



Spelling

R-Controlled Syllables

Skill: Students will decode and spell multisyllabic words with r-controlled syllables.

Materials: Word Cards 1 and 2 (precut), scissors, index cards

Note: Words in bold are said aloud by the teacher.

Teach



- Have students gather around you as you use a set of Word Cards to sort. **Watch what I do with these words.** Create two columns: *Yes* and *No*. **I will place each word in a column based on its sound pattern. Listen as I say each word and pay close attention to the patterns in the words. Knowing about these patterns will help you remember how to spell the words.**
- Say each of the following words as you place it in the *Yes* column, emphasizing the /er/, /ir/, or /ur/ sound for each syllable: *girl*, *dirt*, *sister*, *otter*, *burn*, *hurdle*. Place the following words in the *No* column: *rat*, *pumpkin*, *state*, *wring*.
- **Compare the words in the Yes column and the No column. What do you notice?** Answers will vary. If necessary, guide students to understand that all of these words in the *Yes* column have the same /er/ sound. The words in the *No* column do not. Remove the words from the *No* column to focus only on the words in the *Yes* column.
- **These words all have the same sound. This pattern is called r-controlled vowels. All of these words have a vowel and an r after the vowel, but the vowel doesn't say its name because the r is bossy and controls the vowel.**
- **Look at the words on the board. We know that they all have the same sound /er/, but do they all have the same vowel + r?** Allow time for responses. Students should realize that they do not all have the same vowel + r combination. They should also notice that the r-controlled syllable can be in any position in the word.

Guided Practice



- Distribute Word Cards to pairs of students. **Let's sort these words into different columns. How would you sort them?** Allow time for responses. If necessary, guide students in sorting the words into three separate columns: /er/, /ir/, and /ur/.
- **Look at the rest of your Word Cards.** Use the remaining Word Cards. **Read each word with a partner and decide which column to place each word.**
- **What do you notice about these words? Do they all fit in the categories you created?** Allow time for responses. Students should notice that there are two more r-controlled vowels that haven't been discussed yet. **We have two more r-controlled vowel patterns. These r-controlled vowel patterns each have a different sound. What sounds do you hear for each of these?** Facilitate a discussion about the sounds for each vowel pattern. **Let's make a new column for /ar/ and one for /or/.**
- **Continue sorting the rest of your words into columns.** Students should end up with five columns: *ar*, *er*, *or*, *ir*, and *ur*. Monitor to be sure students have placed all words into the correct columns.



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Guided Practice (cont.)

- **Let's look at how knowing about r-controlled vowels will help you in spelling. Suppose I want to write the word *park*.** Say the word *park*. Pause.
- **Let's break this word up and focus on just the vowel + r. Say *p – ar – k*.** Look back at your columns that you made earlier. Which vowel pattern sounds like the one in *park*? Allow time for responses. **Yes, it sounds like the words in the /ar/ column.**
- **This is how you write *park*.** Write *park* on the board. **The children went to the park to ride bikes.**
- Continue in the same manner with the following words: *fork, burn, herd, and bird*. Students should realize that the words with the *ur, er, ir* pattern all sound the same, so it is difficult to determine the spelling. For these words, the spelling is determined primarily by memorization.
- Students work in partners. One partner says a word, the other partner uses their columns to help them determine how to spell the word. Students write each word, and their partner checks for correct spelling.
- **Remember, listening to the vowel sound in a word can help you understand how to write the word.**

Independent Practice



- Give each student five index cards. Have students label them clearly with *er, ir, ur, ar, and or*.
- **Decide which r-controlled vowel pattern matches the word.** Call out the words one at a time. Student holds up the appropriate card. Monitor and assess.
- **Write the word on a piece of paper. Make sure you use the correct r-controlled vowel pattern.**
- Teacher checks the spellings and guides students in making corrections as needed.



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Word Cards 1

otter

forlorn

surprise

tiger

mother

turnip

birdcage

swirl

porch

Word Cards 1

prefer

farmhouse

turtle

chirp

dark

superb

herd

fork

darkness



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Word Cards 2

chirp

starfish

burlap

lobster

torment

letter

fern

wander

organic

Word Cards 2

prefer

carpenter

confirm

cartwheel

sturdy

important

circus

dirt

garlic