

Counting Syllables — Level Up

A syllable practice worksheet for middle & high school students

Name: _____

Date: _____

Quick refresher: a syllable is a single, unbroken sound in a word, built around a vowel sound. One easy trick: say the word slowly and count how many times your jaw drops or your chin touches your hand held underneath it. *Example: in-cred-i-ble has 4 syllables.*

Part 1: Count the Syllables

Read each word aloud and write the number of syllables it contains.

Word	Syllables	Word	Syllables
photosynthesis	_____	chocolate	_____
rhythm	_____	aluminum	_____
necessary	_____	communication	_____
environment	_____	beautiful	_____
curiosity	_____	temperature	_____
mysterious	_____	algorithm	_____

Part 2: Syllable Division Rules

Multisyllabic words often break at predictable points. Review these rules, then apply them below.

- VC/CV: divide between two consonants when each is preceded/followed by a vowel (nap-kin, mon-key).
- V/CV vs VC/V: with one consonant between vowels, try dividing before it first (ti-ger); if that doesn't sound right, divide after (cab-in).
- Compound words: divide between the two words (rain-bow, foot-ball).
- Prefixes and suffixes: divide them off as their own syllable (re-turn, teach-er, un-happy).
- Consonant + "le": the consonant joins the final syllable (ta-ble, puz-zle, sim-ple).

Now divide each word into syllables using hyphens, then write the total count.

Word	Divided (use hyphens)	Count
napkin		_____
tiger		_____
cabin		_____

rainbow		_____
return		_____
teacher		_____
table		_____
puzzle		_____
unhappy		_____
basket		_____

Part 3: Syllables in Context

Read the sentence below. Count the total number of syllables in the underlined word(s), then rewrite the sentence with syllable breaks (hyphens) for each underlined word.

Sentence	Target Word	Syllables
The scientist explained the complicated theory to her curious students.	complicated	_____
Her extraordinary performance left the audience speechless.	extraordinary	_____
International travel requires a valid passport and sometimes a visa.	international	_____
The documentary examined climate change and its consequences.	documentary	_____

Part 4: Haiku Challenge

A haiku follows a 5-7-5 syllable pattern across three lines. Write an original haiku about any topic you like (school, seasons, sports, etc.), then count the syllables in each line to check your work.

Line 1 (5 syllables): _____
Line 2 (7 syllables): _____
Line 3 (5 syllables): _____

Nice work! Precise syllable counting sharpens both reading and writing skills.

Answer Key — Counting Syllables (Teens)

Part 1:

photosynthesis=5, rhythm=1, necessary=4, environment=4, curiosity=5, mysterious=4, chocolate=2, aluminum=4, communication=5, beautiful=3, temperature=3, algorithm=4

Part 2:

nap-kin (2); ti-ger (2); cab-in (2); rain-bow (2); re-turn (2); teach-er (2); ta-ble (2); puz-zle (2); un-hap-py (3); bas-ket (2)

Part 3: complicated = 4 (com-pli-cat-ed); extraordinary = 6 (ex-tra-or-di-nar-y); international = 5 (in-ter-na-tion-al); documentary = 5 (doc-u-men-ta-ry).

Part 4: Answers will vary — check that each line matches the 5-7-5 syllable pattern.