

Syllable Division Rules

Quick Reference Chart — 6 Rules for Splitting Any Word

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Golden rule first: every syllable needs a vowel sound. Count the vowel sounds in a word to know how many syllables to look for — then apply the pattern below that fits.

1	VC/CV	Split between two middle consonants	nap·kin bas·ket gar·lic	Two consonants sit between vowels — divide right between them.
2	V/CV	Divide before a single consonant	pa·per ti·ger ro·bot	One consonant between vowels — try before it first (keeps the vowel long).
3	VC/V	Divide after a single consonant	cab·in lem·on fin·ish	Used when V/CV doesn't sound right — closes the syllable, shortens the vowel.
4	Consonant + LE	Count back three letters from the end	ta·ble ap·ple pur·ple	The consonant + 'le' ending forms its own final syllable.
5	Digraphs & Blends	Never split these letter pairs	tea·cher os·trich dol·phin	ch, sh, ph, th, bl, st, fr, tr, etc. make one sound — keep together.
6	Prefixes, Suffixes & Compounds	Split off affixes and word halves first	work·ing re·view sun·set	Prefixes, suffixes, and each half of a compound word are already complete syllables.

Tip: If a rule produces a chunk that isn't a real word, try the alternate pattern (V/CV vs. VC/V) — English spelling has exceptions, so these are reliable starting points, not absolute laws.