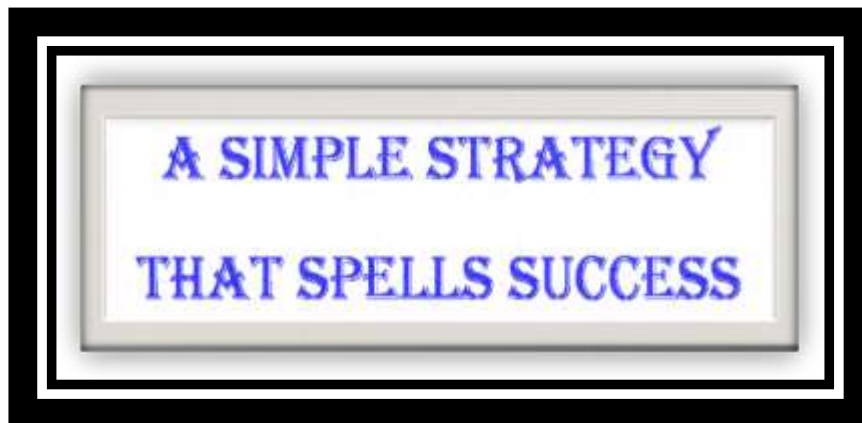


# **SYLLABLE SAVVY SPELLING**



**Syl<sup>3</sup> la<sup>2</sup> ble<sup>3</sup>**

**Sav<sup>3</sup> vy<sup>2</sup>**

**Spel<sup>4</sup> ling<sup>4</sup>**

- 1. Write the word in syllables.**
- 2. Compare each letter to the answer key.**
- 3. Write the number correct for each syllable.**

**By Karen K. Newell**

**Learn for Your Life**

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## *Syllable Savvy Spelling*

Welcome to Syllable Savvy Spelling. This simple technique will not only improve your students' spelling scores this year, but will provide them with a successful strategy that will improve their spelling ability for years to come. In fact, you will likely find that your own ability to spell difficult words is improved after teaching this technique.

### **THREE COLUMN APPROACH**

You will notice that each lesson has three columns. The first is the Phonetic Column. This allows the student to sound out the word using the common dictionary symbols for each phonetic sound. The second column displays the word as it is usually written. The third column is the Syllable Column and prints the words in syllables and gives the number of letters in each syllable. This column prompts the student to focus on the syllables in each word, and the specific letters in the syllables.

#### **Phonetic Column**

The Phonetic Column gives the dictionary symbols to allow the student to sound out the word. If the lesson page is folded over, the student can only see the phonetic column. The students then know which word to spell next, and can attempt to spell the word without having the correctly spelled word in front of them. This has two benefits. First, the student has a chance to practice the words each day without having the answer right in plain view. Second, it also allows the student to work independently, rather than have a teacher or partner dictate the word without them seeing it.

The symbols used in Syllable Savvy are common symbols used in dictionaries.

The exception is the short vowel sound. This is the sound one would hear preceding a "ck" at the end of the word (ie. back, deck, sick, lock, duck). In many dictionaries, the short sound is marked with a curved line, somewhat like a smile, over the letter. In Syllable Savvy, the short vowel sound is written as the vowel without any other symbols. The long vowel sound is marked with the standard flat line over the vowel. (ie, **bā**ke, m**ē**, l**ī**ke, h**ō**pe, t**ū**ne)

At the bottom of each lesson page, is a quick pronunciation key which lists the sounds indicated by the different marks. Apart from the short and long vowel sounds, it is not necessary for the student to attempt to memorize any of the other marks. Of course, they will get much more familiar with these marks by using Syllable Savvy Spelling.

One other sound should be mentioned, which is the schwa sound, indicated by the symbol which looks like an upside down e. This is the vowel sound in the non-stressed syllables which rhymes with "duh." It may be spelled with an "a", "e", "i", "o", "u", or "y".

The pronunciation marks provided are based on one common pronunciation for the word. However, it should be noted, that many words have different pronunciations, many of which are regional. If the pronunciation listed is different than that used in your home, you have three options. One, the word on the lesson may be erased with white out, and the familiar pronunciation substituted. Or, the more familiar pronunciation can be written above the one on the lesson page, emphasizing to the students that there are indeed, more than one correct way to pronounce a word. Finally, one can acknowledge the differences with the student and leave the word as it is. Probably, it is best to use whatever approach is preferred by the student.

