

PALMETTO EDUCATION SUMMIT

SESSION PRESENTATION

A

E

I

O

U

Stacie Wood & Natalie Brubaker

Lexia Learning

# First and Foremost, Find the Vowels:

## Unlocking the Six Syllable Types

*A hands-on session rooted in LETRS Unit 4*

60 Minutes

K-5 + Coaches

LETRS Unit 4

*“First and foremost, always and forever – **find the vowels.**”*

*— Stacie Wood*

# Meet Your Presenters



## **Stacie L. Wood, M.Ed.**

Customer Success Manager of Professional Learning

---

- ▶ 25+ years in special education & literacy
- ▶ Adjunct Professor — Campbell University & William Peace University
- ▶ LETRS Vols 1 & 2, Early Childhood, Admin Certified
- ▶ Former National LETRS Facilitator
- ▶ The Reading League NC Board Member

# Meet Your Presenters



**Natalie Brubaker, M.Ed.**

State Solutions Account Executive

---

- ▶ Former educator & literacy specialist
- ▶ 20+ years of classroom and district experience
- ▶ Science of Reading implementation partner
- ▶ Advocates for expert-led professional learning
- ▶ Drives educational equity through evidence-based practice

## SESSION OVERVIEW

# First and Foremost, Find the Vowels: Unlocking the Six Syllable Types

**01**

### Find the Vowels

*Setting the Stage*

8 min

**02**

### The 6 Types

*Explicit Instruction*

20 min

**03**

### Breakout Practice

*Hands-On Activities*

25 min

**04**

### Your Toolkit

*From Session to  
Classroom*

7 min

# A

## Why does it always start with the vowels?

# E

“First and foremost, always and forever — **find the vowels.**”

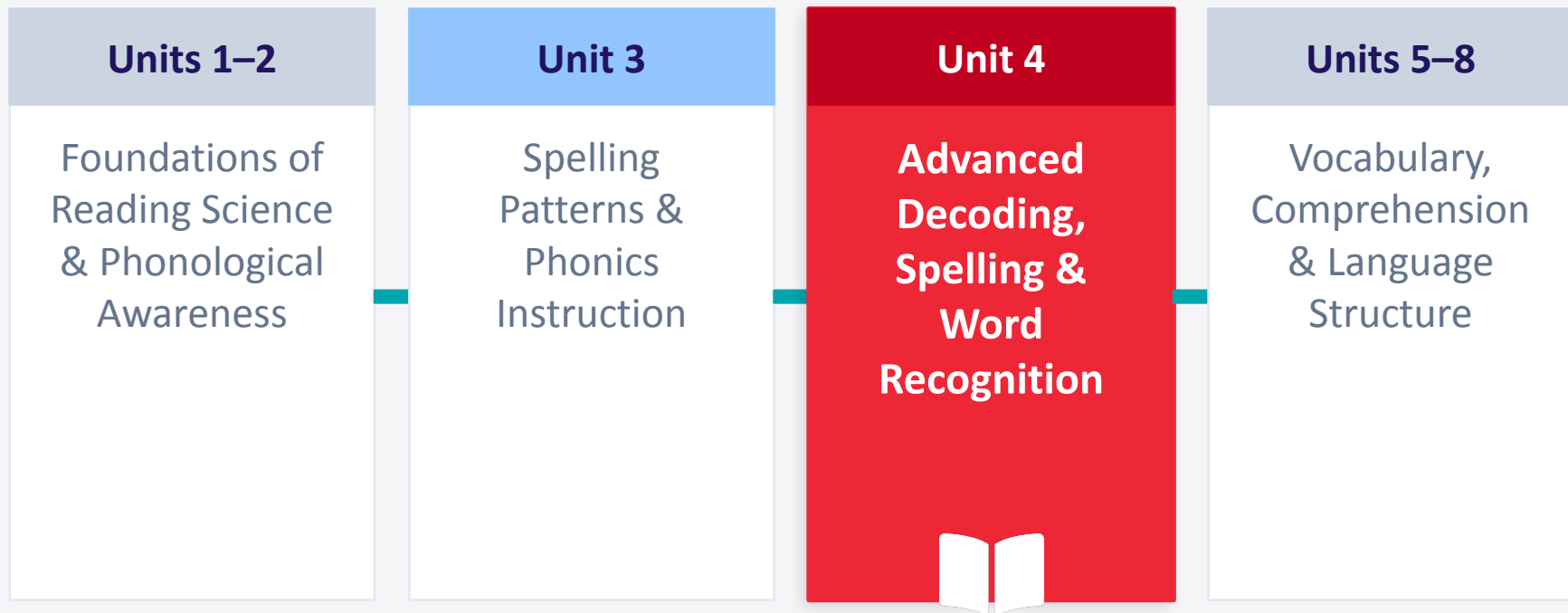
— *Stacie Wood, Customer Success Manager of Professional Learning*

