Book Fifteen Part Two

Syllables
and “-ed”, “-ing”, “-tion”
& “-ture” Endings

Table of contents

2  Words that end in -ed
10  Words that end in -ing
15  The word “because”
16  Syllable rules
39  The “sh” sound (includes words that end in -tion)
47  The “ch” sound (words that end in -ture)
48  Recommended reading

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Words that end with “ed”

Sometimes we add the letters “ed” to the end of a word. Usually, this means that something happened in the past.

For example, my dog barked a lot last night.

However, the “ed” sound doesn’t sound like bed or red, it sounds like this (see below) – you can hardly hear the “e”– you mostly just hear the “d”.

Last night, I kicked a ball all the way to the moon.

When she was one, she crawled on the floor, and now she is two, she crawls a lot more. Last night she crawled all the way ’round the world. She crawls rather quickly – well, quickly for a girl.

Parent/teacher note: The exceptions (such as “started” and “needed”) are taught later in this book.
I washed my dog;
I washed him well.
Then I washed him again,
but he still had a smell.
Then I smelled the same smell
on my hands and my clothes –
then I found that the smell
was inside my nose.

Last night, I yawned
such a big yawn
that my mouth was open
all night until dawn.
My cat yawned too –
he yawned bigger than me;
he wished that he didn’t –
he swallowed a bee!
Sometimes, when we add “ed” to very short words, we also add a second letter – this stops the “e” from turning into a naughty, silent “e” and reaching around and pinching the first vowel.

hug → hugged
I hugged my huge cat.

sip → sipped
I sipped my milk.

My cat had to take a nap, but he napped so long, he napped so much, that I never thought he would nap enough.

Three years went by – or maybe it was four – when my cat woke up, he napped some more.
Last week, a frog *hopped* into my life.  
He *hopped* with his daughter,  
his son and his wife.  
They *hopped* in the door  
and under my chair.  
And now they *hop, hop* in my hair.

I *baked* a cake for your birthday.  
I *baked* a cake, but it *burned*.  
I *burned* the cake  
that I *baked* for you,  
so now I will *bake* some worms.
I **hoped** the frogs would leave me –
I **hoped** they would go away –
but the frogs that **hopped** into my hair
are still up there today.
I will now put my head in water,
and I **hope** that the frogs **hop** away.
And if that doesn’t work,
I know this will hurt,
but I’ll squirt them with hair spray.

Though I like to **sneeze**,
and I **sneeze** a lot,
last night I **sneezed**
and my leg fell off.
I **sneezed** again,
and my head **rolled** away –
now I’m stuck inside
and I can’t go play.
When a word ends with a “y”, the “y” changes to an “i”, and then we add “ed”.

I fried an egg.

But if the word already ends with “ie”, we just add a “d”

I tied my shoe with a pink ribbon.

Babies cry when they are hungry.
Babies cry when they are sad.
But when I was a baby,
I cried when I was glad;
I cried when I wasn’t hungry;
I cried when I was asleep.
My brother says I lied when I cried, so he never listened to me.
But if the “y” is right next to a vowel, like an “when a word ends with a “y”, the “y” does NOT change into an “i” – we add “ed”.

I wasn’t hungry so I toyed with my food.

The dog stayed where he was.

I like to play the piano;
I played it just last night.
First I played some music,
and then the piano said, “Alright – now it’s time to play some cards, or maybe a game of chess.”
And the piano won every game we played – the piano was the best!
The words “said” and “paid” break the rule. Funny thing is, the two words sound very different.

I walked to the store for ice cream, but they said I was too small. I did not know what to say, so I said nothing at all. Then they asked me to pay good money for something I didn’t buy. So I paid them a lot of nothing, and then I said, “Goodbye.”
Words that end with “ing”

Sometimes we add the letters “ing” to the end of a word.

When we add “ing” to the end of a word, the “i” sound is very small. This makes it sound a little bit different to the words “ring”, “thing” and “bring” –

I am bringing a ring to my mother
I am bringing it in a box
And the ring that I bring to my mother is better than flowers or socks.
I found the ring in the garden, when I was digging for worms in the dirt.
I am hoping my mom really likes it, so she doesn’t get mad at my shirt.
We add “ing” to some words when we’re talking about DOING something –

He is running.

