**SYLLABLE DIVISION**

Basic Concepts:

* How words are divided determines how syllables are pronounced - this is the key to reading multisyllable words
* In English, each syllable has one vowel phoneme (this can be represented by more than one letter such as -ee or -ay)
* Syllable division is based on the relationship between the vowels and consonants in words.

Prerequisite student knowledge:

* Basic letter-sound associations (including consonant blend and digraphs) and decoding skills
* One syllable - one vowel concept
* Knowledge of syllable types; syllable division can be begun when students know closed syllables.

Principles of syllable division:

1. Words with more than one consonant between the vowels. The simplest syllable division rule, and one which is often taught first, involves words in which there are only two consonants between the vowels (VCCV). This type of division can be taught after the students have learned the closed syllable pattern and then expanded to other syllable patterns.

VCCV words are usually divided between the consonants VC CV

Examples: rabbit rab bit

victim vic tim

Exceptions: rocket rock et digraphs stay together

program pro gram blends may stay together

The same principles apply to all situations in which there are more than 2 consonants between vowels: Divide between consonants and keep blends and digraphs together. Blends often stay in second syllable.

Examples: VCC CV ethnic eth nic

VC CCCV construct con struct

VC CCCV abstract ab stract

Syllable Division - cont’d.

2. Words with only one consonant between the vowels. After students have been taught closed and open syllables, the VCV pattern can be taught. Students must be taught to try two ways of dividing words and see which one produces a word that they recognize

In VCV words the consonant can stay with the first vowel or go with the second vowel (the more common situation).

Examples: VC V camel cam el

V CV tiger ti ger

Note: These two words make an excellent picture cue and verbal mnemonic for students. When decoding a VCV word, tell the student, “Look at the picture; is your word a tiger or a camel?

1. Words with the consonant - le pattern. Teach students that these three letters always stay together; always divide before the consonant -le. One simple way to ensure this is to start at the end of the word, count back 3 letters, and divide the word at that point.

Examples: gentle gen tle

table ta ble

bridle bri dle

1. Words that divide between the vowels. This pattern is uncommon but students need to be aware that it does occur in a few words.

Examples: quiet qui et

duet du et

fluid flu id

chaos cha os

oasis o a sis