Every syllable type is defined by its vowel pattern.

Decoding decisions start by locating the vowel.

Spelling patterns come back to the vowel.

## Where does Unit 4 fit in the LETRS journey?



## Syllables vs. Syllabication — An Important Distinction

- ▶ This distinction matters instructionally: we're not just dividing words for the sake of it — we're using syllable types to predict vowel sounds

Term	About	What It Does
Syllable	SOUNDS — a unit of speech organized around a vowel sound	Helps with pronunciation and phonological processing
Syllabication	PRINT — a strategy to predict vowel sounds in multisyllabic written words	Helps decode unfamiliar written words by identifying vowel patterns

## THE 6 SYLLABLE TYPES

*First and foremost – find the vowel in each type.*

CVC

### Closed

1 vowel closed by a  
consonant → short vowel

*cat · sit · blend*

CV

### Open

Syllable ends in a vowel →  
long vowel

*me · go · ba·by*

VCe

### VCe

Silent e makes the middle  
vowel long

*cake · bike · hope*

VV

### Vowel Team

Two + vowels together →  
one sound

*rain · meet · boat*

Vr

### Vowel-r

r bosses the vowel →  
r-controlled sound

*car · bird · corn*

-Cle

### C-le

Final syllable only:  
consonant + le

*ta·ble · gig·gle*

CVC

## Closed Syllable

### THE RULE:

One vowel is closed in by one or more consonants. The vowel spells its short sound.



*The most common syllable type in English — it's the foundation everything else builds on.*

### Examples

*cat · sit · blend*

—— marked example ——

b l ē n d

c

1 Elkonin boxes with counters

2 CVC word ladders (cat→bat→bit→sit)

3 Word family anchor charts

4 Decodable reader partner reads

5 Whiteboard write & hold

***First and foremost — find the vowel!***



## Open Syllable

### THE RULE:

The syllable ends in a vowel. The vowel is open — it says its long sound.



*Open syllables unlock thousands of multisyllabic words. If students miss this, big words fall apart.*

## Examples

*me · go · ba·by*

----- marked example -----

g ō  
◡  
o

1 Open door vs. closed door anchor chart

2 Open vs. closed sort (real + nonsense)

3 Syllable splitting — draw a line, label

4 Color-code open syllables in text

5 Word building — remove final consonant

***First and foremost — find the vowel!***

# How many “jobs” does silent e have?

6

## 1. Makes the vowel say its name

cap cape, kit kite

## 2. Makes c and g soft

rag rage, cub cube

## 3. Keeps English words from ending in v or u

have, blue

## 4. Adds a syllable marker

little vs. title, stable

## 5. Distinguishes word meanings

or ore, by bye

## 6. Shows that s is not plural

house, moose

V-C-e

## Vowel-Consonant-e (VCe)

### THE RULE:

Silent e at the end makes the middle vowel say its long sound. The e is silent but powerful. Remember, teaching the pattern is important!



*Help students see the whole pattern — vowel, consonant, silent e — not just memorize the word.*

### Examples

*cake · bike · hope*

----- marked example -----

c a k e

VCe

- 1 V-C-e flip books
- 2 VCe word ladders: cap→cape, kit→kite
- 3 Build it / Break it (add or remove e)
- 4 Circle V, underline C, box the e
- 5 VCe vs. closed partner sort

*First and foremost — find the vowel!*



## Vowel Team

### THE RULE:

Two or more vowels work together to spell one sound. The team plays together.



