



**Course Name: English Phonology**  
**Instructor: Firas F. Ali**

Chapter 8: The Syllable – Part II

## The Structure of the English Syllable (The Onset):



1. If the syllable begins with a vowel, we say that this syllable has zero onset.  
Examples: (ooze /u:z/, aid /eɪd/, aim /eɪm/, arm /ɑ:m/)
2. If the syllable begins with one consonant (except η, ʒ), this consonant is called initial.  
Examples: (think /θɪŋk/, book /bʊk/, tie /taɪ/, fight /faɪt/)
3. If the syllable begins with two consonants, there are two options:
  - A. /s/ + consonant ( /s/ is pre-initial and the other consonant is initial)  
Examples: (speak /spi:k/, stay /steɪ/, sphere /sfɪə/, smell /smel/)
  - B. consonant + /l, r, w, j/ (the first consonant is initial and the second consonant is post-initial)  
Examples: (fly /flaɪ/, glue /glu:/, bring /brɪŋ/, twin /twɪn/)
4. If the syllable begins with three consonants:
  - the first consonant is /s/ and it is pre-initial
  - the second consonant is one of /p, t, k/ and it is initial
  - the third consonant is one of /l, r, w, j/
 Examples: (screen /skri:n/, splay /spleɪ/, strict /strɪkt/, spray /spreɪ/)

## The Structure of the English Syllable (The Coda):



1. If the syllable ends with a vowel, we say that this syllable has zero coda.  
Examples: (zoo /zu:/, way /weɪ/ , cry /kraɪ/)
2. If the syllable ends with one consonant (except h, r, w, j), this consonant is called final.  
Examples: (think /θɪŋk/, book /bʊk/, time /taɪm/)
3. If the syllable ends with two consonants, there are two options:
  - A. /m, n, ŋ, l, s/ + consonant ( the first is pre-final and the other consonant is final)  
Examples: (belt /bel**t**/, fist /fɪ**st**/)
  - B. consonant + /s, z, t, d, θ/ (the first consonant is final and the second consonant is post-final)  
Examples: (beds /bed**z**/, eighth/eɪt**θ** /)
4. If the syllable ends with three consonants, there are two options:
  - A. /m, n, ŋ, l, s/ + consonant + /s, z, t, d, θ/ (pre-final, final, post-final)  
Examples: helped /hel**pt**/ , twelfth /twelf**θ**/
  - B. consonant + /s, z, t, d, θ/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/ (final, post-final1, post-final2)  
Examples: next /nek**st**/, fifths /fɪf**θs**/
5. If the syllable ends with four consonants, there are two options:
  - A. /m, n, ŋ, l, s/ + consonant + /s, z, t, d, θ/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/ (pre-final, final, post-final1, post-final2)  
Example: twelfths /twelf**θs**/
  - B. consonant + /s, z, t, d, θ/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/ (final, post-final1, post-final2, post-final3)  
Example: texts /tek**sts**/



STRESS  
TRADITIONAL  
CLASS STUDY  
ARTICLES  
LINKS  
WORD

PRINCIPAL  
GROUP  
GREWUS  
VOICE  
PHONES  
SABILITY  
SPO

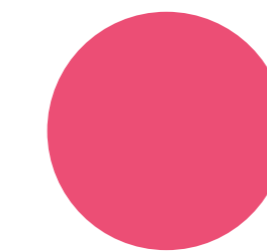
UNCIA

EFERS  
KEY  
COUN  
DESCRIPTION  
LANG

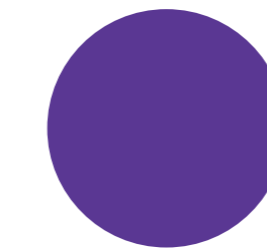
BRANCH  
SOUND  
SOCIAL  
LINGUISTICS

TERMINO  
CORRECT  
AREA  
C

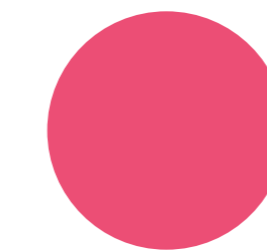
UNCIA  
LIVE  
CTION



The nucleus and the coda make the rhyme of the syllable.

