3.3: Syllabic Consonants

We defined a syllable as a peak of sonority surrounded by less sonorous sounds. In most cases, the peak of sonority, that is, the nucleus of a syllable, is a vowel because vowels are the most sonorous sounds. But in some conditions, a sonorous consonant, a nasal or a liquid, can be the nucleus of a syllable. In those cases, the consonant is transcribed with a special diacritic to indicate its syllabic status.

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pu...guistics/?p=67

Check Yourself

1. The video indicated that the word *funnel* can be transcribed to indicate that the second syllable consists of a syllabic [i]. The word *elbow* is also spelled with the letters 'el'. Say the two words to yourself several times. Which is the correct
transcription for *elbow*?

- [l̩boʊ].
- [ɛlboʊ].

2. The words *human* and *manager* both contain a syllable that is spelled with the letters 'man'. In which word does that syllable contain a syllabic [n]?

- Human.
- Manager.

3. In the word *umbrella*, is the [m] syllabic?

- Yes.
- No.

Answers