*Vowel teams have high variability — teach by sound groupings, not just pairs.*

### Examples

*rain · meet · boat*

----- marked example -----

r ai n

vv

- 1 Anchor charts by sound (ai/ay/ei for long a)
- 2 Sort by spelling pattern for same sound
- 3 Color-code teams in a passage
- 4 Memory game: word to picture match
- 5 Word hunt through a text

***First and foremost — find the vowel!***



## Vowel-r

### THE RULE:

A vowel followed by r. The r changes (bosses!) the vowel sound — it's neither long nor short.



*The 'bossy r' metaphor is powerful — instead give r a superhero persona students will remember.*

## Examples

*car · bird · fur*

----- marked example -----

b i r d



Vr

1 Bossy R superhero anchor chart

2 Sort by vowel-r pattern (ar/er/ir/or/ur)

3 Dictation: write and circle the pattern

4 Word mapping with vowel-r identification

5 Compare: car/cake, her/he (vowel r vs. open)

***First and foremost — find the vowel!***

**-Cle**

## Consonant-le (C-le)

### THE RULE:

Found only at the end of a word.  
The consonant + le forms an  
unaccented final syllable.  
(Schwa Happens)



*C-le is the key to reading longer words fluently. Teach students to spot it and split before it.*

## Examples

*ta·ble · sim·ple*

----- marked example -----

tā | ble

o | C-le

- 1 Syllable division: split before the C-le
- 2 Sort C-le words by consonant (ble/dle/gle...)
- 3 Multisyllabic word building with tiles
- 4 Sentence writing using C-le words
- 5 C-le vs. other endings sort

***First and foremost – find the vowel!***

*Three activities. 25 minutes. Your turn to find the vowels.*

**01**

10 min

### Word Sort Challenge

You'll receive 24 word cards. Sort them into the 6 syllable type categories. Work with a partner — compare, discuss, and defend your choices.

*Can't agree? That's the best part. Talk it out!*

**02**

8 min

### Syllable Split & Label

Divide a list of multisyllabic words into syllables. Label each syllable type. Identify the vowel pattern in each one. Debrief as a group.

*Remember: always find the vowel first!*

**03**

7 min

### Classroom Connection

Your group gets a grade band: K–1, 2–3, or 4–5. Discuss: which types matter most at your grade? What does instruction look like? Share one strategy.

*Think about what your students need most right now.*

# WORD SORT CHALLENGE

6 Syllable Types • *First and Foremost, Find the Vowels*

## How it works:

1. Each card shows a multisyllabic word with one syllable in CAPS.
2. Split the word into syllables. Find the vowel in the CAPS syllable.
3. Identify which of the 6 types that syllable belongs to.
4. Sort the card into the correct category.
5. Compare with a partner — discuss any disagreements!

