

Multi-Syllabic Word Work

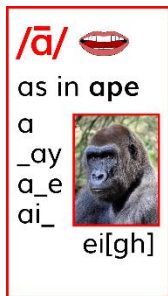
“To help students learn to read polysyllabic words, teachers can use both syllable- and morpheme-based approaches.”

Devin M. Kearns & Victoria M. Whaley, 2019

“So, yes, teach syllabication, but expose kids to the exceptions and teach them to use these divisions conditionally and flexibly. Approach words both through decoding and spelling. Focus considerable attention on the morphological units within words as well.”

Tim Shanahan, 2021

Focus Sound-Spelling Warm-ups



Multi-syllabic instruction is most successful when integrated with a systematic instructional sequence for phonics and spelling. Researchers Kearns and Whaley (2019) suggest brief warm-ups to review focus sound-spellings prior to multi-syllabic decoding and spelling practice.

Example: Using sound-spelling cards to review the focus long /a/ a, ay, a_e, ai sound-spellings.

Note: The blanks indicate necessary consonants for these long vowel sound-spellings.

A second warm-up, **Try Another!** helps students practice set for variability by flexing the vowels, consonant sounds, syllable types, syllable divisions, syllable patterns, vowel and consonant accent shifts, and conventional spelling rules to provide a bank of problem-solving choices for decoding and encoding multi-syllabic words.

Students are provided a list of multi-syllabic nonsense words, which include the focus sound-spellings. The teacher provides brief instruction on the relevant syllable types, and students divide the nonsense words in as many ways as the syllable patterns and vowel sound-spellings permit. The teacher reviews the answers and prompts students to say the pronunciation variations.

Example:	Try Another Words	Possible Answers (of Many)
	1. teinlay	tein/lay, te/in/lay
	2. chaifabe	chaif/abe, cha/if/abe
	3. satead	sa/te/ad, sate/ad, sat/ead

Multi-Syllabic Practice for Familiar and Unfamiliar Words

After warm-ups, the teacher leads students in decoding, encoding, and accessing meaning of both familiar and unfamiliar multi-syllabic words, featuring the lesson focus sound-spellings and high frequency affixes. Whether students recognize the word in their oral lexicons determines which instructional strategy will work best.

Familiar Word Example: unweighted

Unfamiliar Word Example: prevailing

The Pennington Multi-Syllabic Strategy for Familiar Words

Say It!

1. “The word is ‘uninvited.’ Word?” [Students repeat, “uninvited.”]
2. [Use the word in a sentence.] “The uninvited guests were asked to leave.”
3. “Let’s draw lines for the syllables as we say them together.”
“un” is a prefix, meaning *not*.
“in” is a prefix, meaning *in* or *into*.
“vi”
“ted” “The ‘ed’ is a suffix, showing a *past action* or serving as an *adjective* to answer ‘What kind?’ of the connected noun. We pronounce the *e* as short /i/ in “ed” when it follows a /d/ or /t/.”

/un/
/un/ /in/
/un/ /in/ /vī/
/un/ /in/ /vī/ /tīd/

Spell It!

4. “Let’s say the syllables and spell them on top of their lines.”
5. “Let’s say and spell the first prefix, ‘un.’”
6. “Let’s say and spell the next prefix, ‘in.’”
7. “Let’s say and spell the sounds in the next syllable: ‘/v/i/–‘vi’
Check and correct. The vowel at the end of a syllable often has a long vowel sound. If you said ‘vīt’ and spelled ‘vit,’ that’s fine; if you said ‘vīt,’ slash (/) through the ‘t.’”
8. “Let’s say and spell the suffix, ‘ed.’ What needs to be added before the suffix to make the syllable *sound right*? ‘t’ If you need to do so, add the ‘t’ before the ‘ed.’ The bound base, “vit” means *life*, as in *vitamin*, *nativity*, or *activity*.” (Yes, “invite” can also be a free base.)

un
un in
un in vi

un in vi ted

Read It!

9. “Let’s put together the syllables to read the word you have written.
[Use a straight hand slide underneath prefixes and suffixes. Use *u-shaped* hand swoops underneath the rest of the syllables as you continuously blend their sound-spellings. If some students say the incorrect vowel or consonant sound or syllable division, say ‘Try another’ until they say it correctly. Erase the word.]”
10. “Read the word on your paper as you clap and snap the syllables.
Clap the accented and snap (or tap your knees) the unaccented.
Extension: Now read, clap, and snap this related word: *invitation*
What happens to ‘i’ vowel sound and the accented syllable?”

un in vi ted

un/in/vī/ted
in/vi/tá/tion

