

LESSON 8:

OPEN SYLLABLES

Host: In this lesson, we are going to learn about open syllables. Open syllables contain just one vowel. The vowel is open because it is not “closed in” by a consonant, and it says its long sound. For example: the word is *rifle*. The first syllable is *ri*. It is an open syllable: *ri fle*. An open syllable can also be just one letter, like the *u* in *unite*.

Teacher: Today we will learn about another syllable type: open syllables. You are familiar with many of the open syllable words in this lesson. Although these words are short and might seem easy, it’s important to learn them because later, you will combine open syllables with other syllables to read and spell many words.

What is this word?

Correct, *got*. We know that *got* is a closed syllable because there is just one vowel and it is closed in by a consonant. What vowel sound do you hear in *got*?

Right, /*ō*/. If I take away the *t*, we have a new word, *go*. It is an open syllable. It has just one vowel, but the vowel is open, which means it is not closed in by a consonant. Listen while I say the word: *go*. What vowel sound did you hear?

Very good! It makes the long *o* sound. In an open syllable, the vowel can take a long walk—and make its long sound—because no consonant closes in the vowel. It is wide open. So, there are three things to remember about open syllables:

They have just one vowel.

The vowel is open: It can take a long walk because a consonant does not close in the vowel.

The vowel is long.

Reading open syllables is similar to reading other syllables we’ve learned. Let’s read some more words and syllables. Some will be open syllables and some will not. Here’s a strategy to figure out whether a syllable is an open syllable. Ask yourself two questions:

First, does the syllable have just one vowel?

Yes, there is just one vowel.

Second, is the vowel open?

Yes, the vowel is open because there is not a consonant closing in the vowel. Because the answer to both questions was “yes,” I know it is an open syllable. And because vowels in open syllables are long, I’ll read the [syllable], using the long vowel sound: *cra*. I’ll demonstrate the strategy again with the next word. Is there just one vowel?

Yes, there is one vowel. Is the vowel open?

No, a consonant, *g*, closes in the vowel. It is a closed syllable, so the vowel is short: *slug*. Let’s use the strategy to determine whether other syllables are open syllables. Is there just one vowel?

Yes, *i*. Is this vowel open?

Yes, because there’s not a consonant closing it in at the end. Is it an open syllable?

Yes, so what vowel sound is in an open syllable?

Good, long: *pri*. How many vowels are in the syllable?

Yes, one. Is the vowel open?

No, the *p* comes after the *o*. That was a bit tricky. Even if the vowel is the first letter in the word, the vowel isn’t open if there is a consonant after it: *op*. How many vowels are in *glo*?

One, correct. Is the vowel open?

Yes. Is it an open syllable?

Correct, it is an open syllable. So what vowel sound is in an open syllable?

Yes, long. Please read the syllable, using the vowel sound.

Great, *glo*. A syllable can consist of only one letter, as long as that letter is a vowel. So, let’s look at this syllable. How many vowels?

Yes, one. Is the vowel open?

Right, the vowel is open because there’s not a consonant closing in the vowel. So what vowel sound is in an open syllable?

Correct, long. Please read the syllable, using the long vowel sound.

Good, *e*.

Host: Here's a strategy designed to help students spell open syllables:

Dictate a syllable.

Have the students repeat the syllable.

Have the students say and count each sound in the syllable.

Have the students write the letter for each sound.

Have the students check [their] work by reading the syllable.

Teacher: We use the same strategy for spelling open syllables that we used to spell other words and syllables. We segment the sounds and find the letters for each sound.

The first open syllable we'll look at is *me*. I will count the sounds in *me*.

/M/ /ē/: I hear two sounds. I think about the letters that make those sounds and I write.

/M/–*m*, /ē/–*e*. I check the word by reading it.

/M/ /ē/, *me*. Now, I will help you spell an open syllable. First, repeat the syllable.

The syllable is *pro*. Next, count the sounds in *pro*.

/P/ /r/ /ō/: There are three sounds. Think about the letters that make the sounds and write them on your paper.

/P/–*p*, /r/–*r*, /ō/–*o*. Finally, check the word by reading it: *pro*. The next syllable is *she*. What is the syllable?

Right, *she*. Next, count the sounds in *she*.

There are two sounds: /sh/ /ē/. Think about the letters that make the sounds as you write them.

/Sh/–*sh*, /ē/–*e*. Finally, check the syllable by reading it.

She. Great job! In this lesson, you learned about open syllables. Remember, open syllables have just one vowel and it is open because it is not closed in by a consonant. The vowel can go on a long walk, so it says its long sound.

Host: Remember, an open syllable has just one vowel. That vowel is open because it is not closed in by a consonant, and it says its long sound. Open syllables are often combined with other syllables to form difficult words. Learning how to identify open syllables will help students read and spell many more words.