Closed

Open

VCe

Vowel Team

Vowel-r

C-le

*“First and foremost, always and forever — find the vowels.”*

**THE RULE:** *1 vowel closed in by a consonant → short vowel sound*

fan·**TAS**·tic

*CAPS = target syllable*

**Closed**

*TAS = closed →  
short /a/*

**Find the vowel!**

ro·**BUST**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**Closed**

*BUST = closed →  
short /u/*

**Find the vowel!**

TRAN·**script**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**Closed**

*TRAN = closed →  
short /a/*

**Find the vowel!**

con·**FLICT**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**Closed**

*FLICT = closed →  
short /i/*

**Find the vowel!**

**THE RULE:** *Syllable ends in a vowel → long vowel sound*

**CLI·mate**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Open**

*CLI = open → long*  
*/i/*

**Find the vowel!**

**LO·cate**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Open**

*LO = open → long*  
*/o/*

**Find the vowel!**

**PRO·test**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Open**

*PRO = open → long*  
*/o/*

**Find the vowel!**

**si·LO**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Open**

*LO = open → long*  
*/o/*

**Find the vowel!**

**THE RULE:** *Silent e makes the middle vowel say its long sound*

**com·PETE**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**VCe**

*PETE = VCe → long  
/e/*

**Find the vowel!**

**ig·NITE**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**VCe**

*NITE = VCe → long  
/i/*

**Find the vowel!**

**com·POSE**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**VCe**

*POSE = VCe → long  
/o/*

**Find the vowel!**

**in·VITE**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**VCe**

*VITE = VCe → long  
/i/*

**Find the vowel!**

**THE RULE:** *Two or more vowels work together to make one sound*

**com·PLAIN**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Vowel Team**

*PLAIN = ai → long*  
*/a/*

**Find the vowel!**

**pro·CEED**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Vowel Team**

*CEED = ee → long*  
*/e/*

**Find the vowel!**

**be·NEATH**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Vowel Team**

*NEATH = ea → long*  
*/e/*

**Find the vowel!**

**dis·PLAY**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Vowel Team**

*PLAY = ay → long*  
*/a/*

**Find the vowel!**

**THE RULE:** *A vowel followed by r — r changes (bosses!) the vowel sound*

**con·FIRM**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Vowel-r**

*FIRM = ir → /er/*

**Find the vowel!**

**PUR·pose**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Vowel-r**

*PUR = ur → /er/*

**Find the vowel!**

**FOR·tress**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Vowel-r**

*FOR = or → /or/*

**Find the vowel!**

**SER·vant**

*CAPS = target syllable*  
**Vowel-r**

*SER = er → /er/*

**Find the vowel!**

**THE RULE:** *Found only at the end of a word; consonant + le = final syllable*

**stum·BLE**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**C-le**

*BLE = C-le final  
syllable*

**Find the vowel!**

**puz·ZLE**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**C-le**

*ZLE = C-le final  
syllable*

**Find the vowel!**

**ob·sta·CLE**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**C-le**

*CLE = C-le final  
syllable*

**Find the vowel!**

**prin·ci·PLE**

*CAPS = target syllable*

**C-le**

*PLE = C-le final  
syllable*

**Find the vowel!**

# SYLLABLE SPLIT & LABEL

*First and Foremost, Find the Vowels • LETRS Unit 4 Practice*

## How it works:

1. Look at the word and say it aloud.
2. Find the vowels — first and foremost!
3. Draw a vertical line (|) between each syllable.
4. Write each syllable in a box and label its type below.
5. Compare with a partner — discuss any disagreements!

