Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

BUILDING STRONG READERS FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE!

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

LITERACY TOOLKIT

SYLLABLES



Created through funding provided by the Comprehensive Literacy Grant Initiative.

Supporting early literacy success for every child, every family, every community.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

This toolkit aligns with key early learning and literacy standards that support print awareness and early literacy development.

BIRTH–3
(INFANTS & TODDLERS)

Early experiences with songs, rhymes, and books build the foundation for lifelong reading.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Engages in back-and-forth interactions using sounds, words, and gestures.
- Responds to and enjoys finger plays, songs, and rhymes.
- Explores books and shows interest in pictures, print, and story.
- Demonstrates early understanding that print carries meaning.
- Develops attention and memory through repeated experiences.

PRESCHOOL
(3–5 YEARS)

Preschoolers strengthen print awareness and oral language through meaningful literacy experiences.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Identifies that print carries meaning and has a purpose.
- Recognizes some letters, words, and signs in the environment.
- Understands that we read from left to right and top to bottom.
- Participates in shared reading and retelling of familiar rhymes.
- Uses vocabulary and oral language to express ideas and make connections.

PRE–K
(4–5 YEARS)

Pre-K children use their knowledge of print to connect language with meaning and purpose.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Demonstrates understanding of basic concepts of print.
- Identifies letters and their associated sounds.
- Recognizes and produces rhyming words.
- Reads and understands high-frequency words.
- Retells stories and rhymes in sequence using key details.

KINDERGARTEN
(5–6 YEARS)

Kindergarteners apply print awareness skills to support reading comprehension and emergent writing.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Demonstrates a deep understanding of concepts of print.
- Reads emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.
- Uses phonological awareness skills to decode and encode words.
- Writes letters, words, and sentences to express ideas.
- Comprehends and retells nursery rhymes and connected text.

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WELCOME, TEACHERS!

Thank you for using the Phonological Awareness Syllables Literacy Toolkit!

This toolkit is designed to help young children hear, clap, and count syllables in words. Together, we can build strong phonological awareness and set the stage for reading success!

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1 WHY SYLLABLES MATTER

Syllable awareness helps children break words into parts they can hear. This is a key building block for reading and spelling.

Benefits Include:

- Improves early reading and spelling
- Builds strong phonological awareness
- Supports vocabulary development
- Enhances listening and memory skills
- Encourages confidence in oral language
- Prepares children for reading success

2 RESEARCH BASED BENEFITS

Research shows that syllable awareness is strongly linked to early reading and spelling development and helps children decode and encode words more easily.

Children who can identify and manipulate syllables have stronger phonological skills, better vocabulary, and improved comprehension.

Engaging in syllable activities daily helps children build confidence, participate in conversations, and become successful readers.

3 HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

1 EXPLORE
Review the activities and choose the ones that meet your students' needs.

2 PREPARE
Gather a few materials and set up center or small group activities.

3 ENGAGE
Introduce print in meaningful, real life contexts through play and exploration.

4 OBSERVE
Use the assessment tools to note progress, monitor growth, and celebrate small steps of success.

PERFECT FOR

- Classrooms
- Small Groups
- Intervention
- Take-Home Practice
- Literacy Centers
- Family Engagement

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CLAP & COUNT!

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Students identify and count the number of syllables they hear in familiar spoken words by clapping once for each syllable.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus:	Counting Syllables
Grades:	PreK-Kindergarten
Time:	10–15 Minutes
Group Size:	Small Group or Whole Group

LEARNING GOAL

Students will identify and count the number of syllables in spoken words by clapping once for each syllable.

MATERIALS

- Picture cards
- Syllable Counting Mat
- Counters, cubes, or pom-poms (optional)
- Pocket chart (optional)

WHAT TO DO

1. Show a picture card.
2. Say the word naturally.
3. Students repeat the word.
4. Everyone claps once for each syllable.
5. Count the claps together and say how many syllables the word has.

TEACHING TIP

Model the claps first.

Say the word at a natural speaking pace while emphasizing each syllable.

If students need support, have them place one hand under their chin to feel their jaw drop for each syllable.

LET'S CLAP & COUNT!

Look at each picture. Say the word. Clap the syllables. Count how many claps you hear.

					
● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	●	● ●

★ **Remember:** Each clap = one syllable!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which word had one clap?
- Which word had two claps?
- Which word had the most claps?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- ★ Look around the classroom. Choose one object. Say its name and clap the syllables.
- ★ Turn and tell a partner a word with three syllables.
- ★ Draw a picture of something and clap and count the syllables in its name.

