

Tutor Tips from Literacy of NNY Newsletters

How do I sustain a student's interest?

- Always have a "warm up," fun activity
- Have some short-term "mini" goals
- Reward your student periodically, students love certificates.
- When appropriate, go on a field trip with your student.

Adults learn best when (from "the Adult Educator Blog"):

- "Their prior learning was rewarded
- The subject matter is relevant to their perceived needs (professional or other)
- Interaction and dialogue are possible throughout the instruction
- Self direction is possible
- Mistakes are seen as opportunities to learn
- Critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving are part of the instruction
- Practical experience is part of the instruction"

A cute tip from Dave's ESL Café –

Future Time

"I use **fortune cookies** to help teach the future tense to students. After students have read their fortunes and eaten cookies, we work on making our own fortunes.

Spelling Tips

The FLOSS rule:

If a word contains **one vowel** and ends in F, L or S, you USUALLY double the F, L or S. Example: glass, tell, stuff. Exceptions to the rule are: bus, gas, yes, if, of.

When to Spell with C or K at the beginning of words:

Use C whenever you can for the /k/ sound, except if it is followed by one of the following vowels: E, I or Y. If C is followed by E, I or Y, it makes the /s/ sound and then you would use a K to spell the word.

Spelling with CK or K at the end of words:

If a word has one vowel and ends with a /K/ sound, use K if the next to the last letter is a consonant as in the word milk or bulk. Use Ck directly after a short vowel such as pack, truck, lack. **One vowel words usually do not end in C.** Words in English do not end in the letter i except for the word hi or ski. Spell words with a Y when you hear i at the end. Example: Cry, why, shy.

For more spelling tips, a great website is Dr. Cooper's site: www.learningdifferences.com

Why Does It Sound Like a U But Spelled with an A?

Did you ever wonder why the letter A sounds like a short U sometimes, as in the words ago, adopt, and agree? A syllable that ends in an A or just contains an A **and is not accented** will make that short U sound, which is also called the schwa sound.

How do you know what syllable is accented?

Say the word in a sentence and see where you put the most emphasis. When you put the word in a sentence, you will naturally say it correctly. It's harder to do that if you just say the word by itself. In two syllable words, usually

the first syllable is accented. In three syllable words, usually the first or second syllable is accented, never the third. A good spelling rule for students to remember is, words in English very rarely end in the letter U. So if you hear that short U sound (uh) at the end of a word, spell it with an A.

Examples:

Chi-na

A-mer-i-ca

Plas-ma

Com-ma

Teach Your Student Different Syllable Types

Vowels make different sounds, depending upon the letters around them in a word. One way to make them more predictable is to teach a student the different types of syllables.

The most common syllable in English is the **closed syllable**. The vowel is followed by one or more consonants and the vowel sound is short. Example: bag, cat, dig, at, ash, it, path, dish.

Open Syllables end in one vowel and the vowel says its long sound. Example: me, hi, I, she.

Vowel-Consonant-E syllables: The E at the end of the word is silent and the vowel before it says its long sound.

Example: life, hive, make, shake.

Double Vowels: These are syllables with two vowels next to each other. The rule that works **50 percent** of the time is the first vowel does the talking and says its name (long sound) and the second vowel is silent. Example: teach, maid, toe.

R controlled Vowels When an r comes after a vowel, it will change the vowel sound. The vowel is neither short nor long. That's why we call R a Rotten letter. It bullies the vowel and sometimes totally swallows up the sound.

Example: car. You don't hear the A at all in that word.

How to Divide Longer Words into Syllables

Now that you know the different syllable types, how do you teach a student to read a word with several syllables in it?

Every syllable in English contains a vowel. Have the student underline all the vowels in the word. If there are two vowels next to each other, do not break them up. They are part of the same syllable. (W counts as a vowel when it comes after a vowel. Y is a vowel if it comes anywhere except the beginning of a word.)

Now count how many letters are between the vowels.

If there is one letter between the vowels, you usually push that consonant toward the end so it is part of the second syllable.

Example: predict.

There is one consonant, D, between the vowels E and I. So you would break the word into syllables like this:

pre/dict.

Pre is an open syllable because it ends in one vowel so the vowel is long (or says its name). The second syllable is closed because it ends in two consonants and there is one vowel. The vowel will say its short sound.

Sometimes when there is one letter between two vowels, if you push it into the second syllable it doesn't make a real word. If that is the case, move the consonant the other way, into the first syllable.

Example: comic.

comic

If you push the m into the second syllable, the word would be split like this:

co/mic

Co is an open syllable so the O would say its long sound. However that doesn't make a real word when you say

co/mic

So push the m the other way and now split it like this:

Com/ic

Com is a closed syllable so the O says its short sound.

If there are two consonants between the vowels, divide the syllable between the consonants.

Example: hamlet

ham/let

If there are three consonants between the vowels, you usually do a 1-2 split. Push the first consonant into the first syllable and the other two consonants into the second syllable.

Example: express

You break it up like this:

ex/press

If there are three consonants between vowels, do a do a one-three split.

Example: tantrum

tan/trum