Yesterday he was running.

Tomorrow he will be running.

The cat is sleeping now.

The cat was sleeping last night.

And the cat will still be sleeping in an hour.

We also sometimes add “ing” to a word when we want to describe something or tell someone WHICH thing we’re talking about...

The running dog.

A river has running water; a pond has standing water.

The laughing cat.
You will learn more about this later in school.
For now, all you need to know that we use “ing” at the end of a lot of words!

The running dog is running all around the park.
The running dog keeps running, even though it is getting dark.
The running dog keeps running, even when the sun doesn’t shine.
The running dog keeps running – and I keep on wondering why.

I am going to the zoo – my brother is coming too.
We are going to the zoo, but you aren’t coming too because we’re going to the zoo to take a look at you!
I like **being** a cat, but **being** a dog is better.

And though **being** a frog is fun, **being** a fish is wetter.

But **being** who I am is the very best of all –

I like to **be** myself, although I’m rather small.

What will you **give** me if I’m **being** very good?

**Giving** me candy would be good – and you should!

**Giving** me candy would be a surprise – don’t **give** it to me yet, let me first close my eyes.
Listening to that noise is giving me a headache. I am trying to sleep, but it’s keeping me awake. I wish that the dog didn’t need to diet because giving him food is all that keeps him quiet.

A hungry monkey asked me for a nut, but I had nothing – well, nothing but a penny, a crayon, and a candy wrapper too – but the monkey wanted nothing but a nut, boo, hoo.

The word “nothing” comes from the words “no” and “thing” – but we pronounce it differently.
I think this **thing** is broken;
I think this **thing** is dead.
This thing does **nothing**
when I hit it on the head.
But if it did **something**, what **something** would that be?
Well, better than **nothing**
because **nothing** bothers me!

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**Because**

The word “because” is a good one to know – why? Because it isn’t spelled how it sounds. “Because” is an important word that you have to know by memory.

A bee says, “buzz,”
(buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz)

a bee says, “buzz” –
that’s why, **because**!
I was **because**... I was.
It wasn’t **because** I wasn’t.
And **because** I wasn’t...
or perhaps I was...
Why?
Well, **because**!

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**Syllables**

Just like a sentence is made of words, a word is made up of syllables.

If you know how to break a word into syllables, it will be easier to read bigger words.

And to teach you, here is a Silly Bull who knows all about syllables. Ready?
Silly Bull Rule 1

Every syllable has one – and ONLY one – vowel sound.

chic

k

cat

chicken

“Shhhhh” is not a word because it doesn’t have a vowel sound.

Silly Bull Rule 2

The number of vowel sounds in a word tells you how many syllables there are.

pig

ti-ger

kan-ga-roo

al-li-ga-tor

hip-po-pot-ta-mus
I am trying to remember, but I think that I forgot. It was very important – it truly meant a lot. How could it happen? Why is it happening to me? I think that my memory is just a memory.

I am only eleven, but I am very grown up. And after I am twelve, I will leave my home, but... I will bring with me my mother, and my baby brother too. Together we will live with the monkeys at the zoo.
Before I am able
to climb upon the table,
I must climb upon the chair.
But before I can do that
I have to move the seven cats
that have climbed into my hair.

Every night before I fall asleep,
I count seven hundred sheep.
They dance upon my bed
before they jump into my head,
but I never, ever feel their feet.
Silly Bull Rule 3

Not every vowel makes a sound. Silent vowels and “walking vowels” don’t count when you’re counting syllables. (“When two vowels are walking, only one vowel does the talking.”)

snake
cro-co-dile

sheep
ba-boon

goat

Someone gave me something, and he already wants it back. I must have put it somewhere – surely I remember that? Again and again, I checked my clothes; I even looked between my toes. I will be more careful next time – I will put it on my nose.

The silent vowels on this page are colored orange. Read the page, and then count how many orange silent vowels are here.
Silly Bull Rule 4

Sometimes a vowel makes a sound all by itself, separate from other letters. When this happens, the vowel is a syllable all by itself.

