Syllables and Syllable Structure

1. Organization of sounds within words

Syllables

◆ sounds → syllables → words

- each word consists of one or more syllables

  one syllable → tough, hot, rhyme, where, sound, unit
  two syllables → structure, within, consist, under, precede
  three syllables → linguistics, phonetics, resonant, consonant
  more → phonological, organization, differentiation

- each syllable consists of one or more sounds

◆ syllable

- a phonological unit consisting of one or more sounds
- can be divided into two parts

  o rhyme → a nucleus + a coda following it
    ↓     ↓
    vowel  consonant

  o onset → consonants preceding the rhyme

- the nucleus → the only essential part of a syllable
  o not every syllable has an onset
  o not every rhyme has a coda
  o a single sound can constitute a syllable → l, eye
2. Sequence constraints

- different languages use different sequences of consonants (C) and vowels (V)
- limited within each language
- English syllables allow several syllable patterns

in a previous caption

VC V CCV CV VC CVC-CVC

- phonotactic constraints

rules that describe permissible syllable structure in a language