

**A** Listen to these three lists of words. The words in list 1 have three parts – we say they have three syllables. The words in list 2 have two syllables, and the words in list 3 have one syllable.

1	2	3
in-ter-net	six-ty	six
un-der-line	un-der	line
un-der-lined	u-nit	lines
al-pha-bet	hou-ses	house
con-so-nant	go-ing	goes

Some words have more than three syllables: *television* has four syllables, for example, and *geographical* has five syllables. Listen.

te-le-vi-sion  
ge-o-gra-phi-cal

The simplest type of syllable is just a vowel sound, like /u:/. People often say the vowel sound /u:/ (usually written *Ooh*) when they are pleased or surprised. Listen.

Ooh, that's nice!  
Ooh, thank you very much!



Ooh, thank you very much!

Some syllables have one or more consonant sounds before the vowel. Listen.

/s/ + /u:/ = /su:/ This is the name *Sue*.  
/b/ + /u:/ = /bu:/ blue

Some syllables have one or more consonants after the vowel. Listen.

/i:/ + /t/ = /it/ eat  
/i:/ + /st/ = /ist/ east

Some syllables have consonants before and after the vowel. Listen.

/n/ + /u:/ + /z/ = /nju:z/ news  
/f/ + /i:/ + /ldz/ = /fi:ldz/ fields  
/str/ + /i:/ + /t/ = /stri:t/ street

**B** Usually, the number of syllables in a word is the number of vowel sounds – not the number of vowel letters. Listen.

**worked** (2 vowel letters but only 1 vowel sound /wɜ:kt/, so only 1 syllable)  
**different** (3 vowel letters but only 2 vowel sounds /'dɪfrənt/, so only 2 syllables)  
**interesting** (4 vowel letters but only 3 vowel sounds /'ɪnrəstɪŋ/, so only 3 syllables)

Sometimes the sound /l/ can be a syllable with no vowel sound. Listen.

**bottle** (2 syllables /'bɒl + /tl/)  
**syllable** (3 syllables /'sɪl + /lə/ + /bl/)  
**It'll be ready soon.** (2 syllables /ɪt/ + /l/)

## Exercises

28.1 How many syllables are there in these words? Write the number of syllables next to the word.

eyes  why  white  write  writing  glass  glasses   
university  business  information

Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key.

Then listen and repeat these sentences.

- |                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 I've got blue eyes.    | 6 Is this your glass?              |
| 2 I don't know why.      | 7 I don't wear glasses.            |
| 3 Black coffee or white? | 8 Where's the university?          |
| 4 Will you write to me?  | 9 Business is business.            |
| 5 What are you writing?  | 10 There's the information office. |

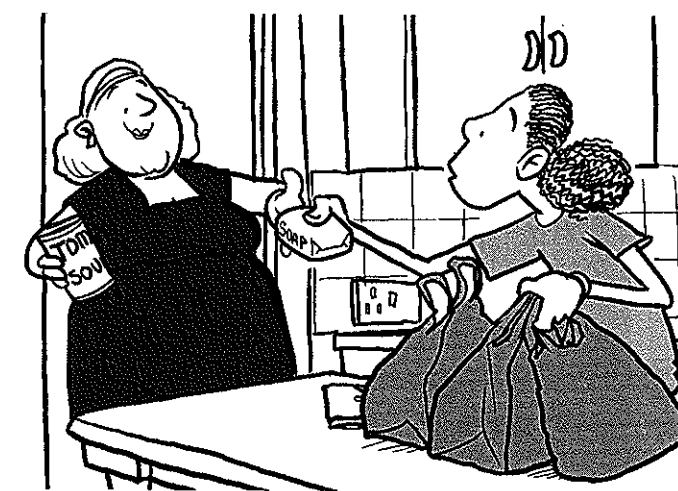
28.2 1 Which day of the week has three syllables?  
2 How many syllables do the other days of the week have?  
3 Which numbers between 1 and 20 have three syllables?  
4 Which letter of the alphabet has more than one syllable?  
5 Which months have only one syllable?

Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

28.3 Read this story and mark all the words that have two or three syllables.

I remember(3) once on my first visit(2) to England( ), soon after( ) I started( ) learning( ) English( ), my landlady( ) went shopping( ) and she came back with a big bag full of things, but she forgot( ) to buy some soup – she needed( ) a tin of tomato( ) soup. So I said, 'I'll go to the shop and buy it for you,' because( ) I wanted( ) to be helpful( ) and it was a chance to practise( ) my English( ) a bit. So I went to the little( ) shop round the corner( ) and asked the

shopkeeper( ) for tomato( ) soup. But he seemed surprised( ), he didn't( ) understand( ), and I repeated( ) again( ) and again( ) 'soup, tomato( ) soup' until( ) he gave me some red soap, and I realised( ) I'd confused( ) 'soup' and 'soap' and I was asking( ) for 'tomato( ) soap'. I felt terrible( ), I wanted( ) to run out of the shop, but my landlady( ) wanted( ) her soup, so I said, 'Thank you. And tomato( ) soup, please' – this time with the correct( ) pronunciation – and he gave me the soup. I paid and went back to the house and said to the landlady( ), pronouncing( ) very( ) carefully( ), 'Here's your soup, and I bought you this soap as a present( ),' and she said, 'Ooh, thank you very much, that's very( ) nice of you!'



Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and practise reading the story aloud.