# Pronunciación 3: El silabeo

#### El silabeo (Syllabification): How to divide Spanish words into syllables.

Watch the following instructional video:

[Improve your Spanish Accent - Dividing Words into Syllables](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtGQDzNgcco) (MaestroKaplan, YouTube)

As you know Spanish is phonetic, the consonants and the consonant groups have specific sounds with each one of the vowels, and only the vowels have a sound by themselves. In order to pronounce words correctly, you need to know how to divide the word into syllables so that you can identify the stress of the word. Spanish words are syllabified according to some very rigid rules.

Let’s analyze the following words for the number of vowels and the number of syllables that we have:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Word to analyze  | Vowels in the word  | Conclusion about # of syllables  |
| amigo  | Has a, i, and o  | It has three syllables  |
| profesora  | Has o, e, o, and a  | It has four syllables  |
| verde  | Has two e  | It has two syllables  |
| hombre  | Has o and e  | It has two syllables  |
| estudiar  | Has e, u, and ia (diphthong)  | It has three syllables  |
| transporte  | Has a, o, and e  | It has three syllables  |
| construir  | Has o, and ui (diphthong)  | It has two syllables  |

After you define the number of syllables the word has, you must follow the next 4 simple rules:

1. A simple consonant or consonant group goes with the following vowel. You can NEVER have a consonant without a vowel in a syllable, but one vowel can be a syllable.

* Amigo --- a-mi-go
* Profesora --- pro-fe-so-ra
* Tarea --- ta-re-a (“ea” is not a diphthong)

A diphthong is comprised of a strong + a weak vowel or two weak vowels. The strong vowels in Spanish are A, E, and O.  The weak vowels are I and U.  “E” and “A” are considered strong vowels and hence can be separated into syllables as they are in the word tarea.

2. Two consonants are usually separated.

* Verde --- ver-de
* Estudiar --- es-tu-diar

\*\*Remember that a **consonant group** is never divided. The consonant groups in Spanish are:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| bl  | blusa  | gl  | globo  |
| br  | brazo  | gr  | grano  |
| ch  | chico  | ll  | llamo  |
| cl  | cloro  | pl  | plato  |
| cr  | crema  | pr  | primo  |
| dr  | dragón  | rr  | perro  |
| fl  | flaco  | tr  | traje  |
| fr  | fruta  |   |   |

3. Three consonants are usually divided after the first one, unless the second is an S: the S goes with the preceding syllable.

* Hombre --- hom-bre
* Transporte --- trans-por-te

4. It is uncommon in Spanish to have four consonants between vowels, but when you do, always divide the word after the second consonant.

* Construir --- cons-truir

|  |
| --- |
| Actividades de conversación |

**Actividad 1:**

Work in pairs to divide these vocabulary words into syllables. As a challenge, identify the stressed syllables using the rules you learned in chapter 2. Then pronounce the word aloud.

1. chino
2. arte
3. pintura
4. español
5. latín
6. cálculo
7. física
8. filosofía
9. música
10. literatura

**Actividad 2:**

Try this Quia quiz. Listening to the audio should help you divide the syllables. (You can simply use your initials to enter the quiz, if you do not want to use your whole name.)

[Quiz: Spanish Syllable Division (Quia)](https://www.quia.com/quiz/1395168.html?AP_rand=202446404)

The information in this chapter, when not created by us, is adapted from:

* Silvaggio-Adams, Vallejo-Alegre, Yo puedo: para empezar ().

Read this online at <https://edtechbooks.org/ventanas/pronunciacion3>