We went **over** to the **radio** to listen to some music. But the **electric** cord was gone, so we couldn’t really use it. My cat started to sing, but as soon as her mouth was **open**, I had to close my ears, so my brain would not be broken.
Many times, when two vowels are right next to each other, one of the vowels is silent. But sometimes, two vowels next to each other both make a sound, and when this happens, they count as separate syllables.

I had a big idea,
bigger than my head.
A huge idea
like a giant goose egg.
It was so big that
the piano looked quite small.
How do big ideas fit inside my head at all?

Answers: idea=3, giant=2, piano=3, ideas=3.
Silly Bull Rule 6

Remember, the letter “y” is sometimes a vowel and sometimes isn’t. Show me which “y” is a consonant and which is a vowel.

When **anyone** knocks on my yellow door,
I ask them, “Who are **you**?”
If **they** take a **year** to answer,
I know **they** are from the zoo.
**Why** do animals come here?
It does seem rather dumb.
It’s happened so **very many** times,
that I am no longer **young**.
Silly Bull Rule 7

Sometimes, two words join together to make a longer word. Usually, the two words are pretty easy to spot. When figuring out the syllables in this kind of word, always divide BETWEEN the two words. Read the right and wrong words out loud, and you’ll see what I mean.

(Right)                          (Wrong)
how-ev-er  ho-wev-er
some-times  so-met-times
eye-ball  e-yeb-all
with-out  wit-ho-ut
an-other  a-not-her

I went for a walk without myself. My footprints were nothing, my eyeballs were gone, no lips whistled something that wasn’t a song. Nobody told me the way to nowhere – and everyone knows I never got there.
Silly Bull Rule 8

When two or more consonants sit between two vowel sounds in a word, the word is usually divided between the FIRST two consonants.

**fun-ny**  
**under**  
**children**  
**complete**

I was **almost hungry**, it was **nearly** time to eat, when my **tummy** said, “**Hurry!**” to my **funny**, **yellow** feet. I went **running** to the **market** where I bought a lot of food. I **started** to eat, but my **tummy** said, “**Ewww!**”
The smell of a **hundred chipmunks** is **better** than a **hundred skunks**.

But the **problem** with a **hundred chipmunks** is their **manners** when they’re eating lunch. They **gobble** it up and stuff it in their cheeks, which get so full they can **hardly** spit or speak.
Ben Ding was bending down to touch his toes.

He was thanking his knees for not banging his nose.

His sister said, “Splendid!”

His hamster said, “Squeak!”

And if you are wondering, hamsters can’t speak.

Silly Bull Rule 10

And some consonants should never, EVER be separated – like when two consonants are working together to make a “ch” or “sh” or “th” sound. Read the “right” and the “wrong” words out loud so you can see what I mean.

father  fat-her
nothing  no-thing
teaches  teac-hes
father  fa-ther
nothing  no-thing
teaches  teach-es
fisherman  fis-her-man
together  to-get-her
together  to-geth-er
I made two sandwiches without any bread. They were messy and squishy, and the butter wouldn’t spread. I was washing the dishes and searching for a knife, when they ran away together saying, “Run for your life!”

I picked two peaches for my brother, see? But I would rather give him one and keep the other for me. This one is fresher, but I think it has a worm. Eww! It’s touching my hand – now I’ve got another germ!
**Silly Bull Rule 11**

The “ck” letter combination is never divided because they make only one sound (kuh) – if they were divided, you would have to make TWO “kuk” sounds. Read the following right and wrong words, and you’ll see what I mean.

- **chicken** vs. **chic-ken**
- **crackers** vs. **crac-kers**
- **jacket** vs. **jac-ket**

I thought I bought a **cuckoo clock** – that’s what they told me at the shop.

I ran home **quickly** and **stuck** it on the wall –

I was **lucky** that it did not fall.

I thought it was cool, but no, it was **yucky**
when out came a **chicken**
and a rubber **ducks**.
I put my lunch in the **pocket** of my **jacket**.

Then I forgot to eat the **packet**.

