Sound Waves Literacy: Segmenting Guide

How to Segment Words

Follow these steps to help you segment words using the Segmenting Strips:

1. **say** the word aloud
2. **count** the sounds, holding up one finger for each sound
3. **write** the number of sounds
4. **write** a grapheme to represent each sound
5. **highlight** the grapheme/s for the focus sound.

Tip: Look away from the word when counting the sounds.

number of sounds	graphemes				
3	ch	i	n		
5	s	c	r	a	tch

Tricky Words to Segment

Words with **q** and **u**

In words with [k c q ck x ch] [w wh u], we usually use **q** for [k c q ck x ch] and **u** for [w wh u].
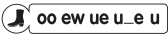
q	u	i	t

Words where **x** represents two sounds

We can use **x** for the two sounds [k c q ck x ch] [s ss se ce x c]. When we segment words where **x** represents two sounds, we write the **x** across two boxes.

n	e	x	t

Words with [y u] [oo ew ue u_e u]
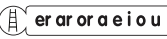
We can use **u**, **ui**, **eu**, **ew**, **u_e**, **ue** and **eau** to represent the two sounds [y u] [oo ew ue u_e u]. When we segment words with a grapheme representing [y u] [oo ew ue u_e u], we write the grapheme across two boxes.
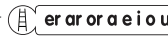
b	eau	t	y

Words ending in **le**

It can be hard to hear [er ar or a e i o u] in words ending in **le**, which is why they can be segmented two ways.

If you hear [l] for **le**, write **le** in one box.

t	a	b	le

If you hear [er ar or a e i o u] [l] for **le**, write **le** across two boxes.

t	a	b	le

Words with split digraphs

A split digraph is two letters representing one sound, but the two letters are split apart by another grapheme. The split digraphs are: **a_e**, **e_e**, **i_e**, **o_e** and **u_e**. When we segment a word with a split digraph, we show the split digraph using a curved line.

c	a	ke

for [ai ay a_e a]

Why Segment Words?

Segmenting words into sounds solidifies the connection between each sound and the grapheme representing it. This fosters the ability to recognise words automatically (a process called orthographic mapping).

When to Use Syllables

Segmenting words into syllables is a useful oral/aural strategy for both spelling and reading. To assist with segmenting multisyllabic words into phonemes, students can first break the words into syllables, then segment these smaller and more manageable parts into phonemes. Knowledge of syllables is beneficial when reading because reading chunks of words rather than individual letters helps build speed and fluency. When breaking words into syllables, teach students to count the number of syllables in a word by clapping each syllable they hear (e.g. the word *segment* is two claps/syllables). Tell students each syllable has a vowel sound.