**Onset-rime segmentation**

The adapted diagram below shows onset-rime segmentation. It is the first skill in the continuum that contributes to phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is an important sub-set of phonological awareness because it has a reciprocal relationship with reading (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020, p. 66).



When focussing on onset-rime segmentation it is important to understand the **structure of English syllables** including simple and complex syllables.

Note that the structure of syllables is based on the **phonemes** (sounds) of the words, not the **graphemes** (sound letter patterns) that comprise them. So some syllables may have multiple letters but only one speech sound (phoneme), see example "eye" and "oar" below).

Every syllable has at least a **nucleus** (vowel). Most syllables will also have an **onset** (consonants before vowel), and **coda** (consonants after the vowel). The nucleus and coda together make up the **rime** of the syllable (the part that rhymes).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description of Syllable | Consonant (C) and Vowel (V) Structure | Example (with phoneme breaks) |
| Single Vowel | V | eye oar |
| Vowel Consonant | VC | u p eigh t |
| Consonant Vowel | CV | g o s ee m y |
| Consonant Vowel Consonant | CVC | d o g s a p p u n |
| Initial Double Consonant Blend | **CC**V or **CC**VC | p l ay s t o p |
| Initial Triple Consonant Blend | **CCC**V or **CCC**VC | s t r aw s p l i t |
| Final Double Consonant Blend | V**CC** or CV**CC** | a s k t o p s |
| Final Triple Consonant Blend | V**CCC** or CV**CCC** | a s k s j u m p s t e m p t |
| Complex Syllables (Combinations of above) | e.g. CCVCC, CCVCCC, CCCVCC, CCCVCCC | s l u m p r i s k s s t r u t s s p l i n t s |

Learn more about the **structure of English syllables and consonant blends.**

**Onset-rime** activities involve breaking words into their **onsets** (consonants before the consonants), and the rime (everything left in the word).

For example the **rime** "own" as in "down" could have the following onsets to make the words in this table

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Onset(Consonant or Consonant Blend) | Rime | Word |
| d | own | down |
| br | own | brown |
| cl | own | clown |
| dr | own | drown |
| g | own | gown |

**References**

Hoover, W. A., & Tunmer, W. E. (2020). *The cognitive foundations of reading and its acquisition: A framework with applications connecting teaching and learning*. Cham: Springer.

Diagram above adapted from Schuele & Boudreau (2008). Phonological Awareness Intervention: Beyond the Basics. Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools 39, 3-20.