

Open and Closed Syllables

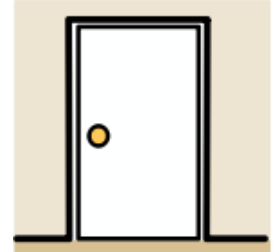
To determine whether a syllable is closed or open look at the vowel

Closed Syllables

In a closed syllable the vowel is followed by a consonant, closing it in, making the **vowel short**.

For example:

cap
sit
men



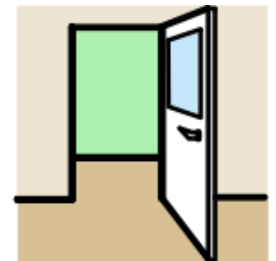
Open Syllables

In an open syllable, nothing comes after the vowel, e.g. he.

The vowel is **open** as nothing closing it in, making the **vowel long**.

For example:

ba by
e ven
pa per
a ble



Why does it Matter?

Knowing the syllable types will help the pupil be a much better speller.

When spelling multi-syllabic words, pupils should spell the word syllable by syllable. Teach them to say the first syllable, then write it down; then say the next syllable, and write it down. Using just this approach, pupils can spell many words accurately. Some words, though, cannot be spelled correctly using this simple approach. Take the word *kitten*. We say it *ki(t) ten*, without pronouncing the first *t*. So a pupil who doesn't have a visual picture of the word and doesn't know about syllable types may just write the word down as *kiten*.

A pupil who **does** understand closed and open syllables, however, will know that when he hears the first syllable /kɪ/, he needs to close the syllable with the letter *t* to make the *i* short. If he leaves the *i* open, it will be a long vowel sound. So even though he doesn't hear a *t* spoken in the first syllable, he knows that he needs to add one.

Group the following words in the table below:

cat insect absent apron rabbit man pen
subject be iron go submit sudden hotel
oven do velvet she basic kitten happen
bonus music mishap relax pupil unit even
pen can so it dog

One Close Syllable	One Open Syllable	Two Closed Syllables	Open and closed