

# E10: Drumming Names

Lesson Objective: Using a vibrating surface such as a drum, children will hear a word and repeat it while rhythmically beating out and then correctly counting its syllables.

## Materials

- Word List
- A “drum” (or box, plastic container, tabletop, etc.)
- A “drumstick” (or large spoon, stick, hand, etc.)

You may want to have two drums, so you can have your own to demonstrate with.

## Activity

Video: How to play Drumming Names

Explain to your child what a syllable is. It is one part of a word. Some words have only one part and other words have more than one part. Pronounce these words very clearly, giving equal weight to each syllable.

Adult: You’ve learned that some words are long  
and some words are short.

You can tell how long most words are  
by counting how many parts they have,  
like this. Listen: “La – La – La”

[Beat drum for each syllable while saying “La-La-La.”]

Adult: Now you hit the drum for each part I say.

Get ready: “La – La – La.”

[Child beats three beats on drum.]

Adult: Again. Get ready: “La – La – La.”

[Child beats three beats on drum.]

Adult: Good! Each of those parts is called a syllable.

Say syllable.

# E10: Drumming Names (continued)

Child: Syllable.

Adult: Yes. Now we are going to count the syllables,  
or parts, in different words.

Some words are short, and they have only  
one part to them.

[Beat the drum as you say each word.]

Adult: These are words like dog, cat, and book.

Other words are a little longer, and they have two parts:

Pup-py, dol-phin, pen-cil.

[Beat the drum as you say each syllable.]

Adult: Longer words have three parts: e-le-phant, com-pu-ter.

[Beat the drum as you say each syllable.]

Adult: And some words even have four beats:

te-le-vi-sion, rhi-no-cer-os!

[Beat the drum as you say each syllable.]

Now show your child how to drum the syllables in a variety of familiar words and names. Print out our [word list](#) for examples of words of different lengths. Use names of people and characters that are very familiar to the child: family, pets, friends, and favorite fictional characters. Make sure you use names of varying syllable lengths: e.g., Jeff, Fido, Granny, Elizabeth, Uncle Julio, etc.

Start with a series of one-syllable words and names. Then move to two-syllable compound words, followed by two-syllable non-compound words.

Adult: I am going to say a name, and I am going to hit the drum  
for each part, each syllable, of the name.

You tell me how many parts you hear.

Listen. Mom-my. Mom-my.

[Say name clearly. Say it again, clearly, while drumming syllables.]

## E10: Drumming Names (continued)

Adult: Say it with me...

Child and Adult: Mom-my.

Adult: How many times did you feel your chin drop  
when you said Mom-my?

Child: Two!

Adult: Yes. Mommy is a word that has two parts, two syllables.

Now you take the drum, and we can  
count the parts in another word...

Once your child grasps the concept, have her say each word with you and drum with you. Eventually she should be able to hear and drum the syllables on her own.

When the child has the hang of hearing the difference between one-syllable and two-syllable words, move on to three-syllable words and names, and then a few four-syllable words and names.

After introducing all the different word lengths, give the child a mix of some one- and two-syllable names. Once she has a solid grasp of one- and two-syllable names, throw some three- and eventually four-syllable words into the mix.

Stick with this activity until the child has mastered the skill of hearing the difference between one- and two-syllable words and names. This is a critical step toward a child's ability to hear the individual sounds in words later on.

NOTE: For any error the child makes, have her repeat the use of her fingers under her chin and feel the number of syllables while she repeats the word. Then have her drum the word again.

## Small Groups (2-5 children)

Additional Materials:

- paper towel tubes for “quiet” drumsticks or rhythm sticks
- large empty plastic bottles with tops or empty cans with lids for “drums”

## E10: Drumming Names (continued)

Adaptation: Read the main activity, watch the video, and follow the instructions above, with the following changes:

Tap out the name of each child in the group, using small drumsticks or finger tapping quietly on the table or hard surface. The best vibrations come from tapping a solid object against an empty or hollow container such as an empty plastic water bottle or an empty peanut can with a plastic top. Have each child tap his own name.

Repeat the activity, asking how many beats each name has. Add words from the word list. Continue this activity until the children master the skill of hearing the difference between one- and two-syllable words.