

Specific Language Training

An Orton-Gillingham Based Curriculum
for Middle & High School Students

Intermediate Level

The Syllabic Code

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INTERMEDIATE LEVEL: Specific Language Training**THE SYLLABIC CODE**

Specific Language Training at the Intermediate Level assumes knowledge of the basic alphabetic code. That is, to proceed with this curriculum, students should know regular sounds of the letters of the alphabet. They should know how to form the letters in order to write, how to segment the sounds of regular words in order to spell, and how to blend sounds of letters, in order to decode regular words. Students without this level of mastery should begin with Basic Level Specific Language Training (written for students from grade three through adult ages who need beginning reading/writing/spelling instruction).

The Intermediate Level of Specific Language Training is designed to complete basic training in the code of the language through the syllabic code. Mastery of decoding and encoding skills is stressed. Some older students, who are adequately prepared may begin their training with this level, rather than with the Basic Level. Students may be pretested for each subdivision to determine their need for instruction in those elements. Gaps and inconsistencies in previous instruction may be addressed.

The first task of this level of training is to master the two most common and regular kinds of syllables--the closed syllable and the silent e syllable. These two syllable types provide practice in distinguishing the short and the long vowel sounds, thus affirming this base of knowledge. The regular r-controlled syllables are next. The first words presented are those that can be broken into syllables by division between two middle consonants. Other patterns of syllable division are presented with the introduction of open syllables.

The diphthong and long vowel alternatives (or double vowel syllables) are presented mainly as spelling choices. The double vowels with "different" sounds (not long, not short) are the diphthongs, and each has a spelling with two choices. The double vowels with "long", or "name", sounds are considered Long Vowel Alternatives (LVA's) since they present choices in spelling for what may sound like a silent e syllable or an open syllable. Many specialists think of these as Double Vowel Syllables or call them all Diphthong Syllables. They are presented slightly differently here because this sequence was built with close attention to the task of spelling. Experience shows that students with poor visual and/or motor memory can more easily learn to decode such patterns, than they can spell them. So, for older learners, the teaching sequence focuses on spelling and writing, since these skills are so difficult to master.

In addition, the three major rules for adding suffixes are introduced for mastery in spelling--the silent e rule, the doubling rule, and the "y" rule. Additional suffixes are included, and regular patterns are presented for mastery.

Special attention is given to the soft "c", the soft "g", and the vowel sounds of "y". Such choices for sounds are omitted in the initial presentation of the six syllable types.

The more rare patterns are introduced to ensure decoding fluency and recognition of spelling choices. Mastery of spelling of all the less common patterns is an unrealistic goal for many with visual and motor memory problems.

At the end of this study sequence, students will be able to divide and decode most words. They will be able to spell words by the logic of their construction, by the careful listening for sounds, and by knowledge of the regular (and less regular) patterns of English orthography.

Kinds of SyllablesCLOSED SYLLABLESnot

A closed syllable is one that ends with a consonant (s). It has one vowel in the middle. The vowel has a short vowel sound.

Examples: cam duct ment es tic

SILENT E SYLLABLESnote

A silent e syllable is one that ends with a silent e. The silent e is powerful. It makes the preceding vowel long.

Examples: zene cate fide tune bone

R-CONTROLLED SYLLABLES:car for verb first nurse

These syllables look like closed syllables. However, the vowel sound is controlled by the letter "r" that follows it. These "regular" r-controlled patterns are stable and common: ar, or, and er. Two other spellings for the sound /er/ must be learned: ir and ur.

Examples: for fer dar tur bir

OPEN SYLLABLES:no

An open syllable is one that ends with a vowel. The vowel has its long (name) sound.

Examples: ra be si po lu

CONSONANT-LE SYLLABLES: -ble -ple -dle -fle -tle

Consonant-le syllables, or alternative endings, come at the end of a word. They are the only type of syllable without a vowel sound. You hear only the consonant and the letter "l" sound:

ta-ble can-dle sam-ple ri-fle ti-tle

DOUBLE VOWEL SYLLABLES:

These syllables have two vowels next to each other that together make either a long vowel sound or a new sound. Those that make a long vowel sound are considered "LONG VOWEL ALTERNATIVES" since they sound like either silent e syllables (if they end with a consonant) or open syllables (if they end with a vowel sound). The Diphthongs are the double vowels that make a new sound. See the outline of the syllable types on the next page.

