



# The 6 Syllable Types at a Glance

A Quick-Reference for Grades 6–12 Content-Area Teachers

DECODING THE CODE • SANKOFA LEARNING DESIGN

**Why syllable types matter for content-area instruction:** When students can identify syllable types, they can decode unfamiliar multisyllabic words independently. This reference guide covers the six syllable types recognized in structured literacy. Keep it at your desk, share it with your content team, or use it as a student-facing anchor chart. Each type includes a definition, the letter pattern, example words with the target pattern highlighted, and a classroom-ready teaching tip.

## Letter Pattern Key

**C** = Consonant    **V** = Vowel    **e** = Silent e    **r** = R following vowel    **le** = Final stable syllable    **vv** = Vowel team

### 1 Closed **CVC**

A syllable that ends in a consonant. The vowel sound is short.

rabbit    pump    napkin    subject

**Teaching tip:** Ask students to identify the "door closer" consonant at the end. If the syllable door is closed, the vowel stays short.

### 2 Open **CV**

A syllable that ends in a single vowel. The vowel sound is long.

go    she    basic    moment

**Teaching tip:** If the syllable door is open (no consonant closing it), the vowel "says its name." Have students practice with two-syllable science terms like pro-ton.

### 3 Vowel-Consonant-e **VCe**

A syllable with a vowel, then a consonant, then a silent e. The first vowel is long; the e is silent.

cake    com-pete    de-bate

chro-mo-some

**Teaching tip:** Call this the "magic e" or "bossy e." The silent e reaches over the consonant and makes the first vowel long. Multisyllabic content words like chromosome use this pattern.

### 4 Vowel Team **vv**

Two (or more) vowels work together to represent **one sound**. Common teams include ai, ea, oa, ee, oo, ou, oi.

rain    team    reason    point

**Teaching tip:** "When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking" works for many teams (ai, ea, oa) but not all (ou, oi). Teach the reliable ones first, then introduce exceptions.

### 5 R-Controlled **Vr**

A vowel followed by the letter r changes the vowel sound. Common patterns: ar, er, ir, or, ur.

star    bird    thermal    formula

**Teaching tip:** Call the r the "bossy r" because it changes how the vowel sounds. Content-area terms like thermal and formula use this pattern frequently.

### 6 Consonant-le **C+le**

A final stable syllable where a consonant is followed by le. The e is silent; the syllable says /əl/.

ta-ble    sim-ple    ar-ti-ple    parti-ple

**Teaching tip:** Always divide before the consonant-le. Scoop the consonant + le together as one syllable. Words like article and particle become decodable once students know this rule.

## Why This Matters for Content-Area Teachers

In secondary classrooms, students encounter thousands of multisyllabic academic words each year. When students can break these words into syllable types, they move from guessing to decoding. This is especially important for students with dyslexia, who benefit from explicit, systematic instruction in syllable patterns.

**1 in 5**

STUDENTS WITH A  
LANGUAGE-BASED  
LEARNING DIFFERENCE

**85%**

OF ENGLISH WORDS  
FOLLOW PREDICTABLE  
SYLLABLE PATTERNS

**6**

SYLLABLE TYPES  
UNLOCK DECODING  
OF ANY ENGLISH WORD

Decoding the Code | Tenneh C. Freeman | Sankofa Learning Design

Aligned to structured literacy and the Science of Reading

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