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Teacher Picture-Name List

elephant



train



balloon



apple



banana



butterfly



pencil



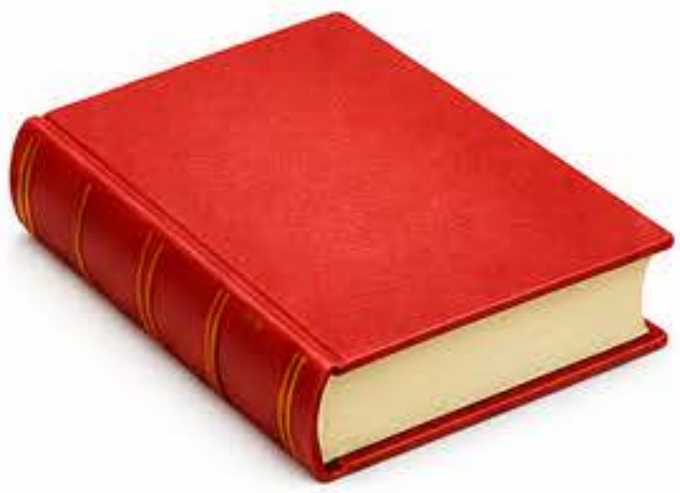
sun



basketball



book



table



dinosaur

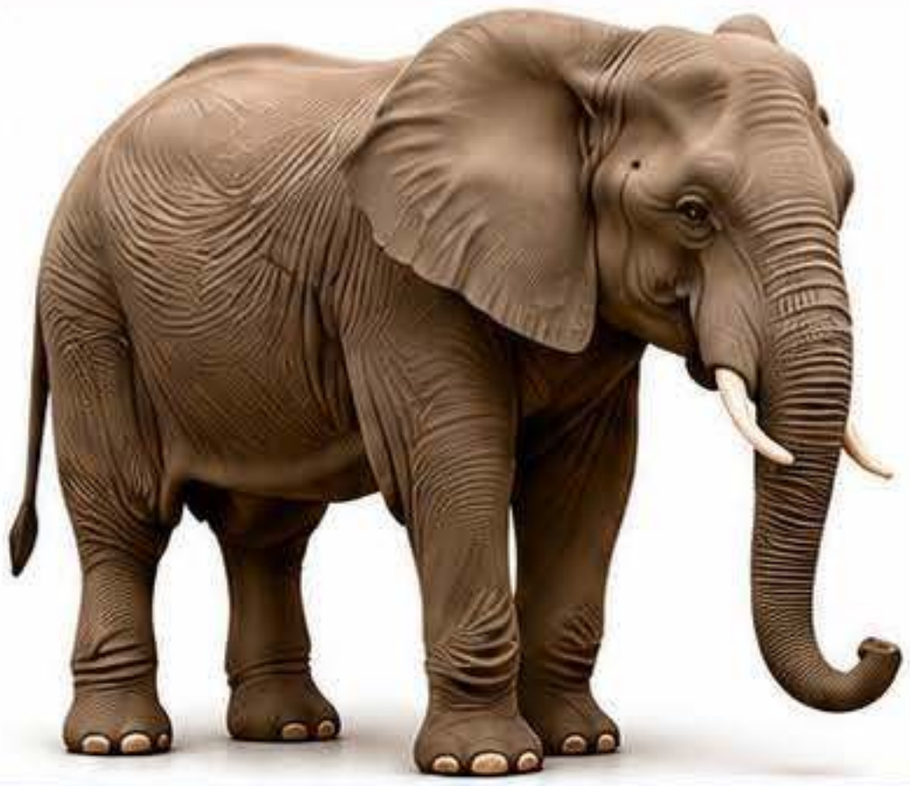


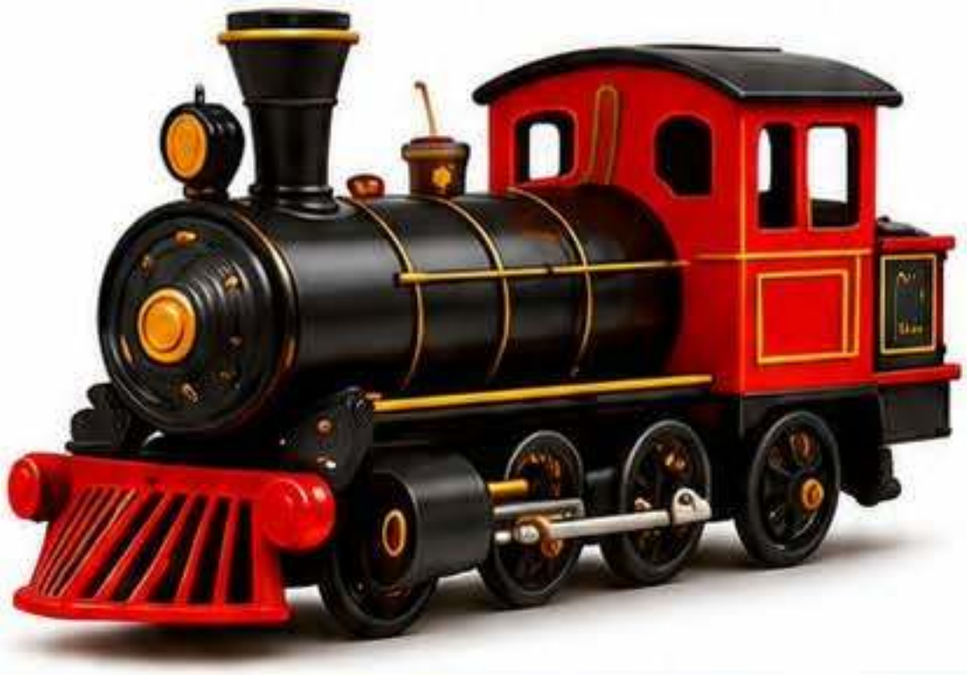
CLAP & COUNT!

POCKET CHART PICTURE CARDS

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Look at each picture. Say the word.
Clap the syllables. Count how many claps you hear.







Remember: Each clap = one syllable!

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CLAP & COUNT!

POCKET CHART PICTURE CARDS

Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

Look at each picture. Say the word.
Clap the syllables. Count how many claps you hear.











Remember: Each clap = one syllable!