Examples: e val u ate re main der bau ble
 open closed open silent e open double r-controlled double consonant-le
 vowel vowel

Level 4: Open, Closed, Silent e, and R-Controlled Syllables

late	code	vat	vo	ze
vot	grad	tar	tate	pler
ni	tat	gru	cate	mide
dote	ped	cline	pla	pute
cli	cod	cove	trite	dor

robot	tempo	decode	erase
omit	stupid	radar	blazer
fiber	credit	zero	retort
rodent	crusade	domestic	microbe
bonus	defer	rotate	volcano

1. Radar can catch drivers who go too fast.
2. Most students have to erase as they do math problems.
3. We will get a bonus if we decode with skill.
4. A silent microbe may bring a flu virus.
5. Prevent forest fires at all times.
6. Joseph held an art exhibit, and we went to see it.

(4-2)

Overview for The DOUBLE VOWEL SYLLABLES -- Levels 7 - 14:

There are two types of Double Vowel Syllables:

Long Vowel Alternatives (two vowels that together make a long vowel sound) and,
Diphthongs (two vowels together that make a new sound).

Please note:

Common one syllable words with these double vowel spellings were presented for mastery in the Basic Level SLT curriculum.

Long Vowel Alternatives:

From the “sound” point of view, two vowels together that make a long vowel sound (name sound) do not really comprise a new syllable type. This is so because what is heard sounds like either an open syllable or a silent e syllable--depending on whether there is a consonant sound following the long vowel sound.

Hence, vowel combinations that make a long vowel sound are called **Long Vowel Alternatives (LVA's)** in this curriculum. The objective for the study of these alternative spellings is to assure skill in reading words with these vowel combinations and to develop memory of the alternative choices for spelling. Eventually, through practice, students will memorize the spellings of commonly used words and will gain facility in the use of the dictionary and/or spell checkers on the computer for words of which they are unsure.

The spellings introduced at this point in the curriculum are the most common ones. Less common spellings are saved for later in the sequence. Included in each of these levels is a review of the long vowel sounds in open syllables and in silent e syllables.

The Diphthongs:

The Double Vowel Syllables that make a new sound will be considered diphthongs in this curriculum. These include the two sounds for **double o** (short oo, as in book, and long oo, as in spoon), the two spellings **oi** (as in boil) and **oy** (as in boy), the two spellings **ou** (as in outing) and **ow** (as in powder), and the two spellings **au** (as in August) and **aw** (as in claw).

Level 15: “A” at Beginning, as in “alike”**Overview:**

When the letter “a” comes at the beginning of a word, it makes a sound somewhat like the short u. This sound is referred to as the “schwa” sound. Students will need to become familiar with the common words in which the “a” at the beginning says the schwa sound. At times they may have to try the short vowel sound and the schwa sound for the letter. Then, assess which pronunciation makes a recognizable word.

Order for Instruction:

--Explain that when the letter “a” comes at the beginning, it will make a sound like the short “u” sound.

--Spell, then read a selection of the following words:

aback	abide	ablaze	abode
abolish	abominate	abort	abound
abrasive	abuse	abusive	about
abutment	across	acrostic	acute
adapt(-ing, -ed)	adopt(-ed, -ing)	adorn	adulterate
afire	aflame	afloat	afoul
afraid	aglow	ago	agog
agree	aground	ajar	akin
alarm (-ed, -ing)	alight	alike	alive
aloft	alone	along	aloud
amass	amaze	amazement	amend

Level 22: Compare the Doubling Rule with the Silent e Rule

Overview:

Comparing the words that result from following the Doubling Rule and the Silent e Rule is a very useful application. Students need to develop automaticity in recognizing the fact that the double letter indicates a short vowel sound in the first syllable, whereas the single consonant, just preceding the suffix, indicates a long vowel in the last syllable before the suffix.

Order for Instruction:

--Compare silent e syllables with closed syllables. Use a quick reading drill from cards or from word lists. Make sure the student restates the role of the silent e.

--Review the doubling rule. Make sure the student can read such words as “mopping”, and can tell that the base word was “mop”. Make sure that the student can answer this question: “What does the double letter in the word tell you about the vowel sound in the first syllable?” The student should be able to articulate that “the double letter gives the vowel a short vowel sound.”

--Review the silent e rule. Make sure the student can read such words as “filing” and can tell you that the base word was “file”. Make sure the student can answer this question: “What does the single letter in the middle of the word tell you about the vowel sound in the preceding syllable?” The student should be able to articulate that “the single consonant indicates that the preceding vowel is long.”

--Practice reading, spelling, and composing sentences with pairs of words, such as the following:

hopping -- hoping starring -- staring filing -- filling

--Practice comparing and applying the two suffix rules with the Practice Sheet that follows.