## PHONETIC COLUMN:

### A WARNING

It should be noted that some younger children in lower grades may have difficulty with the Phonetic Column. It may be confusing to some students when they are presented with the “wrong” letters and the phonetic marks may reinforce using the wrong letters. Of course, the purpose of Syllable Savvy is to promote correct spelling, and if a student finds the phonetic “clues” confusing, this is counter-productive. However, other aspects of Syllable Savvy can still be used. If you determine the phonetic marks are confusing to your student, you may simply cut the Phonetic Column off of the Lesson Page.

If the Phonetic Column is eliminated for younger students, there are a few techniques that can be employed to keep the benefit of the phonetic clues. First, a picture or sample sentence can be written on one side of an index card, and the other two columns glued to the opposite side. For instance, if the spelling word is “ocean”, the first side could have the sentence, “Let’s go swim in the o.....” and have the waves of the sea drawn on the card. The opposite side of the card could list the regular spelling and the syllable column.

Another technique to allow the student to work independently on their spelling list without seeing the word each time they practice it; is to record the word and a sentence using the word with a tape player or computer. The student can listen to hear the spoken word and then write the word on paper.

Of course, the old fashioned way of having a parent or partner read the word list to the student can still be used. One of the values of Syllable Savvy Spelling is that it allows the student to study the words independently. Some younger students, however, are not necessarily ready for that independence and do better working with someone else.

### Middle Column

The middle column displays the word with its standard spelling. This is the way the students will encounter the word and in most cases they will be familiar with it. It is obvious that it is much easier to read a familiar word than it is to spell it.

### Syllable Column

The Syllable Column breaks each word into its syllables. This is the natural way to write complex words. It also has the advantage of giving the students syllables that are usually only two to four letters long. That is much less intimidating than facing a long word with what appears to be an unattainable number of letters.

After each syllable, the number of letters in that syllable is displayed in superscript. This helps the student to focus on the specific letters in each syllable.

The number at the end of the syllable also aids the students in correcting their own work. Often students will look at a longer word they have just written and think it looks “about right” and not compare each letter on their list and the master list. Day after day, this reinforces writing the word incorrectly. By writing the word in syllables, then recording how many letters they correctly wrote in each syllable, the student receives immediate feedback. It also becomes more obvious to them if one letter is incorrect.

### FIVE EXTRA SPACES

Each lesson consists of 20 words. However, only 15 words are listed on the Lesson Page. This is because it is important to include in the students’ study of spelling those words that are particularly important for them. These words can include words they misspelled from previous spelling lessons, words they misspell in their creative writing, or words that are part of

their science, social studies, or other unit studies.

### ONE LESSON PER WEEK

Each Syllable Savvy Spelling level consists of thirty weekly lessons. Each lesson has four work pages. The fifth day of the week is the spelling test.

Each lesson begins with the words listed in three columns. On the second, third, and fourth day the student completes a work page. The spelling work page lists the phonetic spelling and then has a space for the student to write the word syllable by syllable.

In a five day school week, students will be introduced to the word one day, practice the words on the work page for three days, and take a test on the fifth day.

### HOW IT WORKS

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Day

The first day of the lesson, the student will first encounter the new spelling words. For many students, this is most effective if it is done with the teaching parent. After the first day, the student will practice the words independently. Of course, some older students prefer to work independently, and once they have been taught the steps below, they may prefer to do even the first day's work on their own.

As mentioned earlier, the Lesson Page can be folded so that only the Phonetic Column is showing. Then, the following steps can be performed.

