on the card. The opposite side of the card could list the regular spelling and the syllable column.

Another technique to allow the student to work independently on their spelling list without seeing the word each time they practice it; is to record the word and a sentence using the word with a tape player or computer. The student can listen to hear the spoken word and then write the word on paper.

Of course, the old fashioned way of having a parent or partner read the word list to the student can still be used. One of the values of Syllable Savvy Spelling is that it allows the student to study the words independently. Some younger students, however, are not necessarily ready for that independence and do better working with someone else.

SYLLABLE COLUMN

The Syllable Column breaks each word into its syllables. This is the natural way to write complex words. It also has the advantage of giving the students syllables that are usually only two to four letters long. That is much less intimidating than facing a long word with what appears to be an unattainable number of letters.

After each syllable, the number of letters in that syllable is displayed in superscript. This helps the student to focus on the specific letters in each syllable.

The number at the end of the syllable also aids the students in correcting their own work. Often students will look at a longer word and think it looks "about right" and not compare each letter on their list and the master list. Day after day, this reinforces writing the word incorrectly. By writing the word in syllables, then recording how many letters they correctly wrote in each syllable, the student receives immediate feedback. It

also becomes more obvious to them if one letter is incorrect.

FIVE EXTRA SPACES

Each lesson consists of 20 words. However, only 15 words are listed on the Lesson Page. This is because it is important to include in the students' study of spelling those words that are particularly important for them. These words can include words they misspelled from previous spelling lessons, words they misspell in their creative writing, or words that are part of their science, social studies, or other unit studies.

STUDENT WORK PAGE

Another part of the Syllable Savvy Spelling technique is the Student Work Page. This is a simple sheet of notebook paper folded in half the long way. When the paper is folded in half, it divides the page into four columns, two on the front and two on the back.

In a five day school week, the student will practice the words four times. Each time, he will use the same Student Work Page, but will be writing the words on a different column.

This Student Work Page can have several advantages. First, the teacher can look at the Work Page any time during the week and see how the student is progressing. It also allows students to look at their own progress to determine which words they need to spend more time practicing. Finally, if the daily practice is used as a quiz grade as described below, the teacher will have all the practice assignments in one place. Of course, it is essential to keep the Work Page where it will not be lost. It may be helpful to have a clipboard where the Lesson Page and Student Work Page are kept together. Or as an

alternative, they may be kept inside a colored school folder.

HOW IT WORKS THE FIRST DAY

The first day of the lesson, the student will first encounter the new spelling words. For many students, this is most effective if it is done with the teaching parent. After the first day, the student will practice the words independently. Of course, some older students prefer to work independently, and once they have been taught the steps below, they may prefer to do even the first day's work on their own.

As mentioned earlier, the Lesson Page can be folded so that only the Phonetic Column is showing. Then, the following steps can be performed.

1. Look at the pronunciation of the first word on the list. Help the student sound the word out.
2. Open the page so the spelling of the word in the middle column is visible. For most of the words in this program, the word will be familiar to the students.
3. Look at each syllable in the Syllable Column. Ask, "Is this the way you would expect this syllable to be written? Is there anything tricky or difficult here?" Thankfully, most syllables aren't too difficult.
4. Any letters that are not expected, can be underlined with a colored pencil. This is an optional step; but some students find that the focus required to identify the unexpected letters helps to cement them in their memory.
5. Fold the Lesson Page over again so the correct spelling is not visible. Then the student will

- write the word on the first column of their Student Work Page. They should write it in syllables with breaks between each syllable.
6. After the entire word is written, the student will look at the Syllable Column again to correct the word. The student checks the number of letters in each syllable with the number of letters written on the Student Work Page. If the letters are all correct, the number is written at the end of the syllable on the Student Work Page. Syllable by syllable the student checks the word they have written with the word on the Lesson Page.
 7. If all syllables in the word were written correctly, the student indicates that they got the word right. This can be done by the student drawing a star, smiley face, or any other symbol. This reinforces the students' success.
 8. If the word written on the Student Work Page is incorrect, the student studies the word on the Lesson Page again, and rewrites the word on the next line below.
 9. After the first word is written correctly, the student progresses to the next word on the list. Each step is followed until all the words are written correctly on the Student Work Page.

