

Name:

Guided Notes - Syllables in Spanish (1/19)

What is a syllable?

In Spanish, a syllable must consist of at least a _____. Usually, though, a syllable will consist of one or two _____ followed by a vowel. Syllables “like” to start with a consonant wherever possible. This is why a consonant between two vowels will usually stick with the second vowel. Two vowels that are pronounced together as if they were one vowel sound is known as a _____ (like the “ua” in “agua”).

Examples:	agua → a-gua	sábana → sá-ba-na
	caso → ca-so	oro → o-ro
	gasolina → ga-so-li-na	gato → ga-to

Two Consecutive Consonants:

When there is one consonant right after another within a word, these consonants will usually be separated. *However, think of the letters “ll, rr, and ch” not as two consonants, but more like one consonant sound. Because of this, we would not separate them.

Examples:	cu <u>an</u> do → cuan-do	co <u>st</u> a → cos-ta
	al <u>can</u> zar → al-can-zar	*am <u>ari</u> llo → a-ma-ri-llo
	*he <u>ch</u> o → he-cho	*car <u>ro</u> → ca-rro

Here’s the exception: If there are two consonants right at the beginning of the word, like in “blanco,” “clase” or “problema,” then you know they stay together. If a consonant pair (two consonants together) can be found at the beginning of the word, then it will also stay together in the same syllable anywhere inside the word.

Examples: aplicar → a-pli-car (“pl” is found in “plato”)

sobre → so-bre (“br” is found in “brisa”)

ladrillo → la-dri-llo (“dr” is found in “droga”)

Three Consecutive Consonants:

When there are three consonants in a row, the first one will be separated from the second and third ones. In other words, the second and third consonants will start the next syllable.

Examples: inglés → in-glés
 sombrero → som-bre-ro
 comprar → com-prar

Multiple Vowels:

Spanish has two types of vowels: Strong vowels → (a, e, o)

 Weak vowels → (i, u)

 * “y” is a weak vowel when it sounds like “i”

Rules:

1. Two _____ vowels combine into one syllable → fui, muy
2. A _____ vowel plus a _____ vowel combine into one syllable → Juan
3. Two _____ vowels in a row are separated into different syllables → fe-o, te-a-tro

More examples: reina → rei-na ciudad → ciu-dad
 toalla → to-a-lla leer → le-er
 guapo → gua-po camináis → ca-mi-náis

*Sometimes a written accent (which indicates emphasis) will force two vowels apart that would otherwise stay together in the same syllable. Notice that this happens in a pair with a weak and strong vowel where the weak vowel takes the emphasis.

tío → tí-o

baúl → ba-úl

día → dí-a

reúno → re-ú-no

*When the strong vowel carries the accent, we consider it one syllable:

reunión → reu-nión

tenéis → te-néis