

# E3: Feeling Syllables

Lesson Objective: Children will feel and correctly count the number of syllables in a spoken word by holding together their index and middle fingers of one hand firmly under their chin while orally repeating the word.

## Materials

Suggested Word List

## Activity

Explain to your child what a syllable is. It is one part of a word. Pronounce these words slowly and very clearly, giving equal weight to each syllable.

Video: How to play Feeling Syllables

You will model holding two fingers parallel to and touching under your chin while slowly saying the word. Then help the child hold her fingers firmly under her own chin. It is important that the child feel her chin move when uttering each syllable.

Adult: You've learned about some long words  
and some short words.

You can tell how long most words are  
by counting how many parts they have.

Listen: rain – bow.

[Hold two fingers under your chin while saying word.]

Watch how my chin moves with each word part: rain – bow.

Hold your fingers under your chin, like this.

Now say the word with me: rain – bow.

Child & Adult: rain – bow.

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

Can you say syllable?

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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.

These are words like dog, fish, and book.

[Hold two fingers under your chin while saying word.]

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

dog-house, gold-fish, book-bag.

[Hold two fingers under your chin while saying word.]

Longer words have three parts: e-le-phant, um-brel-la.

[Hold two fingers under your chin while saying word.]

And some words even have four parts:

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

[Hold two fingers under your chin while saying word.]

Now have the child join you in saying some compound words and feeling how her chin moves with each syllable.

Adult: Hold your fingers under your chin. Now say cow-boy.

Child: Cow-boy.

Adult: This time, say cowboy and count how many times your chin moves.

Ready?

Child: Cow-boy. Two!

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

Once your child has the hang of feeling the syllables and understanding the difference between one-syllable and two-syllable words, move on to three-syllable words, and then a few four-syllable words.

(continued)

Stick with this activity until the child has firmly mastered this skill. This is a tremendously valuable technique that will be useful throughout preschool and beyond.

## Small Groups (2-5 children)

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

Read words from the word list as the children count the syllables aloud as a group. When they have had several opportunities to practice, ask for volunteers to demonstrate “feeling” the syllables while the other children count aloud the number of syllables they hear. Have the children then check their answer by feeling the syllables as they repeat the volunteer’s spoken word.