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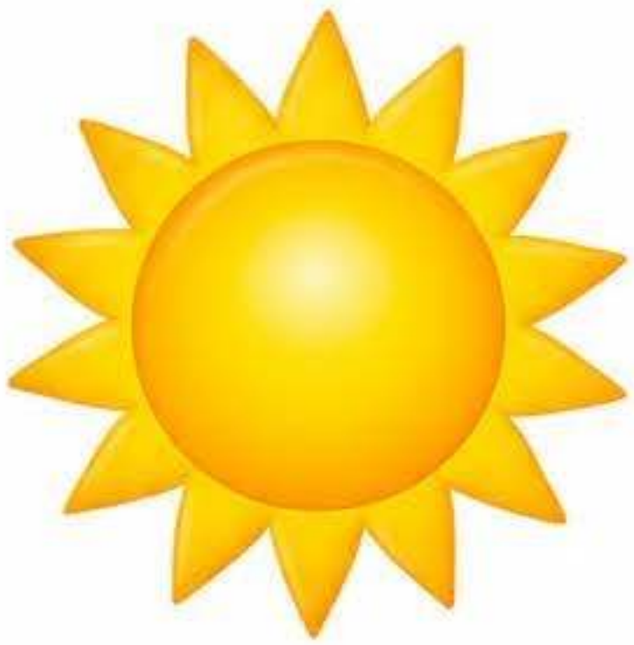
CLAP & COUNT!

POCKET CHART PICTURE CARDS

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Remember: Each clap = one syllable!

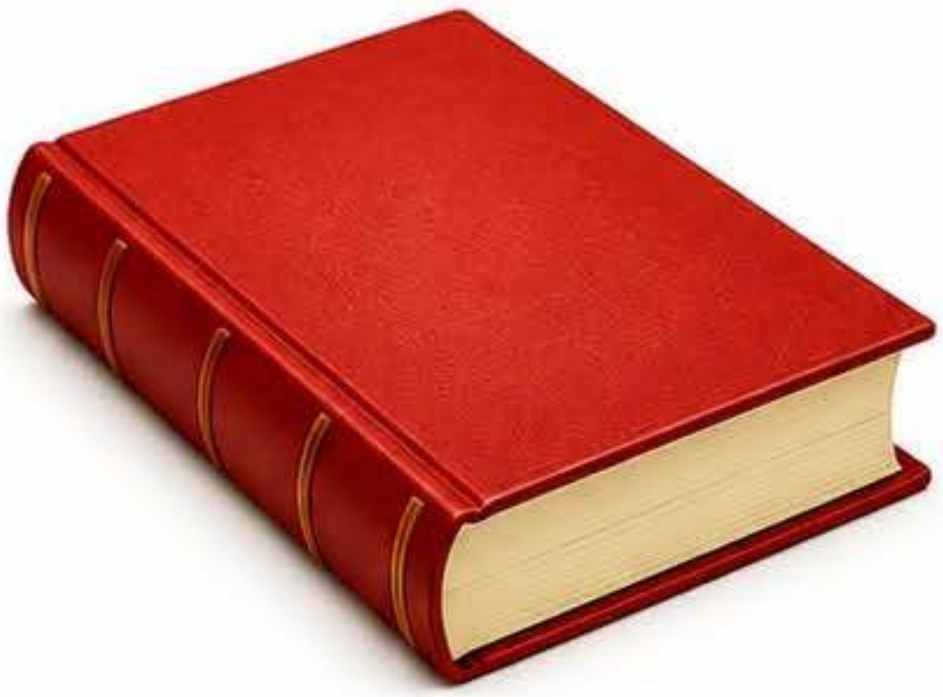
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CLAP & COUNT!

POCKET CHART PICTURE CARDS

Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

Look at each picture. Say the word.
Clap the syllables. Count how many claps you hear.







Remember: Each clap = one syllable!

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GROCERY CART SORT

Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

Students identify and count syllables in grocery store words and sort them onto the correct numbered grocery cart.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus:	Syllable Awareness
Grades:	Preschool–Kindergarten
Time:	15–20 minutes
Group Size:	Whole Group, Small Group

LEARNING GOAL

Students will clap and count syllables in words and sort them onto the correct numbered grocery cart.

MATERIALS

- Grocery Cart Sort Mats (1–4)
- Grocery store picture cards
- Scissors
- Pocket chart (optional)

WHAT TO DO

1. Say the word.
2. Clap the syllables.
3. Count the syllables.
4. Sort the picture card onto the matching numbered grocery cart.
5. Read the word together.

TEACHING TIP

Model clapping slowly and clearly.

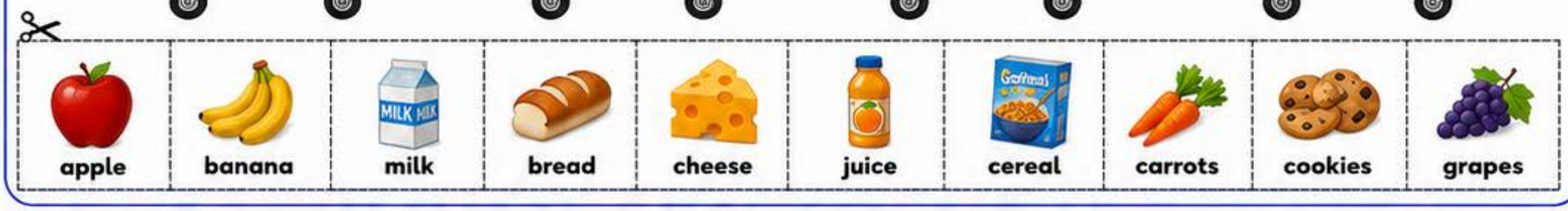
Encourage students to stretch the word as they clap.