Two months later,

when the weather got cold,

my **knuckles** found that

lunch so old – **icky, sticky**

and very, very **sickly**.

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**Silly Bull Rule 12**

Remember that we put -ed at the end of some words? And remember that you can't really hear the “e” – just the “d”?

Well because there isn't any vowel SOUND, the “-ed” that is added to the end of words does NOT make a syllable of its own.
Silly Bull Rule 13

But when a word ends in a “t” or a “d”, you can hear the “-ed” ending – so it is a separate syllable.

When I was a baby, I lifted the car.

I wanted to knit a sock. So I knitted one for you.

It had a little hole, but I mended it with glue.

Then I tried to put the sock on; I pushed and pulled a lot. When I finally got the sock on, I could not pull it off.

Read this page and the next, and then show me which “ed” endings are a separate syllable, and which ones are not.
I wanted to be scary;
I needed to scare someone.
So I pretended to be a monster –
I hoped to have some fun.
I waited by a tree
and jumped out at my cat.
My cat just yawned and fell asleep,
and that was the end of that.
To draw a **poodle**, draw two **circles** and a dot.
Then turn it upside down and stare at it a LOT.
It could be a **bicycle**, or maybe a **turtle’s** eyes.
But we know it’s a **poodle**...
surprise, surprise, surprise.

I stood in the **middle** between a **Little** and a Lot.
I couldn’t move a **muscle** –
couldn’t **giggle**, couldn’t cough.
I tried to **wiggle** out,
but I only **wiggled** in.
I wish that **Little** and a Lot were a **little** more thin.
Silly Bull Rule 15

When a word ends in “al” or “el”, it doesn’t really sound much different than if a word ends in “-le”.

animal
an-i-mal

usual
us-u-al

metal
met-al

camel
cam-el

towel
tow-el

tunnel
tun-nel

special
spe-cial

spe-shal

My cat is not a normal cat.

My cat is very special.

My cat is so unusual that she should get a medal.

What makes my cat so special?

I’m glad that you have asked.

My magical cat can sit for hours doing nothing in the grass.
It is a **simple puzzle** – not difficult at all. But I am just an **animal** and my brain is **unusually** small. So, hold on a minute, while I **dial** the telephone – I think I left my brain on the **table** back at home.

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**Silly Bull Rule 16**

If a two-syllable word has ONE consonant in the middle, the first vowel sound is usually long.

- **paper**
- **even**
- **tiny**
- **open**
- **music**
Silly Bull Rule 17

And if a word has TWO or more consonants in the middle, the first vowel sound is usually short.

happy
yellow
little
bottle
funny

I am writing a letter on a piece of yellow paper. I will send it to myself, so that I can read it later. To make my letter better, I began with “Dear Me” – it sounds a little silly – but it’s better than, “Poor Me!”
I suppose I can be silent when the baby is sleeping, but today it is a problem because I am keeping my doggy in my room – just listen to her yapping.

My dog will not be quiet, even when she is napping.

Silly Bull Rule 18

But there are lots and lots of words that break these two rules about long and short vowel sounds. If you don't know a word, try and say it with a short vowel and then a long vowel, and see which way makes sense.
If I lived in the desert,
I would want to have a camel,
so the camel and I
could travel, travel, travel
to the market for milk
and perhaps a little apple –
and that is why
I need to have a camel.

Me, my body and I
like to swim in the river,
but we never, ever, ever
swim without our liver.
Our liver stays inside
with our tummy and our bones –
and we would never, ever, ever
leave our liver home alone.
Parent/teacher note: There are several more syllable rules — for example, rules about prefixes, suffixes and hyphens — but this is not the time or the place for them. At this point, your child/student needs to practice reading and learn more about the parts of speech, tenses, etc.

The “sh” sound

We don’t have a letter for the “sh” sound, so we use a COMBINATION of letters to spell the sound.

There are about 12 different ways of spelling it, but these four ways are used the most —

- fish
- motion
- special
- yes, you can
- permission
And how do you know if these letters are pronounced normally or pronounced “sh”? Simple – you look and see if there’s a vowel or a consonant afterwards. Try saying the “sh” sound for ALL of these words, and you’ll see what I mean.

