

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Syllables

DESCRIPTION

Children clap and count the syllables in things they see while out on a nature walk.

TARGETED SKILL(S):

Count to determine the number of syllables in words of up to three syllables.

**SUITABLE FOR**

Whole class or small group

**PREP-TIME**

5-10 min.

**DURATION OF ACTIVITY**

20-25 min.

**MATERIALS**

- **We provide:** OPTIONAL: 'Nature Picture Cards'
- **You find:** OPTIONAL: your own nature images

PREPARATION

1. Determine where you would like to go for a nature walk (e.g., school playground, nearby park or trail).
2. If going for a nature walk is not feasible, print and cut out either the optional 'Nature Picture Cards' (one set, in colour if possible) OR your own nature images to display throughout your classroom or hallways. Adhere the cards to the walls prior to your walk.

What will we learn?

"Today, we are going to clap and count out the syllables of things we notice while in nature."

What do we know?

1. "What is a syllable?" (A 'beat' or part of a word.)
2. "How can we find out how many syllables are in a word?" (We can clap and count out the parts of the word.)
3. "Let's practise clapping and counting out the syllables in our names!" For example: "Ava. A [clap]- va [clap]. Two!"; "Jude. Jude [clap]. One!"; "Lillian. Lil [clap]- li [clap]- an [clap]. Three!"
4. "As we go for our walk, we will stop and clap out things we see in nature. What do you think we will find?"
5. "I wonder if we can find anything that has one syllable... or two syllables... or even three syllables!"

Watch me first!

1. Begin your nature walk together. While walking, stop and model observing the things around you.
2. Choose and name one thing you see (e.g., flower). Model clapping out the syllables as you name it again. For example, "Flower. Flow [clap]- er [clap]. Two!"
3. Repeat the word, asking the children to help you clap and count (e.g., "Flower. Flow [clap]- er [clap]. Two!").
4. With the children's help, continue to clap and count out the syllables in a couple more words of varying syllables. For example: "Tree. Tree [clap]. One!"; "Butterfly. But [clap]- ter [clap]- fly [clap]. Three!"

Let's try it!

1. Continue your walk to find more things in nature. Have fun clapping and counting out the syllables of what you find, making it a natural part of your nature exploration walk.
2. Encourage the children to find and suggest things to clap and count out. Work towards having individual children clap a nature word while the rest of the group counts the claps to determine the number of syllables.

What did we learn?

- “Today, we learned that all the words around us in nature are made up of syllables. Knowing about syllables will help us be better readers and spellers as we get older!”
- “Some of the things we find in nature have one syllable, some have two, and some have three or more syllables. Can you think of a nature word that only has one syllable? Can you clap while naming the word?”
- “Can you think of a nature word that has two syllables? Or three syllables? Can you clap while you say the word?”
- “What was your favourite thing we found today on our nature walk? How many syllables does it have?”

Let's do more!

- In pairs or small groups, invite the children to take turns finding things in nature. Ask them to work together to clap and count to determine the number of syllables.
- Ask the children to categorise the nature things they have found according to the number of syllables they have. If you wish, graph your syllable category results together.
- Count how many total syllables are in the specific names of things in nature. You could also represent it with nature objects (e.g., use five sticks or rocks to represent five total claps for ‘sug-ar ma-ple tree’).
- While on your walk, introduce the children to nature words they may not be familiar with (e.g., fern, clover) and/or to the specific names of things (e.g., “monarch butterfly” instead of “butterfly”).
- Incorporating Domain E skills (Physical Development): As you walk outside, ask the children to move in different ways (e.g., jump, skip, walk backwards or sideways).

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Less Challenging



- Repeat each nature word three or four times in order for all children to join in.
- Focus mostly on things in nature that only have one or two syllables. As children become more comfortable with clapping and counting syllables, introduce nature words with three or more syllables.
- Provide the children with handheld mirrors. Ask them to hold a hand under their chin so they can “feel”, “see”, and hear the syllables. Alternate between words with one syllable and words with two syllables.
- To avoid overwhelming children who are struggling with syllables, only focus on a few nature words on your walk.

More Challenging



- Tell the children to listen carefully as you say a nature word. Then, ask them to take their best guess as to how many syllables are in the word. They can then confirm their guess by clapping and counting out the syllables.
- Call out a certain number of syllables and have the children stop and find something with that number of syllables.
- Ask the children to take turns leading: “I spy with my little eye something with ___ syllables.” They could also add the colour or another attribute: “I spy with my little eye something that is yellow with ___ syllables.”
- Try to find some things in nature with four syllables! (e.g., caterpillar, dandelion)

TIPS



Exploring in nature has so many benefits! Repeat this activity often throughout the year to see what new and interesting things you can find in nature and to determine the number of syllables for these things.