Use visuals and movement to support understanding.

SORT THE SYLLABLES!

Use the grocery carts and cards provided to complete the activity.
Clap each grocery word. Count the syllables.
Place the picture card in the grocery cart with the matching number.





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many syllables are in this word?
2. Which word has the most syllables?
3. What is another grocery word that has 2 syllables?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Have students write the words under the correct grocery cart.
- Challenge students to find or draw other grocery words with the same number of syllables.
- Use the cards to build sentences about

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Teacher Picture-Name List

Food and Grocery Items

apple



banana



milk



bread



cheese



juice



cereal



strawberries



carrots



cookies



grapes



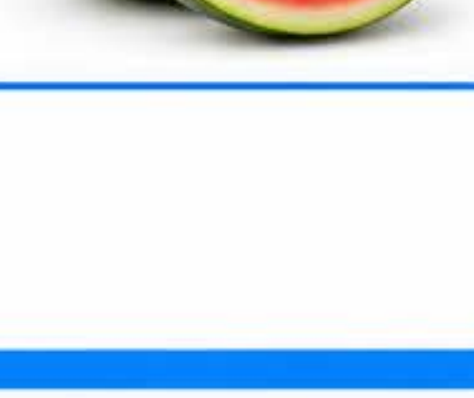
eggs



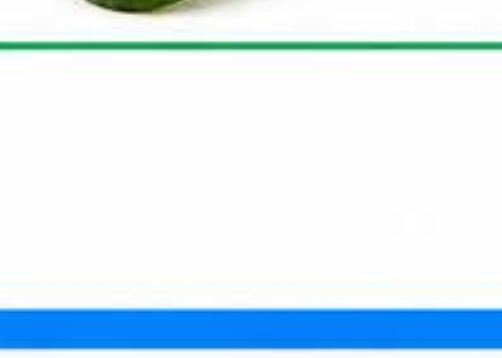
pineapple



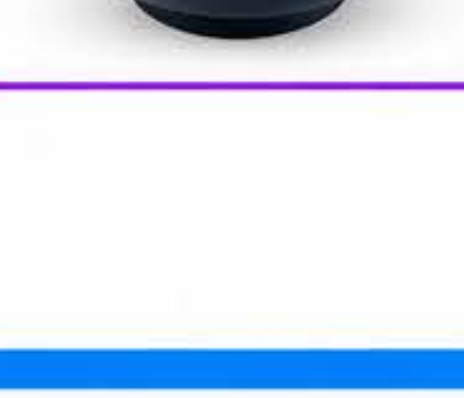
tomatoes



macaroni



avocado



broccoli



watermelon



cucumber



rice




1


2

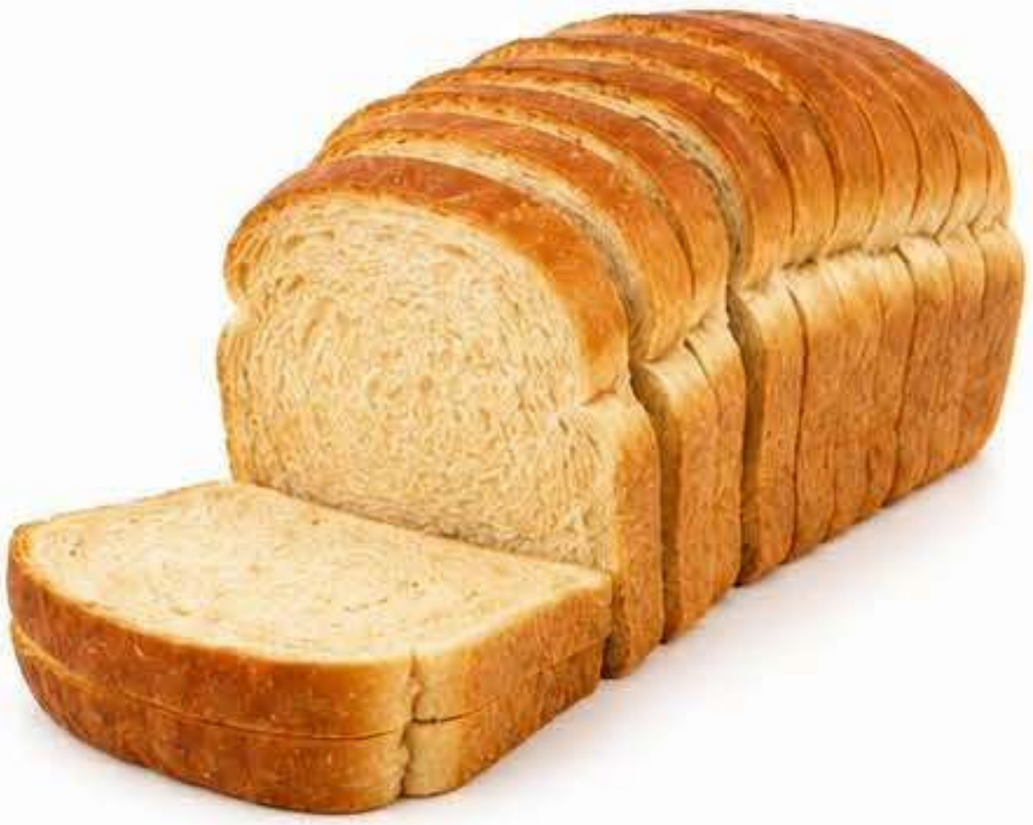

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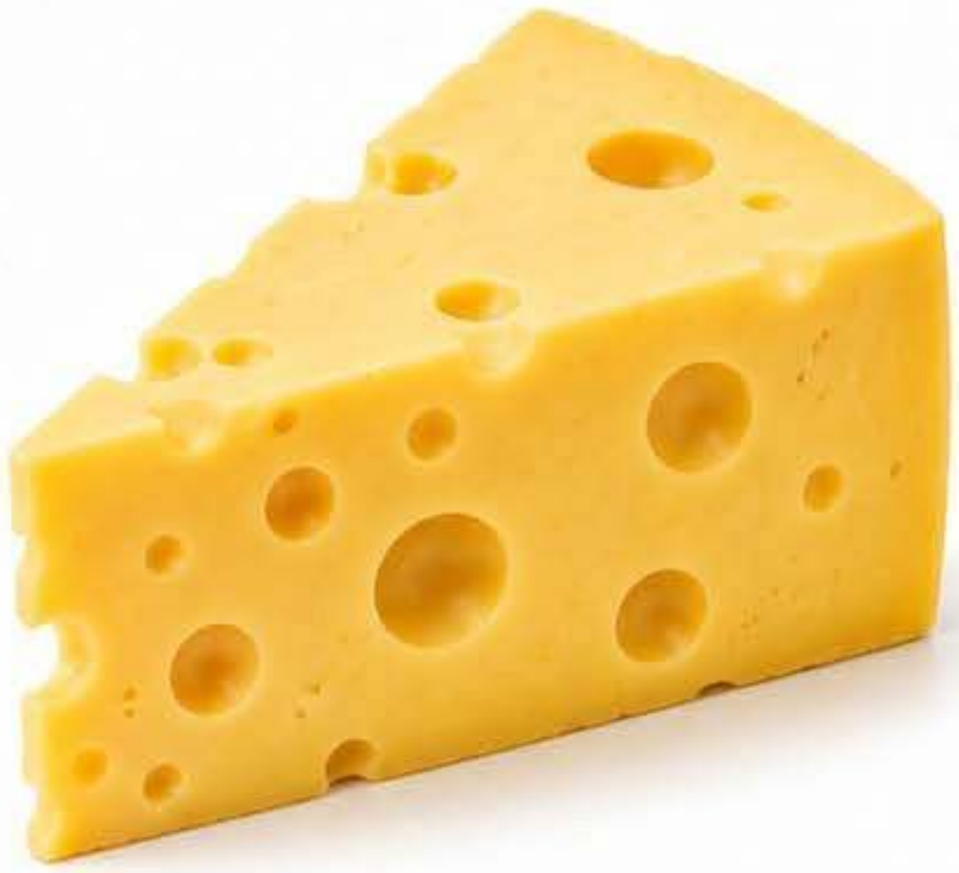

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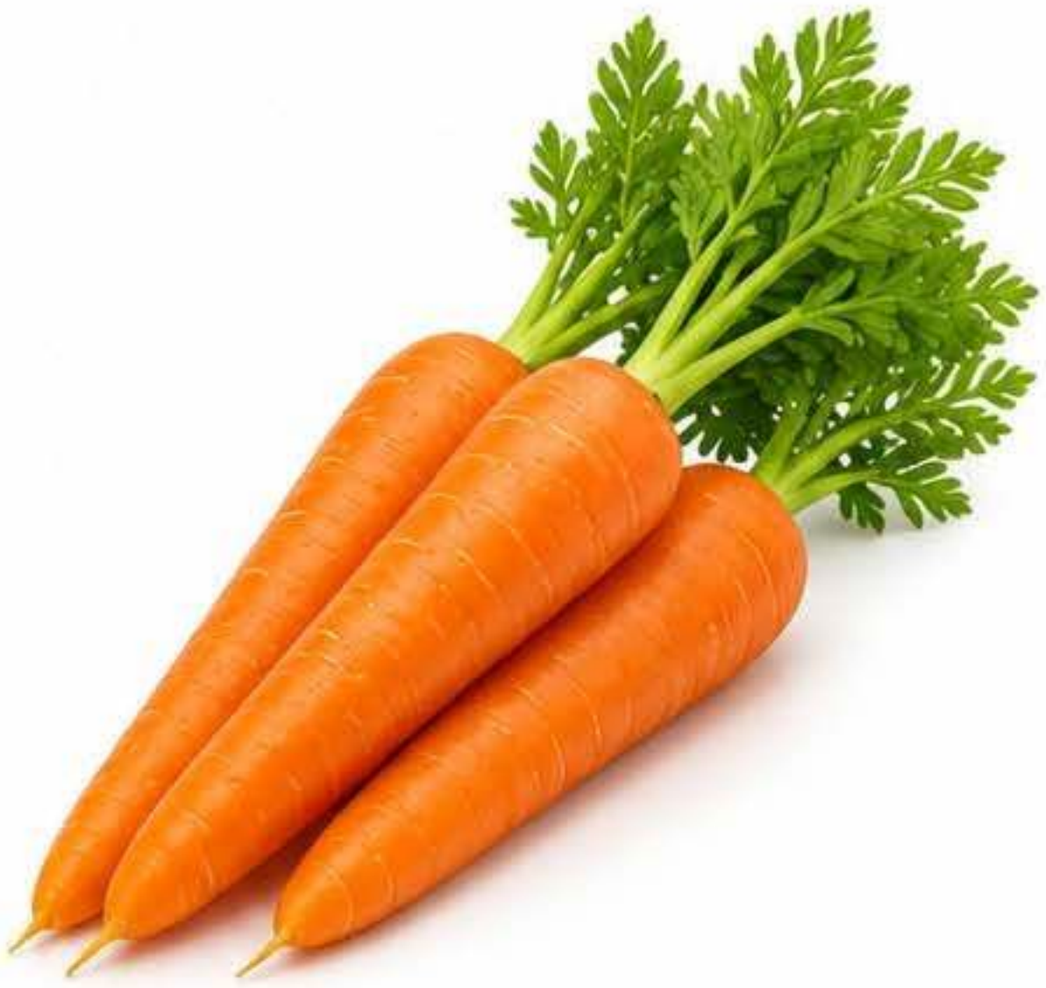