**Vocabulary:**
- Consonants: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z
- Vowels: a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y

**Example:**

**Martin** is a **Martian**;
he has three **Martian** eyes –
and one **Martian** eye
always cries, cries, cries.
**Martin** isn’t sad,
all **Martians** are quite happy,
but **Martin’s** third eye
is a sad, little chappy.

A “chappy” is English slang for a man or a boy – can also be applied to an object.
When I go out in the sun,
I wear sun tan **lotion**.
But the **lotion** that I wear
gives me a bad **emotion**.
The **lotion** is pink,
and my skin turns blue –
Would you have bad **emotion**
if it happened to you?

We went to the **station**
and caught the wrong train –
it was very, very dark
and there was a lot of rain.
**Station** after **station**, we did not see
the **stations** going by –
our eyes were fast asleep.
At the end of the line,
we were in the wrong **station**;
not just far from home,
but in a totally different **nation**.
An ancient cat
in an ancient hat
counts his money
on an ancient matt.
One cent, two cents,
eight, nine, ten...
then the ancient cat
starts over again.

My cat is very special;
well, special to me.
I’ve had my special cat
since I was two or three.
My cat is so special
that he talks specially –
I just wish I understood what
he is saying to me.
“Fish are delicious,” said the cat from the city,
“but I am suspicious – this fish is too pretty!
Because just how delicious can a fish this suspicious
be if the fish never swims or swishes?”

(In this use, “swish” means to move in a curving, exaggerated way.)

My dog is on a mission to catch the cat.
My cat is on a mission to catch the rat.
And I am on a mission to make them all be friends – but I think that my mission will never have an end.
If a profession is what you do for work, then my baby brother is a professional burp. My profession is patting him on the back – and then he has to take a professional nap.

I can see by the expression on your angry, angry face that I didn’t have permission to win our silly race. Your expression is confession that you have a big obsession with winning, but what’s wrong with being second place?
In the words “sure” and “sugar”, the letter “s” makes the “sh” sound all by itself.

I am **sure** I love **sugar**; **sugar** is the best. I put lots of **sugar** on everything, yes! But are you **sure** that **sugar** on mud tastes good? I prefer to eat **sugar** on chunks of wood.

In the word “ocean”, the “c” and the “i” make the “sh” sound...

A lot of **fish** live in the **ocean**. And the waves of an **ocean** are always in **motion**. I like to have the **notion** that my bath tub is an **ocean** where the **fish** all know to leave my toes alone!

Note: Notion means idea.
There are some words that break this rule (like “spicier”, “science” and “society”).

I want to learn about science at school. Science is good; science is cool.
And if I am a scientist when I grow up – I need to be good at science and stuff.

And words that end in “-tion” (like question, suggestion, and digestion) are pronounced “queschun” instead of “ques-shun”.

I know the answer to a lot of little questions. But what is the answer to a really big question? A really big question – if you don’t mind the suggestion – is: why does eating mud give me indigestion?
The “ch” sound

We don’t have a letter for the “ch” sound, so we use a COMBINATION of letters to spell the sound.

The “ch” sound is almost always spelled with a “c” and an “h”, but some words (about 300 of them) have a “-cher” sound that is spelled “-ture”.

I can see into the future –
I have a crystal ball.
And today I see a picture of a vulture on the wall.
Now, a vulture is a creature that I do not wish to meet,
so I need another future...
hmmmm – what will it be?
My dog waits behind a tree because he wants to capture me. What an adventure!
He jumps out with a growl!
He knocks me down onto the ground.
And, yes, I let him capture me – even though he is smaller than little, old me.

The end
(Phew!)

Recommended reading

Dr. Seuss – ALL of his books!

Dav Pilkey – especially the Captain Underpants books (very humorous and lots of illustrations). Mr. Pilkey has written and illustrated over forty books published by Scholastic Press. Check out www.pilkey.com

Peggy Parish – the Amelia Bedelia books published by Harper Collins (about 30 books). Many illustrations and lots of word play.

James Marshal – especially his “George and Martha” books. Mr. Marshal has published more than ten funny and charming books with Houghton Mifflin.