Chapter 9: Strong and Weak Syllables
Questions:

- What are the types of syllables?
- Why is it necessary to study strong and weak syllables?
- What is the difference between strong and weak syllables?
- What makes a syllable weak?
• Syllables have two types: strong and weak
• It is important to understand the difference between strong and weak syllables especially when we consider stress, elision, and intonation.
The differences between strong and weak syllables:

- **Length:** Strong syllables are longer than weak syllables.
- **Loudness:** Strong syllables are louder than weak syllables.
- **Quality:** Strong syllables have vowels that differ in quality from the vowels of weak syllables.

**NOTE:** It is always the vowel that makes the syllable longer, louder, or different in quality.
• The syllable is weak when it has the short vowel /ə/ (Schwa). Example: better /bɛðə/ - The second syllable is weak.
• The syllable is weak when it has the close front unrounded vowel /i/. Example: city /sɪti/ - The second syllable is weak.
• The syllable is weak when it has the close back rounded vowel /u/. Example: thank you /θæŋk ju/ - The second syllable is weak.
• The syllable is weak when it has a syllabic consonant /m̩, n̩, ŋ̩, l̩, r̩/. Example: couple /kʌpl̩/ - The second syllable is weak.
• The syllable is weak when it ends with the short vowel /ɪ/ and the next syllable starts with a consonant. Example: design /dɪzaɪn/ - The first syllable is weak.
• /ə/ is the weakest vowel in English and the most frequently occurring one.

• Only five consonants can be syllabic in English: /m, n, ŋ, l, r/.
List of important words with syllabic consonants:

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<th>cattle</th>
<th>wrestle</th>
<th>bottle</th>
<th>muddle</th>
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<tr>
<td>trouble</td>
<td>knuckle</td>
<td>panel</td>
<td>kernel</td>
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<td>pedal</td>
<td>threaten</td>
<td>eaten</td>
<td>happen</td>
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<td>often</td>
<td>uppermost</td>
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<td>Hungary</td>
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<td>veteran</td>
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<td>literal</td>
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<td>blossom</td>
<td>Handle</td>
<td>parcel</td>
<td>Petal</td>
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<td>national</td>
<td>history</td>
<td>seven</td>
<td>Heaven</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Question: Identify the weakest syllable in the following words and give reasons:

Open, happy, architect, radio, easy, forget, thorough, potato, trouble, seven, Hungary, thicken