CEREAL
CEREAL











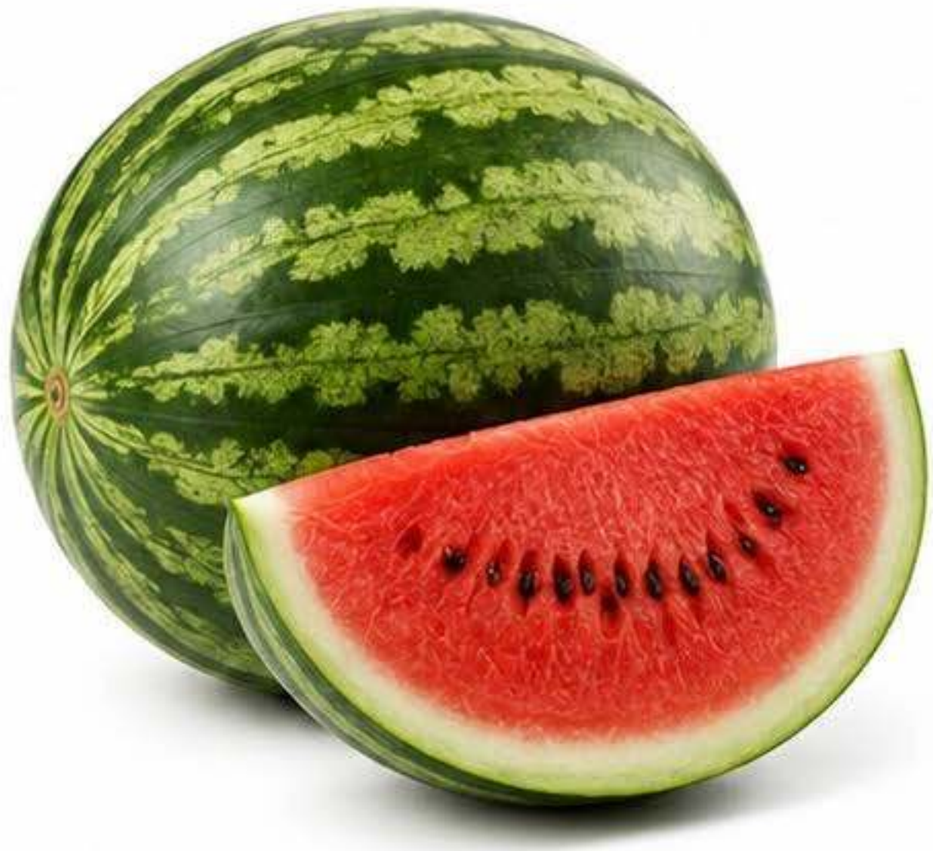


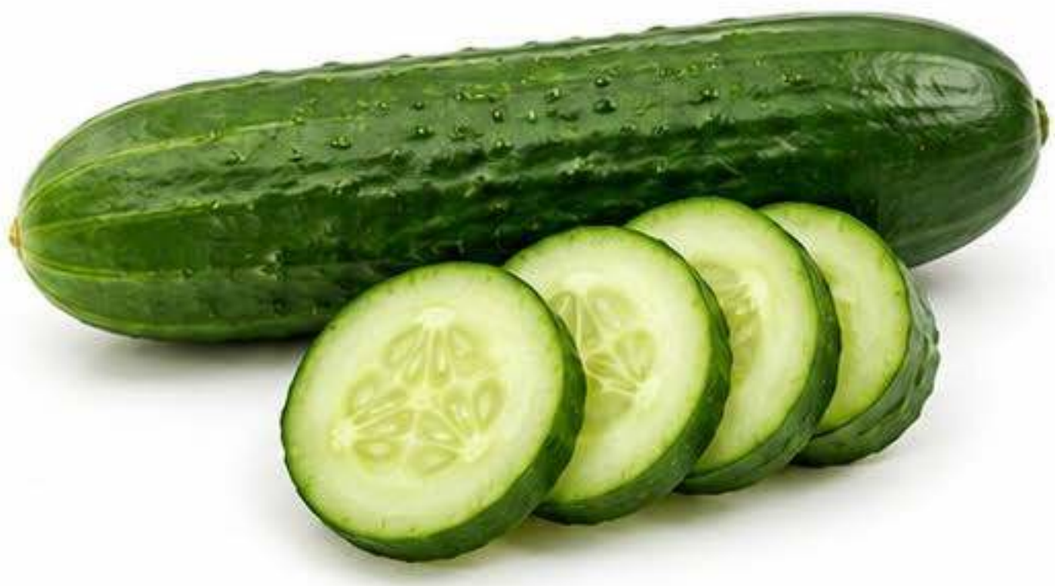














TRAIN CAR SORT

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Students identify and count syllables in transportation words and sort them onto the correct numbered train car.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus: Syllable Awareness
Grades: Preschool–Kindergarten
Time: 15–20 minutes
Group Size: Whole Group, Small Group

LEARNING GOAL

Students will clap and count syllables in words and sort them onto the correct numbered train car.

MATERIALS

- Train Car Sort Mats (1–4)
- Transportation picture cards
- Scissors
- Pocket chart (optional)

WHAT TO DO

1. Say the word.
2. Clap the syllables.
3. Count the syllables.
4. Sort the picture card onto the matching numbered train car.
5. Read the word together.

TEACHING TIP

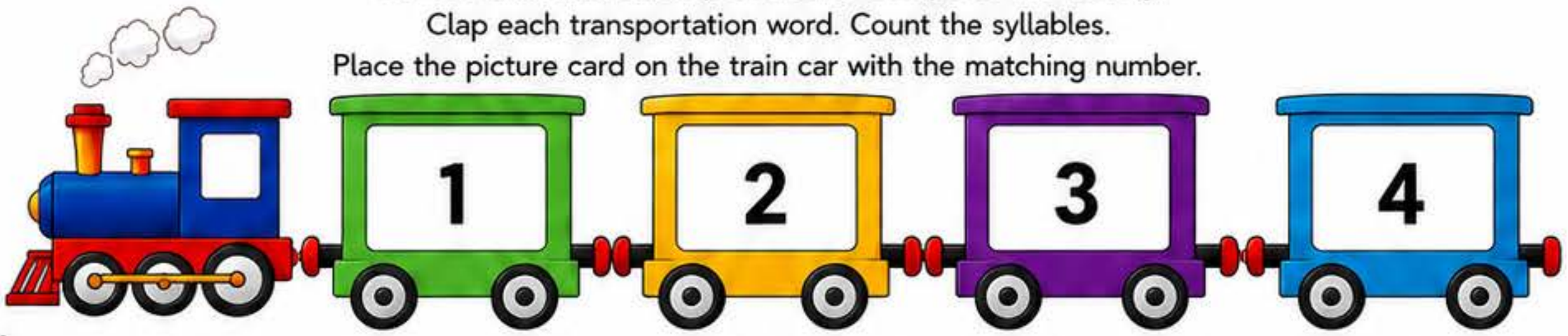
Model clapping slowly and clearly.

Encourage students to stretch the word as they clap.

Use visuals and movement to support understanding.

SORT THE SYLLABLES!

Use the train and cards provided to complete the activity.
Clap each transportation word. Count the syllables.
Place the picture card on the train car with the matching number.




car


boat


truck


train


motorcycle


bicycle


scooter


skateboard

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many syllables are in this word?
2. Which word has the most syllables?
3. What is another transportation word that has 2 syllables?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Have students write the words under the correct train car.
- Challenge students to find or draw other transportation words with the same number of syllables.
- Use the cards to build sentences about transportation.

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Teacher Picture-Name List

