

## 21. Syllabic Consonants

**Objective:** This lesson explains to learners that the concept of 'syllabic', or syllabic segments is not constrained to vowels alone, but certain number of consonants can stand as peaks.

Syllabic Consonants refer to those segments where no vowel is found, and where the consonant itself stands a peak. The nasals and laterals, and the retroflex r can be syllabics.

### 21.1. Syllabic /n/

cotton maiden Britain sudden nation

'kɒt**n** 'meɪd**n** 'brɪt**n** 'sʌd**n** 'næʃ**n**

kitten beaten brighten mutton patient

'kɪt**n** 'bi:t**n** 'braɪt**n** 'mʌt**n** 'peɪʃ**n**

lesson prison reason present caution

'les**n** 'prɪz**n** 'ri:z**n** 'prez**n**t 'kɔ:ʃ**n**

botany monotony president

'bɒt**n**i mə'nɒt**n**i 'prezɪd**n**t

Threaten threatening

'θre**n** 'θret**n**ɪŋ

seven heaven often

'se**v**n 'he**v**n 'ɒ**f**n

## **We do not find n after l tʃ dʒ**

swollen kitchen pigeon

'swɒlən 'kɪtʃən 'pɪdʒən

happen happening ribbon

'hæpən 'hæpənɪŋ 'rɪbən

'hæpən 'hæpənɪŋ 'rɪbən

'θɪkən 'weɪkən

'θɪkən 'weɪkən 'θɪkən 'weɪkən

## **Nasal+plosive+syllabic nasal is very unusual**

abandon lantern london

ə'bændən 'læntən 'lʌndən

## **2. Syllabic ŋ**

'brəʊkŋ ki:ŋ 'θɪkŋ

## **3. Syllabic /m/**

Call them kɔ:ləm, keep them ki:pəm,

kill them kɪlm, "Hung them all" hʌŋgm ɔ:l

Happen 'hæpm / open the door əʊpm ðə dɔ:(r)

/ I am working m wɜ:kɪŋ

## **4. Syllabic r**

pr'tɪkjʊlə hɪstri or hɪstəri Hungary 'hʌŋgri missionary 'mɪʃnəri

visionary 'vɪʒnəri veteran 'vetərən

'bɛtə 'lædə 'kʌvə 'dɪnə / In some regions in Britain, shwa is dropped and replaced with syllabic

/r/ 'bɛtr 'lædr 'kʌvr 'dɪnr

## **5. Syllabic /l/**

### **Preceded by alveolar Consonant**

cattle bottle muddle meddle wrestle settle model cradle

'kætl 'bɒtl 'mʌdl 'mɛdl 'rɛsl 'sɛtl 'bætl 'mɒdl 'kreɪdl

### **Preceded by alveolar a non-alveolar Consonant**

trouble couple people struggle smuggle shackle

'trʌbl 'kʌpl 'pi:pl 'strʌgl 'smʌgl 'ʃækl