HOW IT WORKS

2nd - 4th DAYs

On the second, third, and fourth days of the week, the student will practice writing their words using the same technique. Even if they worked with the teacher the first day, they can

usually do these practice sessions alone. Of course, the teacher can always check the Student Work Page to determine that the student is staying on course.

SPELLING TEST

5th Day

The last day of the week, the spelling test is given. This can be done one of two ways. The teacher can dictate each word, then have the student write it on a clean sheet of paper. Or as an alternative, the Phonetic Column can be separated from the rest of the Lesson Page with scissors, and the students can independently take their test.

GRADING

Usually, with a twenty word spelling list, each word is worth five points. Therefore, the grade to the test can be determined by multiplying the number of incorrect words on the test by five, and subtracting the product from 100 percent.

The daily practices can be graded and counted as quiz grades for students who need additional help in spelling. On a quiz, each syllable can be counted as two points. Therefore, a student is getting partial credit for the syllables they write correctly. The words written on the first day are not included as a quiz grade, as the student is encountering the word for the first time. The three quiz grades can be averaged. The quiz grades can be equal to one test grade. This gives credit to the student for keeping on track and making progress through the week.

SPELLING GUIDE

A one page spelling guide is included which explains some of the techniques used in this program. It should be reviewed at the beginning of the year and referred to as needed.

Spelling Guide

1. Short and long vowel sounds

Use the short sound unless the long sound is indicated.

a	hat	ā	bay
e	bed	ē	bee
i	big	ī	light
o	log	ō	rope
u	sun	ū	tune

2 Stressed syllables are indicated by italicized letters in Levels 5 and above.

bē gun

3 The Schwa ə

This symbol designates an unstressed “uh” sound.

A short u is used if the syllable is stressed.

hum bəg humbug hum³ bug³

Both have the same sound, but the short u is stressed and the schwa is not stressed.

4 Open and closed syllables

A syllable with a short vowel sound is usually closed by a consonant at the end.

A syllable with a long vowel sound is usually open with the vowel at the end of the syllable.

tā bl table ta² ble³
ta blit tablet tab³ let³

In the word “tablet,” the “b” is usually pronounced with the second syllable and not the first. However, since the “a” is a short vowel sound, it is closed with the “b” at the end of the syllable. Attention to this rule will assist in learning the spellings of many larger words.

5 Differences in pronunciations and number of syllables

An asterisk* will indicate words whose spelling differs significantly from the number of syllables commonly spoken.

chok o lāt* chocolate choc⁴ o¹ late⁴
dif fer int* different dif³ fer³ ent³

The student is encouraged to learn the different pronunciation in order to assist in spelling these irregular words.

6 Blended syllables

Some syllables that are pronounced as only one syllable may be written as two syllables in the third column when it is logical for spelling. In these cases, the space between the syllables is removed.

trapt trapped trap⁴ped³

SYLLABLE SAVVY SPELLING SAMPLE

Lesson Sample

1. stu dē	study	stud ⁴ y ¹
2. stu dēz	studies	stud ⁴ ies ³
3. stôr ē	story	stor ⁴ y ¹
4. his ter ē	history	his ³ tor ³ y ¹
5. jē o grə fē	geography	ge ² o ¹ gra ³ phy ³
6. sī əns	science	sci ³ ence ⁴
7. skūl	school	school ⁶
8. now	now	now ³
9. pen sl	pencil	pen ³ cil ³
10. tok	talk	talk ⁴
11. chok	chalk	chalk ⁵
12. owr (belongs to us)	our	our ³
13. owr (60 minutes)	hour	hour ⁴
14. pen ē	penny	pen ³ ny ²
15. pen ēz	pennies	pen ³ nies ⁴
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		