Transportation and Things That Move



car



boat



truck



forklift



bus



bicycle



taxi



airplane



helicopter



train



rocket



garbage truck



submarine



tractor



ambulance



segway



scooter



skateboard



motorcycle



skates




1


2


3


4


















SCHOOL BUS




TAXI








AMBULANCE











HARD HAT SYLLABLE SORT

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Students identify and count syllables in construction words and sort them onto the correct numbered hard hat.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus:	Syllable Awareness
Grades:	Preschool–Kindergarten
Time:	15–20 minutes
Group Size:	Whole Group, Small Group

LEARNING GOAL

Students will clap and count syllables in words and sort them onto the correct numbered hard hat.

MATERIALS

- Hard Hat Sort Mats (1–4)
- Construction picture cards
- Scissors
- Pocket chart (optional)

WHAT TO DO

1. Say the word.
2. Clap the syllables.
3. Count the syllables.
4. Sort the picture card onto the matching numbered hard hat.
5. Read the word together.

TEACHING TIP

Model clapping slowly and clearly.

Encourage students to stretch the word as they clap.

Use visuals and movement to support understanding.

SORT THE SYLLABLES!

Use the construction picture cards provided to complete the activity.
Clap each construction word. Count the syllables.
Place the picture card on the hard hat with the matching number.





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many syllables are in this word?
2. Which word has the most syllables?
3. What is another construction word that has 2 syllables?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Have students write the words under the correct hard hat.
- Challenge students to find or draw other construction words with the same number of syllables.
- Use the cards to build sentences about construction.