1. Look at the pronunciation of the first word on the list. Help the student sound the word out.
2. Open the page so the spelling of the word in the middle column is visible. For most of the words in this program, the word will be familiar to the students.
3. Look at each syllable in the Syllable Column. Ask, "Is this the way you would expect this syllable to be written? Is there anything tricky or difficult here?" Thankfully, most syllables aren't too difficult.
4. Any letters that are not expected, can be underlined with a colored pencil. This is an optional step; but some students find that the focus required to identify the unexpected letters helps to cement them in their memory.
5. Fold the Lesson Page over again so the correct spelling is not visible. Then the student will write the word on the first column of their Student Work Page. They should write it in syllables with breaks between each syllable.
6. After the entire word is written, the student will look at the Syllable Column again to correct the word. The student checks the number of letters in each syllable with the number of letters written on the Student Work Page. If the letters are all correct, the student moves to the next syllable. Otherwise, the word is written again if it was misspelled.
7. Syllable by syllable the student checks the word they have written with the word on the Lesson Page.
8. If all syllables in the word were written correctly, the student indicates that they got the word right. This can be done by the student drawing a star, smiley face, or any other symbol. This reinforces the students' success.
9. If any part of the word was missed, it needs to be written again. Mark any difficult spellings on the first page of the lesson.
10. After the first word is written correctly, the student progresses to the next word on the list. Each step

is followed until all the words are written correctly.

### HOW IT WORKS

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Days

On the second, third, and fourth days of the week, the student will practice writing their words using the same technique. Even if they worked with the teacher the first day, they can usually do these practice sessions alone.

On review days, students begin by reviewing the first page. Any unusual spellings or difficult words have been marked on this page.

Then they turn the page and do the work page for that lesson. Words are written syllable by syllable as before.

Before proceeding to the next word, students self-correct the word they just wrote. They verify every letter in every syllable. At the end of each syllable, they write the number of correct letters. If all letters in a word are correct, they indicate the word was written correctly by making a star or smiley face on the line.

Incorrect words must be rewritten until each syllable is correct.

### SPELLING TEST

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Day

The last day of the week, the spelling test is given. This can be done one of two ways. The teacher can dictate each word, then have the student write it on a clean sheet of paper.

### GRADING

Usually, with a twenty word spelling list, each word is worth five points. Therefore, the grade to the test can be determined by multiplying the number of incorrect words on the test by five, and subtracting the product from 100 percent.

The daily practices can be graded and counted as quiz grades for students who need additional help in spelling. On a

quiz, each syllable can be counted as two points. Therefore, a student is getting partial credit for the syllables they write correctly. The words written on the first day are not included as a quiz grade, as the student is encountering the word for the first time. The three quiz grades can be averaged. The quiz grades can be equal to one test grade.

An alternative method is to give one bonus point for each daily practice page. This gives credit to the student for keeping on track and making progress through the week.

### ON-GOING REVIEW

You will notice that many of the words have tiny chalk boards with a single letter on it. This letter refers to the appropriate rule in the Spelling Rules index in the back of the book.

We have two goals with these Spelling Rules. First, we want to show common rules which will assist student's spelling ability without having them memorize every possible rule in the English language. The point is not to memorize rules, but to group common spelling patterns so they are easier to remember.

Second, an occasional review of the spelling rules will cement the pattern in their minds, as well as the correct spelling of words they have learned. You might consider giving a monthly spot quiz to see if they can spell words from one or two rules.

Many students find it helpful to keep a list of words with a common pattern. This is a great technique in teaching phonics in kindergarten through second grade, but can be continued with spelling patterns in older grades as well. Students may like to write the words directly on the Spelling Rules page, or keep a separate notebook.

## TEACHING TIPS

It takes discipline for a student to develop the habit of sounding out each syllable phonetically while simultaneously writing the letters. Therefore, it takes effort on your part to coach them in developing that skill. It is an effort well worth your time that will pay off for both of you.

On the first day, as the child is writing the weekly list for the first time, listen that he or she verbalizes each syllable as it is written. If they do not, ask them to rewrite it while speaking it. Occasionally during the week you can also listen and remind them to develop this habit.

Visual learners often find that highlighting the vowels with a yellow highlighter helps them to remember them. Some have found that using a different colored highlighter for different vowel combinations is helpful. However, there are only a few colors of highlighters so this may not be as useful unless you also keep a variety of colored markers on hand as well.

Kinetic learners who like motion or touch can write their words in the air, draw them on a velvet covered board, or spell them in cursive with their toes. Young dancers particularly like that last technique.

Keeping a notebook with one page of common spelling patterns is useful for younger students. However, even older students find it helpful for certain patterns such as “ough” or “sion.” As an alternative to a notebook, use the Spelling Rules pages or the extra pages at the end as a place to write hard to remember words. A quick review once a month will enable students to remember words previously learned and connect them to new ones as they are presented.

