ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Syllables

Difficulty level: Easy

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you break a long word into beats, like clapping out the parts of a tricky word, so it is easier to read, say, and spell. A long word looks hard as one lump, but its beats are short and simple, and you can sound out each one in turn. Clapping or tapping the beats also helps you hear where one part ends and the next begins. That is how you tackle a new word in reading, pronounce it clearly, and spell it part by part.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q How many syllables are in 'banana'?

SOLUTION

Say the word slowly and clap once for each beat: ba (clap), na (clap), na (clap).

Count the claps: 1, 2, 3

So 'banana' has 3 syllables.

EXAMPLE 2

Q How many syllables are in 'tiger'?

SOLUTION

Say the word slowly and clap once for each beat: ti (clap), ger (clap).

Count the claps: 1, 2

So 'tiger' has 2 syllables.

Practice questions

1 **Clap out the word cat as you say it. How many syllables are in cat?**

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2 **Say the word pencil slowly and count the beats. How many syllables are in pencil?**

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3 **Which of these words has three syllables?**

A elephant

B tiger

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4 **Say the word happy and listen for the beats. How many syllables are in happy?**

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5 How many syllables are in sun?

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6 Clap out the word butterfly as you say it. How many claps is that?

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7 How many syllables are in computer?

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8 **Say the word dog and count the beats. How many syllables are in dog?**

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9 **Which word has the most syllables?**

A sun

B umbrella

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10 **Say the word rabbit slowly. How many syllables are in rabbit?**

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ANSWER KEY

1. 1

2. 2

3. elephant

4. 2

5. 1

6. 3

7. 3

8. 1

9. umbrella

10. 2

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