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Teacher Picture-Name List

Construction Tools and Equipment

bulldozer



hammer



shovel



dump truck



cement mixer



toolbox



drill



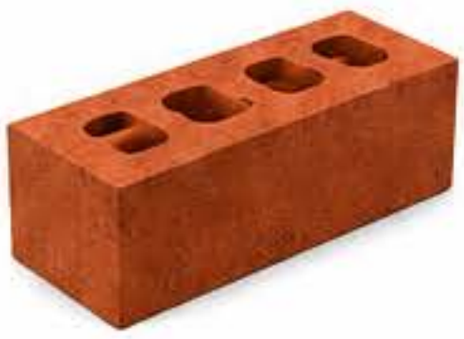
work gloves



excavator



brick



front loader



saw



hard hat



barricade



ladder



jackhammer



cement truck



traffic cone



tape measure



wheelbarrow




1


2


3


4






















CONCRETE
50 LB



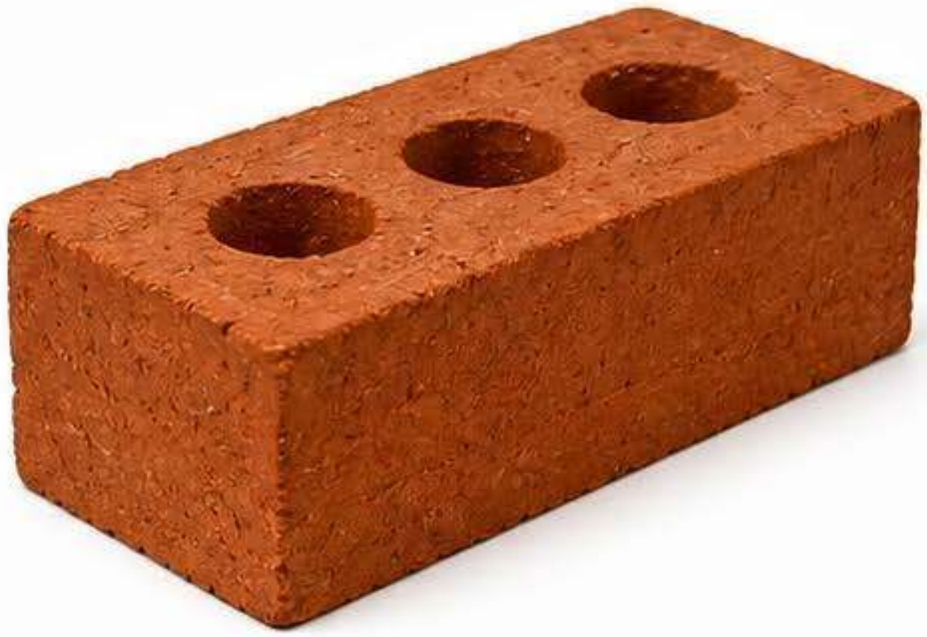
















FAMILY CONNECTION

STRONG SOUNDS TODAY. STRONG READERS TOMORROW.

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TALK

- Ask questions.
- Listen.
- Tell stories.

LISTEN

- Sound out words in everyday life.
- Notice the beginning and ending sounds.
- Play listening games together.

CLAP

- Clap the syllables in words.
- Feel the beats in the words.
- Repeat and practice often.

CONNECT

- Count syllables together.
- Build words one part at a time.
- Make learning fun every day!

FAMILY CHALLENGE

Try these syllable activities all week long!

- ☐ Clap the syllables in 5 different words.
- ☐ Find 5 items around the house and clap their syllables.
- ☐ Name 3 foods and clap their syllables.
- ☐ Sing a song and clap the syllables together.
- ☐ Make up a silly word and see how many syllables it has!

Every syllable counts!

TRY THIS TONIGHT!

- Choose a word and clap the syllables together.
- Say the word slowly and count the beats.
- Take turns thinking of words with the same number of syllables.
- Use today's activities during car rides, bath time, or story time!
- Celebrate your child's effort and progress every step of the way.

"You are helping your child's brain grow!"

TOGETHER, WE BUILD CONFIDENCE, SKILLS, AND A LOVE OF LEARNING!

Thank you for being a part of your child's learning journey!

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OBSERVATION CHECKLIST



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Use this checklist to observe and celebrate children as they develop phonological awareness skills by identifying and working with syllables.

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____ Observer: _____

SKILLS TO OBSERVE	CONSISTENTLY (Most of the time)	SOMETIMES (With support)	NOT YET (Needs more practice)	NOTES
1 Claps hands to show the number of syllables in a word	○	○	○	_____
2 Says the number of syllables in a word	○	○	○	_____
3 Identifies words with the same number of syllables	○	○	○	_____
4 Identifies words with different numbers of syllables	○	○	○	_____
5 Blends syllables together to make a word	○	○	○	_____
6 Segments a word into syllables	○	○	○	_____
7 Deletes a syllable from a word (e.g., say "basketball" without "basket")	○	○	○	_____
8 Adds a syllable to a word to make a new word	○	○	○	_____
9 Identifies the first syllable in a word	○	○	○	_____
10 Identifies the last syllable in a word	○	○	○	_____
11 Produces rhyming words with the same number of syllables	○	○	○	_____
12 Uses syllable skills during songs, rhymes, and games	○	○	○	_____

STRENGTHS I OBSERVED:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

NEXT STEPS:

- ★ Continue to build confidence.
- ★ Provide extra practice and support.
- ★ Encourage and celebrate every step!

WHAT CAN HELP:

- ✓ Songs and nursery rhymes
- ✓ Syllable clapping games
- ✓ Books and storytelling
- ✓ Movement and actions
- ✓ Family practice every day

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