

# LESSON 5:

## R-CONTROLLED SYLLABLES

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**Host:** This lesson focuses on *r*-controlled syllables. In *r*-controlled syllables, the *r* controls the vowel sound. In closed syllables, those syllables where a consonant closes in the vowel, the vowel makes its short sound. However, if the vowel is followed by the letter *r*, the vowel does not make its expected sound. The *r* changes, or controls, the vowel sound.

For example, the *a* in *pat* says /a/, but when an *r* is added, the word becomes *part* and the *r* changes the sound that the *a* makes.

**Teacher:** Today we'll learn about a type of syllable that changes the way a vowel sounds. It's called an *r*-controlled syllable because the *r* controls the vowel sound. It is important to learn about *r*-controlled syllables because many words contain these sounds. Being able to recognize and read *r*-controlled syllables will allow you to read many more words. It will also help you in other classes and allow you to read connected text more easily.

Look at these words and tell me something they have in common.

Right, they all have the letter *r*. Yes, all of the words have *r*, and the *r* follows the vowel in each of the words. Because *r* follows the vowel, the vowel does not make its short sound. The *r* "controls" the vowel sound, which is why they are called *r*-controlled syllables. Let's start with the letters *ar*. When you see the letters *a* and *r* together in a word, they usually say /ar/, as in *star*. What sound does *ar* usually make?

Right, /ar/. Now, let's look at the letters *or*. When you see the letters *o* and *r* together in a word, they usually say /or/, as in *corn*. What sound does *or* usually make?

Right, /or/. Now, let's look at the letters *er*. When you see the letters *e* and *r* together in a word, they usually say /er/, as in *her*. What sound does *er* usually make?

Right, /er/. Now, let's look at the letters *ur*. When you see the letters *u* and *r* together in a word, they usually say /ur/, as in *turn*. What sound does *ur* usually make?

Right, /ur/. Now, let's look at the letters *ir*. When you see the letters *i* and *r* together in a word, they usually say /ir/, as in *bird*. What sound does *ir* usually make?

Right, /ir/. Do you notice anything about these sounds?

Right, they sound very similar, don't they? When the *r* comes after the *e*, *i*, or *u*, it sounds like /er/. Let's look at some more examples of *r*-controlled syllables.

*R*-controlled sounds blend with other sounds to make words: /p/ /ar/ /k/.

Now, it's your turn. Blend the sounds as I slide my finger under the letters.

Correct, *park*. The whole word is *park*. Although *park* has four letters, it has just three sounds because *a* and *r* make one sound, /ar/. /P/ /ar/ /k/: three sounds.

/Ch/ /ir/ /p/: *chirp*. Now, it's your turn. Blend the sounds as I slide my finger under the letters.

Correct, /ch/ /ir/ /p/: *chirp*. Although *chirp* has five letters, it has just three sounds because *c* and *h* make one sound, /ch/; *i* and *r* make one sound, /ir/; and *p* makes one sound, /p/. /Ch/ /ir/ /p/: three sounds. Remember, *r*-controlled sounds blend with other sounds to make words.

/H/ /ur/ /t/. Now, it's your turn. Blend the sounds as I slide my finger under the letters.

Correct, /h/ /ur/ /t/: *hurt*. The whole word is *hurt*. Now, I will slide my finger under the letters, and you will read the word.

Correct, *hurt*. Although *hurt* has four letters, it has just three sounds because *h* makes one sound, /h/; *u* and *r* make one sound, /ur/; and *t* makes one sound, /t/. /H/ /ur/ /t/: three sounds.

Remember, when a vowel is followed by the letter *r*, the letter *r* changes the vowel sound. You can remember the sound by thinking of our key words: *star*, *corn*, *her*, *bird*, and *turn*.

**Host:** Here's a strategy designed to help students spell words containing *r*-controlled syllables:

Dictate a word.

Have the students repeat the word.

Have the students say each sound and count each sound.

Have the students say the letters in the word.

Have the students say the letters again as [they write] them.

Have the students check by reading the word.

**Teacher:** Each of you has a spelling support card with the vowel-*r* teams on it. I'll dictate a word. You will repeat the word and figure out which vowel-*r* team is used to spell it. Then, you'll write the word on the card. Because the vowel-*r* is already on the card, you will add only the beginning and the end of the word. Then, you'll read the word to yourself to double-check your answer. Because the card can be easily erased, you can change your answer if you need to. When your answer's ready, hold it up and show me. I'll show you an example, and then we'll work through one together.

The first word is *thorn*. The *r*-controlled sound I hear is /or/, so I write on the *or* line. /Th/ is the first sound, so I write it at the beginning. The next sound is /or/, which is already on the card. The last sound is /n/, so I write it at the end. I read the word to check myself: /th/ /or/ /n/, *thorn*.

Now, let's do a word together. The word is *harsh*. What *r*-controlled sound do you hear in *harsh*?

Correct, the sound is /ar/. That's right, everyone. Point to the vowel-*r* team that says /ar/ on your card.

What is the first sound in *harsh*?

That's right, the sound is /h/, so write the letter that says /h/ at the beginning of the word.

What is the next sound in *harsh*?

Good, the next sound is /ar/, but we don't write that because it's already there. What is the last sound in *harsh*?

Good, the sound is /sh/. Write the letters that say /sh/ at the end of the word.

Check your work by reading the word. When you are finished, hold it up for me.

Now, let's do another word. The word is *churn*. What are the sounds in *churn*? Do you hear the vowel-*r* team?

The sound is /ur/, which can be represented by *ir*, *ur*, or *er*. Now, which letters make the /ur/ in *churn*?

Yes, *ir* does make the /ur/ sound, but in *churn*, it is spelled *ur*. Please make the correction on your card.

Now, let's do another word. The word is *perch*. What are the sounds in *perch*?

That's right. Do you hear the vowel-*r* team? The sound is /er/, which can be represented by *ir*, *ur*, or *er*. Now, which letters make the /er/ in *perch*?

Yes, *er* does make the /er/ sound in *perch*. Good job!

Let's complete a word web for *r*-controlled sounds. The middle bubble shows your *r*-controlled sound. The smaller bubbles around the page are blank. Write a word in each small bubble that contains your *r*-controlled sound. For example, my sound is /ar/. *Marsh* has /ar/, so I write *marsh* in one of the small bubbles. As I'm reading, I'm going to look for more /ar/ words to add to my web.

Now, it is your turn. Look at the *r*-controlled sound on your word web sheet. While you read, see if you can find at least five words with your *r*-controlled sound.

Remember that in an *r*-controlled syllable, the *r* controls the vowel sound. Many words have *r*-controlled syllables in them. You can look for words with vowel-*r* teams while reading in your classes. Understanding how the *r* controls the vowel sound makes reading those words easier.

**Host:**

Remember, in *r*-controlled syllables the *r* controls the vowel sound. If the vowel is followed by the letter *r*, the vowel does not make its expected sound. The *r* changes, or controls, the vowel sound.