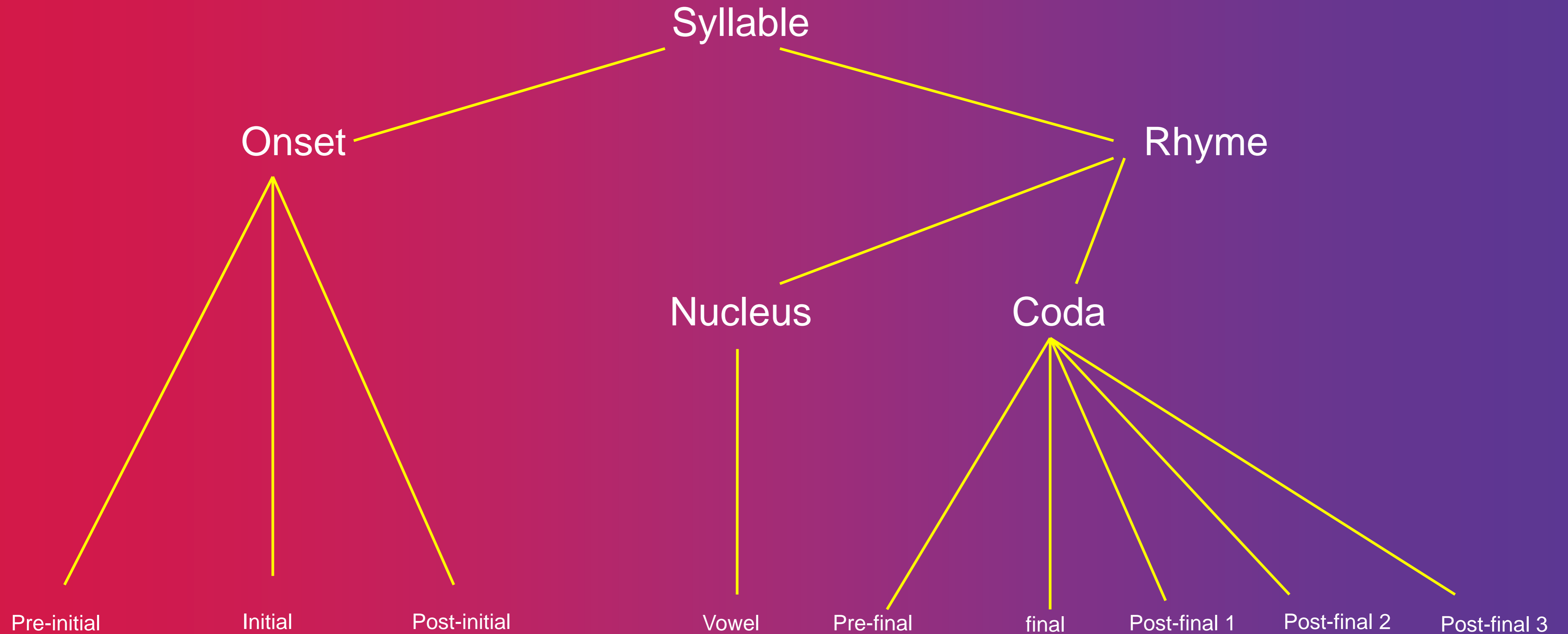


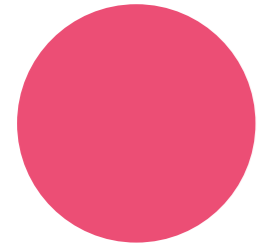
The maximum number of consonants that may appear in the onset is three, and the maximum number of consonants that may appear in the coda is four.



Syllables have different forms: V, VC, CV, CVC, CCV, CCCV, VCC, CVCC, etc.

# The Maximum Phonological Structure of the English Syllable





Analyse the syllable structure of the following words:

1. Spray
2. avoid

1. Spray /spreɪ/ CCCV

Onset:

/s/: pre-initial

/p/: initial

/r/: post-initial

Nucleus:

/eɪ/

Coda:

Zero Coda

2. avoid /əvɔɪd/ VCVC

1<sup>ST</sup> Syllable:

Onset:

Zero Onset

Nucleus:

/ə/

Coda:

Zero Coda

2<sup>nd</sup> Syllable:

Onset:

/v/: initial

Nucleus:

/ɔɪ/

Coda:

/d/: final