Level 35: Compare the Three Suffix Rules**Overview:**

Review and compare the three major suffix rules. The study of the suffix rules can be connected to the type of syllable for which it is needed. The Doubling Rule is needed for Closed Syllables; the Silent e Rule is needed for Silent e Syllables, and the “Y” Rule applies to any word, ending in an Open Syllable formed with the letter “y”.

Students need to be able to apply the rules and to verbalize the rules. The practice with verbalizing will increase the possibility that the information will be retrievable at the time needed in the future.

Order for Instruction:

Apply these questions and verbalizations to the exercises that follow.

KEY QUESTIONS for each of the suffix rules:

Do I DROP the e or KEEP the e? (The Silent e Rule)

Drop the e, if the suffix starts with a vowel: raking, typist

Keep the e, if the suffix starts with a consonant: safely, timeless

Do I KEEP the y or CHANGE the “y” to “i”? (The “y” Rule)

Keep the y, if the letter just before the y is a vowel: annoyed, employee

Keep the y, if the suffix being added starts with an i: babyish, studying

Change the y to i, if the letter just before the y is a consonant:
studied, cloudiest, tinier

Do I DOUBLE or DON'T I? (The Doubling Rule)

Double the final consonant before a suffix that begins with a vowel

if both the following conditions appear:

--the word has only one syllable (or is accented on the last syllable)

--the word ends with a single consonant preceded by a single vowel:

running, planned, hottest, tugged, mopping

Don't double the final consonant if:

--the base word ends with two consonants: faster, retracted

--the base word has two vowels in the middle: boiling, restrained

--the suffix starts with a consonant: badly, allotment

Level 49: Soft “g” before e, i, and y (gem, gin, gym)**Overview:**

The typical pattern is that “g” will have its **soft sound**, when followed by **e, i, or y** and “g” will have its **hard sound**, when followed by **a, o, u, or by consonants**. In a very few common words, the “g” pattern is broken: get, give, gift, girl. In another set of common words, the letter “g” is followed by the letter “u”. This letter “u” serves the purpose of keeping the “g” hard (guess, guide). These exceptions to the “soft g” pattern will be explored further in Level 51.

Order for Instruction:

--Review familiar words that show that “g” is hard before a, o, u, and consonants and at the end of a word:

gate	gave	gasket	got	goat	gut
gum	grape	grass	grasp	glad	glitter
glass	globe	rug	plug	snug	smog

--Review basic level words showing that “g” is soft when followed by an “e” at the end of a word:

age	barge	cage	change	charge	forge
fringe	gorge	gouge	huge	large	lounge
mange	page	purge	rage	range	sage
scrounge	splurge	stage	strange	urge	wage

--Review the words that use the “long” spelling after the short vowel:

badge	bridge	budge	dodge	dredge	edge
fudge	grudge	hedge	judge	ledge	lodge
nudge	pledge	ridge	smudge	trudge	

Level 67: “ou” sounds like short u, and “ough” sounds like /uf/**Overview:**

The “ou” combination may also sound like “short u”, as in “country”. In addition, the “ough” may sound /uf/, as in “rough”. The goal for this level is for recognition in decoding.

Order for Instruction:

--Read, spell, and compose sentences with a selection of the following words:

country	countryman	couple	cousin
double	double-check	double-cross	double-quick
doubloon	Doug (Douglas)	enough	retouch
slough	sough	southern	southerner
touch	touchback	touchdown	touchy
trouble	troubleshooter	untouchable	untouched
young	youngish	youngster	

--Read, spell, and compose sentences with a selection of the following words:

rough	roughage	roughen	roughhewn
roughhouse	roughneck	roughrider	roughshod
tough	toughen		

--Read and spell a selection from the Practice Sheet that follows.

Appendix for Words with Silent Letters

The words with silent letters may be taught when they come up for the particular student. The following lists are provided so that the instructor may show the student that there are groups of words that have similar patterns. The silent letters are listed alphabetically, to assist the teacher in finding the list needed. These words should be practiced in the same way as the others. For each list, there should be reading, spelling, and composing.

Silent b:

<u>bt:</u>	debt	doubt	subtle	undoubtedly
<u>mb:</u>	beachcomber	bomb	catacomb	climb
	comb	crumb	dumb	dumbbell
	dumbfound	dumbwaiter	jamb	lamb
	limb	numb	plumber	thumb
	thumbnail			

Silent g:

<u>-gn:</u>	align	alignment	arraign	assign
(ign)	assignment	benign	campaign	cologne
	consign	consignment	cosign	countersign
	design	designer	malign	reign
	sign			
<u>gn-</u>	gnarl	gnash	gnat	gnaw
	gnome			

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