Closed

Open

VCe

Vowel Team

Vowel-r

C-le

*“First and foremost, always and forever — find the vowels.”*

Palmetto Education Summit • Lexia Learning

**1** **explore**  
(2 syllables)



*First — find  
the vowel!*

**2** **basement**  
(2 syllables)



*First — find  
the vowel!*

1

**ex | plore**

*The 'e' in 'plore' is silent but makes 'o' long.*

**ex****Closed***short /e/***plore****Vr***/or/ — silent e*

2

**base | ment**

*Two different types in one word!*

**base****VCe***long /a/ — silent e***ment****Closed***short /e/*

3

**tur | key**

*'key' ends in a vowel — y acts as vowel.*

**tur****Vowel-r***/er/ — r bosses***key****Vowel Team***long /e/ — ends in vowel*

4

**com | plain | ing**

*Three syllables, three types! Find all three vowels.*

**com****Closed***short /o/***plain****Vowel Team***long /a/ — ai team***ing****Closed***short /i/*

5

**re | place**

*Prefix 're-' is always open.*

**re****Open**

*long /e/ — ends  
in vowel*

**place****VCe**

*long /a/ — silent  
e*

6

**pur | ple**

*Classic Vowel-r + C-le  
combination.*

**pur****Vowel-r**

*/er/ — r bosses*

**ple****C-le**

*unaccented final  
syllable*

7

**re | main**

*Two different long vowel strategies.*

**re**

**Open**  
long /e/ —  
ends in vowel

**main**

**Vowel Team**  
long /a/ — ai  
team

8

**im | por | tant**

*Watch out — 'e' in 'tance' is silent.*

**im**

**Closed**  
short /i/

**por**

**Vr**  
/or/

**tant**

**Closed**  
nasal sound

9

**ath | lete**

*'ath' is closed even with digraph 'th'.*

**ath****Closed***short /a/***lete****VCe***long /e/ —  
silent e*

10

**cor | ner | stone**

*Two Vowel-r + one VCe.  
Challenge word!*

**cor****Vowel-r***/or/ sound***ner****Vowel-r***/er/ sound***stone****VCe***long /o/ —  
silent e*

# CLASSROOM CONNECTION

*First and Foremost, Find the Vowels • Palmetto Education Summit*



**7 MINUTES**

Find your grade band. Discuss the 3 questions with your table. Be ready to share ONE strategy with the room.

## K-1

Closed (CVC)

Open (CV)

VCe

*Foundational types — students need these cold before moving on.*

## 2-3

VCe

Vowel Team

Vowel-r

*Expanding the toolkit — students move into pattern variability.*

## 4-5

Vowel-r

C-le

**All 6 in multisyllabic words**

*Applying all 6 types to read and spell multisyllabic words fluently.*

**Discuss: (1) Which types matter most? • (2) What does instruction look like? • (3) What's your biggest challenge?**

**KEY FOCUS TYPES:** Closed (CVC) • Open (CV) • VCe — *Foundational types — students need these cold before moving on.*

1

**Which syllable types are most critical at your grade level — and why?**

*e.g., Closed is non-negotiable in K; Open becomes critical in grade 1*

---

2

**What does explicit syllable type instruction look like in your classroom right now?**

*e.g., Elkonin boxes, CVC word ladders, decodable readers, magnetic letters*

---

3

**What is your biggest challenge when teaching syllable types?**

*e.g., Students confuse open and closed; blending through longer words*

---

**KEY FOCUS TYPES:** VCe • Vowel Team • Vowel-r — *Expanding the toolkit — students move into pattern variability.*

1

**Which syllable types are most critical at your grade level — and why?**

*e.g., Vowel teams are the biggest challenge and payoff in grade 2*

---

2

**What does explicit syllable type instruction look like in your classroom right now?**

*e.g., Vowel team sorts, color-coding patterns in text, word mapping*

---

3

**What is your biggest challenge when teaching syllable types?**

*e.g., The variability of vowel teams; students applying rules inconsistently*

---

**KEY FOCUS TYPES:** Vowel-r • C-le • All 6 in multisyllabic words — *Applying all 6 types to read and spell multisyllabic words fluently.*

1

**Which syllable types are most critical at your grade level — and why?**

*e.g., C-le and Vowel-r in longer words; syllable division strategies*

---

2

**What does explicit syllable type instruction look like in your classroom right now?**

*e.g., Syllable division practice, morphology connections, word sorts in content areas*

---

3

**What is your biggest challenge when teaching syllable types?**

*e.g., Students who missed foundational types; applying knowledge under fluency pressure*

---

★ **YOUR SHARE-OUT:** One syllable type strategy your table would recommend to every educator in this room:

# SHARE IT OUT

*One strategy per grade band — what would you recommend to every educator in this room?*

**K–1**

**Our strategy:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**2–3**

**Our strategy:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**4–5**

**Our strategy:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

*“First and foremost, always and forever — find the vowels.”*

### From Session to Classroom — What You're Taking Home

#### 6 Syllable Types Reference Guide

Full color quick-reference aligned to LETRS Unit 4. Designed for your desk, your wall, or your coaching binder.

#### Classroom Activity Toolkit

5 ready-to-use activities per syllable type, organized by grade band K–5. Implement the very next day.

#### Word Sort Card Set

24 word cards for your own classroom sorts — or to use as a model when building your own.

#### QR Code

---

A

# First and Foremost, Always and Forever, Find the Vowels.

E

---

*Thank you for being here.*

**Stacie Wood, M.Ed.**

CSM of Professional Learning  
[stacie.wood@lexialearning.com](mailto:stacie.wood@lexialearning.com)

**Natalie Brubaker, M.Ed.**

State Solutions Account Executive  
[natalie.brubaker@lexialearning.com](mailto:natalie.brubaker@lexialearning.com)